

Lahla Ngubo

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The continuities and discontinuities
of a South African Black middle class

Nkululeko Mabandla

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Preface

This book is the winner of the Africa Thesis Award 2012. The jury's report included the following comments:

“The thesis (...) describes in much historical detail the formation of a landed middle class in Mthatha (or Umtata), the former Transkei, going as far back as three generations. (...) The thesis shows convincingly how land and property were crucial elements in the formation and reproduction of this middle class. This is a refreshingly new perspective on the middle class since many more conventional studies argue that a middle class in the Transkei emerged from families involved in the administration of the Bantustans and through education made it in the city. (...) What is furthermore interesting to note (...) is that the general perception of what a middle class should look like is influenced by a focus on consumption patterns as indicators of class status in conventional studies. (...) Taken together, these two tendencies have led to a situation where studies on middle class formation and reproduction almost automatically focus on the *urban* middle class, based on their occupation in industry or government, and their *consumption patterns*. This has sometimes prevented academics from also looking at the *rural* middle class and their *property ownership*. Apart from this academic relevance, the thesis also relates to current policy discussions on land reform and land redistribution. (...) Solid empirical research, sound theoretical conceptualisation and a good analysis do not yet necessarily make a good piece of academic work; good academic work does not automatically ‘produce’ an exceptional thesis. It only turns into a winner if excellent analysis and research are also brought to us with matching writing skills. Nkululeko Mabandla offers these in abundance.”

To the young lions

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Abbreviations

| | |
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| AA | Affirmative Action |
| BEE | Black Economic Empowerment |
| CDE | Centre for Development Enterprise |
| DLA | Department of Land Affairs |
| LRAD | Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development |
| MAR | Mthatha Archives Repository |
| NPC | National Planning Commission |
| TDC | Transkei Development Cooperation |
| TLA | Transkei Legislative Assembly |
| TRACOC | Transkei Chamber of Commerce |
| TRACOR | Transkei Agricultural Cooperation |
| UADS | Umtata Agricultural Development Services |
| WCCARS | Western Cape Archives and Record Service |
| XDC | Xhosa Development Cooperation |

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This study represents the beginning of a life-long dream to further education that was interrupted by the political conditions of the past and my involvement in opposing them. Many of my peers who undertook a similar stance against apartheid did not have the opportunity to go back to their studies after liberation was attained. I am mindful of the privilege that I have in being able to realize this dream and thus takes this opportunity to dedicate this thesis to all the generations of young lions who answered the call of their people and country to bring about a democratic transformation in South Africa.

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Introduction

Introduction and contextual background

This work explores the role of land in Mthatha's Black¹ middle class during the apartheid and democratic eras. Mthatha's Black middle class, which developed at the turn of the twentieth century, is a particular type of middle class that is defined not only by occupation but also by ownership of land. The path to land came about when the Mthatha municipality auctioned land to both Black and white buyers in 1908. This allowed the accumulation of land in the hands of a hitherto occupation based, mission educated Black middle class.

The study traces the development of this class from the mid nineteenth century to the democratic era, and focuses on how this middle class reproduced and transformed itself during this time. The study builds on Redding's (1987) historical study of Mthatha (1870-1950). In addition to the first generation discussed by Redding, this study identified two more generations: A second generation which developed from the 1950s onwards, and their descendants, the third generation, which continues to combine occupation and landownership to date.

The role of land in the definition of the Black middle class is sorely missing from studies of this class in the democratic period. Recent studies have drawn attention to the growth of this class in post-apartheid South Africa. This growth was supported by employment policies such as affirmative action (AA) and Black economic empowerment (BEE). Studies have generally focussed on income/occupation as the main determinants of middle class location (e.g., Udjo 2008; Unilever Institute 2007; Rivero *et al.* 2003). Thus, Rivero *et al.* (2003) analyse the advances made by Black South Africans in the managerial and professional categories between 1994 and 2000. Their sole criterion for identifying membership in the Black middle class is occupation. Meanwhile, Unilever's

¹ Black is used in this thesis to refer to 'Black African'.

much publicised 'Black Diamond Study' (Unilever Institute 2007) deals almost exclusively with consumption patterns of Black professionals, that is, their affluence based on income. And indeed, much interest has been generated in the popular press, where the Black middle class is often portrayed as 'young and driving a BMW' (Carrol 2004).

While the new Black middle class might have considerable disposable income, it seems to lack investment in more durable assets such as property. Studies of residential mobility suggest that home ownership, for example, remains relatively low within the 'new' Black middle class (Beavon 2000; Prinsloo & Cloete 2002; Crankshaw 2008). The general absence of property within this class has led Southall (2005: 1) to compare it with the proletariat:

The 'new middle class', which is typically in government and corporate employment, shares many of the characteristics of the classic proletarian, notably in the sense that it has no direct ownership of the means of production and is in a subordinate relationship to capital owning employers.

The conceptualisation of the Black middle class by income/occupation only is not a recent development. For example, Crankshaw (1997; see also Seekings & Nattrass 2006) looks at the Black middle class in pre-1994 South Africa through the occupation lens (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion).

The dominant narrative of South African social history in the twentieth century is that of a massive reconfiguration of social relations as a result of the discovery of minerals in the late nineteenth century. African land dispossession became necessary to serve the labour demands of the developing mining industry and the white commercial farming sector (Feinstein 2005: 33). According to Domar (1970, cited in Feinstein 2005: 33), land can become a problem for capitalist production when it is plentiful because peasants prefer to work their own land as independent producers rather than as hired labour. To attract them, employers would have to pay wages that would be comparable to what they could earn as independent farmers. In the history of South Africa, legislative measures such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 facilitated Black land dispossession (see Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion).

Large-scale dispossessions notwithstanding, Jordan (1984; also Peires 1989: 329) informs us of a long-standing and well-established landed Black middle class in South Africa. Evidence of an early Black landowning class that was buying up land in the late nineteenth century can be found in Murray's (1992) work on Thaba Nchu. A class of entrepreneurs who were both transport riders and/or land controllers (if not owners) was also identified by Bundy in his study of the nineteenth century peasantry (Bundy 1988). Murray and Bundy demonstrate that land was important in creating affluence and allowing for education. This, in turn, facilitated salaried white-collar employment.

Thus, in addition to land, education played an important role in structuring class differences, and mission education introduced new forms of skill-based stratification as Black land dispossession intensified. The division of Black society along lines of western Christianity and mission-education on the one side, and African traditional belief systems on the other, became ever more marked as the colonial modernizing project gained momentum. In the Eastern Cape region of South Africa (where this study is located; see section on methodology), for example, social differentiation among the *amaXhosa* took the form of an emerging dichotomy between ‘school’ people and ‘red’ people. The former were also called *amagqobhoka* (literally ‘the penetrable ones’), meaning those who had adopted western norms of behaviour; the latter were referred to as ‘red’, or *amaqaba* (literally ‘the smeared ones’) because of the red ochre which they used as traditional (form of) make-up. The ‘school’ people, distinguished in the popular imagination by exposure to western education as well as European tastes, formed the nucleus of the emerging middle class (see e.g. Mayer 1961; Gerhart 1978).

However, the combination of wars in late nineteenth century as well as legislative measures such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913 are largely believed to have separated many Africans from land and driven large numbers into proletarianisation. Consequently, the growth of the urban industrial sector from the first half of the twentieth and the economic boom of the 1960s is understood have provided occupational opportunities, especially for the educated and skilled. These developments gave rise to an urban based middle class – the focus of most existing sociological studies – that was solely defined by occupation and the advent of democracy opened even more occupational advancement channels for this class. Thus land, in the view of many studies, became insignificant in the definition of this class.

This book challenges such approaches and argues that a full understanding of the middle class needs to pay due attention to property ownership (or lack thereof). Moreover, it is vital to adopt a historical perspective and move beyond the present conceptualisations of this class. While those who joined the Black middle class post-1994 as a result of new government-driven opportunities might indeed be property-less, many of those who come from longstanding middle class families – with origins reaching back to the nineteenth century – have more than marketable professional qualifications, they typically also have access to land.

This study contributes to our understanding of the trajectories South Africa’s historical Black middle class – a class which is defined by access to (mission school) education, and resulting occupational opportunities, as well as access to land. The ways in which this particular landed middle class has reproduced and

transformed itself from 1900 to the present is the focus of the analysis. In many cases it was returns from land which made education possible in the first place, and the relatively high salaries obtained from white-collar and professional work allowed re-investments in land. Education and landownership thus co-existed in a cyclical and mutually reinforcing relationship.

Thus, this book argues that the question of Black landownership needs to be looked at inter-generationally. Newman (1993), for example, shows that class is a question of historical continuities and is transmitted through kinship ties, in other words, it shows a 'family trajectory'. The middle class under study is a particular Black middle-class that established itself in Mthatha in the former Transkei Bantustan. In contrast to other Bantustan towns, Mthatha was a well-developed town, a thriving commercial centre which offered opportunities for employment and property ownership. Mthatha also had significant white commercial interests and was thus prescribed as a 'European town' at least until the 1960s (Horrell 1971). Thus, the development of an 'urban' landed Black middle class in a major 'white spot' such as the town of Mthatha, presents an interesting case study for the understanding of the role of land in the definition of the Black middle class.

Theoretical framework

The study is informed by a broad theoretical framework which considers property-ownership (Marx 1973[1857-1858]) and labour market relations (Weber 1968[1925]) as the basis of social differentiation. Both Marx and Weber argue that ownership of the means of production (land, capital, factories, machinery, etc.) constitutes the fundamental base of class differences. In other words, those who own the means of production are able to use these to extract surplus value, i.e. additional economic resources. For Marx, class constitutes the basis of social inequality and he separates people, broadly, into two classes: owners and non-owners. The relations between those that own means of production, the capitalist or 'bourgeoisie' and those that do not own such property, the workers or 'proletariat', are exploitative as the latter are forced to sell their labour power to the capitalists.

The Black landowners of Mthatha as discussed by Redding, and the focus of this study, fall by virtue of their landholding, into a different class from those that do not possess any means of production but their labour. At the same time, they certainly cannot be equated with Marx's capitalist owner class. The significance of their ownership is that they have other means of survival besides selling their labour power. Marx's dichotomous class model – as has been argued by, for example, Wright (1997) – does not explain and locate theoretically, the continued existence of the middle class. Marx & Engels (2004[1848]) saw the middle class

merely as a transitional class that would eventually disappear, absorbed either into the capitalist or working class.

Weber (1968[1925]), on the other hand, while acknowledging the role of property in structuring class differences argues that property is not the sole basis for inequality. Weber argues that inequality is founded on a multiplicity of structural determinants involving in addition to property ownership, marketable skills, prestige, and political power. The central concept in Weber's theory is the market where property and skills are exchanged. The market determines the 'class situation' of individuals according to the marketability of (their) property and/or skills. Put differently, economic class is founded on ownership of property *and* employment relations. In other words, from a Weberian perspective those at the top of the social hierarchy typically owe their class position to large-scale ownership of land and capital (capitalists or 'bourgeoisie' in Marx's terminology, renters in Weber's); those at the bottom are non-owners who are required to sell their labour (working classes). However, in between the two we find the middle classes who obtain their class identity typically through occupation, in other words, education (marketable skills) and those that combine these with small-scale land ownership (probably a smaller group). Unlike Marx, Weber allows us to conceptualise the middle class or rather two types of the middle classes: (a) the land/occupation middle class (the focus of this study), and (b) the occupation-only middle class (possibly the 'new' middle class of the post-apartheid era).

The usefulness of traditional class analysis has increasingly come under attack especially since the end of the cold war (Pakulski & Waters 1996; Clark & Lipset 1991). However, these debates are not entirely new and as early as the 1950s, the importance of class for understanding social relations in the global north was questioned:

The term social class is by now useful in historical sociology, in comparative or folk sociology, but it is nearly valueless for the clarification of the data on wealth, power and social status in contemporary United States and much of Western society in general. (Nisbet 1959: 11, cited in Pakulski & Waters 1996)

Proponents of the anti-class thesis have pointed, among others, to the demise of state socialism in Eastern Europe, the seeming failure of the Marxist ideology to attract workers in industrialised countries and to influence their political action (socialist revolution). Increasing unemployment was seen as further evidence that class has become obsolete in the new era of late capitalism and globalisation. Instead it was suggested that late twentieth century stratification is mainly along the lines of race and gender (Pakulski & Waters 1996; see also Beck 2002). However, Scott (2002: 23) argues that class remains relevant as it affects relations of production and influences 'life chances and conditions of living'. Similarly, Wright (2001: 1) elaborates on the continued relevance of class as follows:

Class inequality and the institutions which reproduce that inequality are deeply implicated in all other forms of inequality and that, as a result, whatever else one must do as part of a radical egalitarian political project one must understand how class works.

Understanding how class works is important at a time when democracy and political liberation has not radically transformed economic and social inequalities for many in South Africa (NPC 2011; Ntsebeza 2011; Sitas 2010; Hart 2002). Contemporary capitalism has taken a 'transnational turn', in other words, it reaches beyond the borders of the nation state and has assumed a global character. This development has introduced changes in the relations between classes, that is, between labour and capital. It has introduced a new dimension in class relations, i.e. the separation between ownership of the means of production and their control (Ortner 2006; Bello 2003; Sivanandan 2003).

As a consequence, contemporary class theorists, such as Wright (1997) and Goldthorpe (1997), have focussed their attention on the labour market, that is, occupation as the main determinant of class position. They suggest that the changing structure of ownership (of corporate organisation) in the era of globalisation has made it possible to control the means of production without necessarily owning them. This has seen the formation of a middle class of highly skilled professionals and managers who are experts in their field and thus enjoy autonomy, better conditions of service with benefits and promotion opportunities. They exercise control and authority on behalf of the employers. Under these conditions, the middle class has emerged as one of the most dynamic classes of capitalism, growing in size, wealth and political influence since the end of the twentieth century (Scase 1992).

Influenced by a Weberian perspective, both Wright and Goldthorpe emphasise levels of educational qualifications, skills and authority within the work environment as the basis of class differences. Unlike Weber, however, they underplay the significance of property ownership in influencing life chances (Scott 2002).

A much noted study on the inequalities between Blacks and whites in the US, for example, has shown that a focus on occupations/income alone is not enough in overcoming the historical wealth disparities between the two racial groups (Oliver & Shapiro 2006). Oliver & Shapiro argue that wealth/ property is a more significant factor than income/occupation in structuring persistent social inequalities. In their analysis of income and wealth, income is defined as a flow of money over a fixed period, for example, money earned per hour, per month, per year, etc. (i.e. remuneration for work, social grants or pensions). Wealth, on the other hand, suggests ownership of assets which have been amassed over a long period, including those inherited across generations.

Oliver & Shapiro argue that wealth creates opportunities for a good standard of living and that its accumulation over time allows for intergenerational class continuities. In this way, command of wealth resources such as land, for

example, has a more overarching effect than income or education (occupations) in creating life chances. They suggest that when wealth is combined with income, it ‘can create the opportunity to secure the “good life” in whatever form is needed, that is, in ‘education, business, training (...) and so on’ (p. 2) Thus, unlike Weber who puts property and skills on an equal footing, Oliver and Shapiro’s approach is more Marxist in that it puts wealth at the centre, as the base that enables the acquisition of education and skills.

Blacks in South Africa were limited during colonialism and apartheid by a range of racialised state policies that systematically reduced their chances to accumulate wealth. These policies included, historically, restrictions in acquiring land, housing as well as trading opportunities in the metropolitan areas of the country as these were exclusively set aside for whites (Seekings & Nattrass 2006; Terreblanche 2002; see also Chapters 2, 3 and 4 for further discussion). The Bantustans were the only places where Blacks could own land. This makes them particularly interesting for research. Thus, investigating the continuities of the Ncambedlana Black middle class, which was not only defined by income/occupation but land ownership as well, articulates with these long-standing theoretical debates. Like Oliver & Shapiro, this study emphasises the encompassing role of property in structuring economic well-being.

Methodology

This book is based on an in-depth case study of Mthatha’s Black middle class. Mthatha is of interest to the study of the historical continuities and discontinuities of the Black middle class because it allows us to examine the continuing role of land in the definition of this middle class. As noted above, Redding (1993) has drawn attention to the development of Black landownership within this group as a result of the Mthatha² municipality’s decision to extend urban land rights to Africans in 1908. Redding argues that by virtue of working in the civil service of the colonial administration, mission-educated Africans could afford the high asking prices for agricultural and building plots on auction. The place where Blacks were allowed to buy property was Ncambedlana, an area at the north-eastern edge of the town (see Map 3.1).

Ncambedlana is also known as *lahla ngubo*, literally, ‘a place where you throw away your blanket’³. According to local folklore, on reaching Ncambedlana, people from the neighbouring ‘red’ villages would change from their traditional blankets into ‘western clothing’ on their way to the town of Mthatha. Thus,

² *Mthatha* was known as *Umtata* up until 2004, when it was renamed. In this text I will use the current name. However, when citing from interviews and other sources no corrections will be made.

³ The traditional blanket is an important piece of clothing for the so-called red people.

Ncambedlana engaged the popular imagination from early on as a ‘modern’ and urban space. The focus of this book is the history of Ncambedlana and its people. The first generation is naturally of particular interest: Who were those who arrived in Mthatha in the early twentieth century and how did they obtain land in the first place? However, as noted above, the time frame goes beyond Redding’s seminal study which concluded in the mid-twentieth century. The post-1950s continuation of this landed Black middle class is particularly significant considering apartheid policies after 1948 when the National Party sought to restrict Black property ownership in urban areas. It has thus been argued that property ownership ceased to be relevant to middle class livelihoods, and Black households became solely dependent on wages (e.g. Seekings & Natras 2006; see Chapter 2 for further discussion). The present case study shows this to be a hasty conclusion: Land ownership combined with salaried occupations continues to define Ncambedlana’s middle class livelihoods up to the present day. Questions that are discussed in this work include:

- What happened in the second half of the twentieth century when apartheid changed the political and economic climate in South Africa?
- Did members of this class manage to keep their land?
- How did they fare under the so-called ‘independence’ of the Bantustans?
- And did they maintain their hold on land post-1994?
- What did they do with their land in the past?
- And what do they do with their land today?

The argument throughout the book is that investment in land helped to spread the risk of historically low paying jobs in the public service as well as provided security from the vulnerability of losing employment. Thus, landownership helped these families transcend their reliance on salaries. At the same time, land commanded cultural and even spiritual meaning for most residents. Even those who no longer needed to raise extra funds through selling agricultural produce, continued to farm their land for their own consumption until well into the 1970s.

By providing an in-depth account of the history of the Ncambedlana middle class, this study contributes to debates about middle class formation and social change in post-colonial societies in general. This larger theoretical aspect is important in view of the hope modernisation theorists have pinned on the middle class as an important pillar of democracy (see for example Lipset 1959, 1968; Huntington 1992; Luebbert 1991).

Fieldwork for this study was conducted in Mthatha between the months of July and August 2010, for a period of five weeks. Prior to this, I had visited Mthatha in June 2010, identifying and locating individuals whose families had resided in Ncambedlana at least since the 1950s. During this set-up period, I also took the opportunity to interview some of the older members of this group who

were in their late 80s and early 90s. Some of them were direct descendants of the first Black-land owners in Ncambedlana identified by Redding (1987). Altogether twenty-eight individuals, 19 men and 10 women, were interviewed (see Appendix for details), and more than 30 hours of interview were recorded. All interviews were transcribed in full to facilitate analysis. Pauses in the interviews are indicated by two dots (...). The study design conforms to the ethical requirements of the University of Cape Town. All participants agreed to participate in the interview and were informed they may stop the interview at any time. Participants gave permission for their names to be used, and no pseudonyms are employed.

The methodology used in this study is rooted in oral history. Perks & Thomson (2006: ix) define oral history as ‘the interviewing of eye witness participants in the events of the past for the purposes of historical reconstruction’. The interview design broadly mirrors Alex Haley’s (1973) approach to researching the history of his family through conversational narratives. The study of oral traditions as a source for African historiography in particular, dates as far back as the 1960s.⁴

The ethos of oral history is about giving voice to those whose narratives are not part in the ‘official’ archive (see Deumert 2012). Similarly, Okihiro (1996: 209) defines oral history as ‘not only a tool or method for recovering history; it is also a theory of history which maintains that the common folk and the dispossessed have a history and that history must be written’. Oral history is thus a way of moving beyond the monolithic voice of the official archive and allows for multiple perspectives to become visible, perspectives which are often absent from the official written record. Thus, Deumert (2012) argues strongly for a ‘heteroglossic or multivocalic approach to historical writing’, that is, an approach which pays due attention to the voices of the sub-altern.

More importantly, the historian engages in direct conversation with the source and in this way the interviewee becomes both source and historian. In other words, authority is shared (Perks & Thompson 2006; Grele 1975) and the oral history interview is best understood as a co-construction of the historical record between the narrator and the researcher. Most importantly it is a project which is influenced by the ‘historical perspectives of both participants’ (see also Ryan 2009).

Oral history, however, is not without detractors (Kirby 2008; Perks & Thompson 2006; Burke 1991). Criticism directed at oral history centres around reliability of memory, subjectivity of source and interviewer. Concerns regarding the reliability of memory have been addressed by Lummis (1998: 273). He suggests

⁴ The publication of ‘Oral tradition’ (Vansina 1961) was the first to establish oral narratives as an important source for historical analysis.

that while there is no clear scientific evidence as to how information is stored and recorded by the brain, what has been observed in most cases of memory failure is that recent memories are the ones that get affected first, while earlier memories 'remain clear or even enhanced'. Furthermore, Hunter (1958, cited in Lummis 1998) suggests that when memory is stimulated to remember, this can lead to the 'recall of unreported parts of the original'. Accordingly, Lummis (1998: 274) distinguishes between memory and recall as follows:

By memory I mean the fund of information about the past that an informant will readily relate, often as polished stories or anecdotes, which suggests that they have been frequently retold or thought about; as such they are liable to be integrated with subsequent experience and values. By recall I mean responses to detailed interviewing which prompts dormant 'memories' that are less likely to be integrated into the individual's present value structure. This latter category includes a great deal of circumstantial evidence.

In the interviews conducted, the respondents' narratives (memories according to Lummis) flowed easily, suggesting that they were quite conversant with their histories. However, certain aspects were not so easily remembered and in these cases probing from the interviewer/author allowed them to recall events and episodes in their life histories. The criticism of subjectivity, on the other hand, could equally be levelled against archival sources, whose authors also had interests, attitudes, opinions and subjective experiences.

During the course of the interviews, I soon discovered that a second group – not covered by Redding's original study – had settled in Ncambedlana in the 1950s. These were mostly teachers, but also lawyers, doctors as well as entrepreneurs. The existence of this second group meant that there was a continuation of Redding's (1987, 1993) Black middle class well beyond the early twentieth century.

Most of the interviews were set up by phone and once I explained the purpose of the study people were willing to help. My impression of the respondents was that these were people who were proud of their background and achievements, and felt their story deserved to be told. To this end, I found them to be quite accommodating in availing themselves after a long day's work. And since most of them worked, the interviews would often extend far into the evenings. They also spared no effort in recommending others I should see, including furnishing me with their contact details. This was in stark contrast to remarks made by Murray Leibbrandt and others about the difficulties encountered in trying to interview in urban middle class communities (in the discussion following the presentation of a conference paper at the DPRU/TIPS Conference 2006, Johannesburg).

It is quite possible that the ease of access I encountered had to do with the fact that I spent a part of my childhood in the area. Even though I had not lived there for close to three decades, people knew my family and still looked at me as a 'son of the soil'. The sense of shared history allowed not only for ease of access

but also meant that it was relatively easy for me to establish rapport and a common understanding with the participants. Ryan (2009: 29) explains the bond between narrator and interviewer in oral history in terms of an ‘implicit, culturally understood meaning in words and gestures’. That is, the narrator tells his or her story on the assumption that it will be fully understood by the interviewer, an understanding which can be facilitated by the existence of a common background and, even partially, shared history.

My introduction of the study to the interviewees involved explaining why Ncambedlana was chosen, and why this was an important place in the urban history of South Africa. Respondents would slowly nod their heads in agreement and say ‘Yes, title deeds!’ This spontaneous response reflected their solid (emic) understanding of the processes under investigation in this study: Just like me (the researcher) they understood the importance of Ncambedlana as one of the first areas where Blacks could buy property and own land in an urban context during the colonial and apartheid eras.

The interviews with descendants of the original families were conducted to elicit not only the individual’s own life experiences (life story interviewing), but also their historical memories and family histories (family-tree interviewing; Perks & Thomson 2006). The role of land in the descendants’ families was explored: For example, how they use land today; the different means employed by their families to make ends meet across generations; how they used land in the past; how these uses continued or changed during the Bantustan and post-apartheid period.

Thus, information on land ownership and professions of parents and grandparents as well as the different ways in which land was and is used was collected to capture patterns of inter-generational continuity or discontinuity. In addition, respondents reflected on their own (and others) middle class identity, with particular attention to the role of land ownership in their imagination of class (Kikumura 1986; Alexander 2009). The changing understanding of what it meant to be middle-class then and now was a theme that occurred across interviews and it allowed participants to construct a picture of how they viewed the historical transformations of middle class identity and membership in their families.

Sometimes narrators would seek to underplay the importance of land-ownership. They would call it simply *babeziphilela* (literally ‘they were not dependent’), meaning they were not reliant on employment only. And they would emphasise their educational achievements with references such as ‘they/we were the first Black graduates’ or ‘they/we were Fort Hare graduates’. That is, they were proud and highly aware of their educational achievements and status. And in many ways education was the core of their middle-class identity. However, they were fully aware that this education was made possible by the proceeds

from family plots and livestock. They had a freedom other wage earners did not have, and this freedom was on the basis of having land.

Extensive quotes from interviews are included in the book. This has been done deliberately to allow the narrators' voices to 'speak' directly to the reader. The use of extended quotes from oral history interviews is a common practice in historiography 'from below' (Burke 1991). An exemplary case is Price's (1990) historical study of Suriname which tells the story of colonial possession and conflict through different voices and narratives: Saramakans, German Moravians, Dutch colonial administrators, and the author himself. Others, such as Cvetkovic (2003, cited in Ryan 2009), use large segments of oral interviews side by side to allow the participants to enter into a 'dialogue' with each other, before presenting historical analysis and interpretation.

One critique of what has otherwise been hailed as a masterpiece, Van Onselen's *The seed is mine* (1996), is that 'voices' other than that of the author are silent (Crais 1999). In the present study, the author was keenly aware of the marginalisation and silencing of subaltern voices by the meta-narratives of the official archive and thus, by using extended quotes from the interviewees, sought to redress the silencing of the voices from below. Although the interviewed group could be regarded as privileged when compared to others who owned neither property nor possessed equivalent educational qualifications, their subaltern status nevertheless derives from the historical racial oppression that affected all Blacks irrespective of class in South Africa.

Although the interviews were initiated in isiXhosa, the bilingualism of the participants allowed them to switch comfortably between isiXhosa and English (since the interviewer shared their bilingualism). All isiXhosa material has been translated by the author, English portions of interviews were kept in their original form (i.e. not corrected or edited). The translations were done in a way that tried to be fully representative of the original. The aim was to capture the meaning and essence of the interview as adequately as possible. The difficulties inherent in translating from one language to another are acknowledged.

In addition to oral history interviews, primary sources such as the various historical documents lodged at the Mthatha Archives Repository (MAR) and the Western Cape Archives and Record Service (WCAARS) were consulted. The Mthatha archives were badly catalogued and in a process of reorganisation at the time. However, staff members were knowledgeable of the relevant volumes and helpful in locating them.

The archival records helped in constructing a clearer picture of the history of Black landownership in Ncambedlana. It also allowed an understanding of government attitude towards the development of this Black middle class as well as the civic activism by the Ncambedlana residents to secure their rights and im-

prove their living conditions. In other words, methodological triangulation, the use of oral interviews together with primary sources (archive) and secondary sources (literature), allowed the researcher to form a comprehensive picture about the role of land and occupations in the growth of Ncambedlana's Black middle class.

Drawing on the archival record and secondary literature also helped to corroborate the conversational narratives. At other times the oral narratives filled in or 'corrected' written sources.⁵ Cross-checking oral and written sources against one another provided a deeper understanding of what had happened to this group during the apartheid and post-apartheid eras.

Significance of the study: Land, class and transformation

In a country like South Africa, characterised by Black poverty, urban homelessness and the slow pace of land reform, the study aims to bring a fresh view to current debates about the importance of land in the reproduction of livelihoods and social order more generally.

Modernisation theories have tended to dismiss the importance of land (Lewis 1954; Rostow 1960). In support of their view they cite the economic development of the global north from agriculture to industry, as well as the movement of people from the rural to the urban areas. In South Africa, this view finds currency in newspaper columns like the one by former *Sunday Times* editor, Mondli Makhanya (2010): 'Ordinary South Africans either do not want land or just do not have the capacity to work it. They want to go to the cities and work in the modern economy'.

This position is also supported by the Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE 2005), which argues that rural-urban migration and stagnation of agriculture in the former Bantustans undermine the government's attempt to address poverty issues through land redistribution. The CDE suggests that most rural poor want jobs and houses in urban areas, and are not interested in agriculture. The often repeated claims of the unproductive nature of agriculture in the former Bantustans, however, have been challenged by some. McAllister (1992) argues, for example, that maize yields in some parts of rural Kwazulu Natal (KZN) and the Transkei are higher than generally believed.⁶ Similarly, Chitonge and Ntsebeza's (2012) study of land reform and poverty in the Eastern Cape's Chris

⁵ Vansina (1985) has argued that oral history is not inferior to written sources and that where written sources exist, the two could be used to complement (cross-check) each other.

⁶ Ainslie (2002: 1) has argued that commonly cited data on livestock production in the Bantustans is unreliable since it is based on only a few empirical studies which were undertaken decades earlier. They are 'restated with depressing regularity' and without careful verification.

Hani District Municipality, suggest much higher agricultural production values than often reported by scholars.

In addition, the view that land necessarily means agriculture has been challenged as too narrow since it overlooks other uses of land such as, for example, mining and housing (Moyo 2007; Ntsebeza 2011). Similarly, this book will show that land remains an important material base even when used for non-agricultural purposes. This is demonstrated by the conversion of land from agricultural to residential uses by the Ncambedlana Black middle class in the democratic period. This has meant extra-economic means for this group, complementing their salaries from their occupations. Thus, land in whatever form is an important basis of wealth and socio-economic inequality. This book argues that in South Africa, historically, there also developed a land-owning Black middle class whose descendents are still part of South Africa's social fabric. The growth of the middle class is not merely of socio-economic importance (and central to social theory), but has often been regarded to be of direct political significance. As argued, for example, by Nie *et al.* (1969: 808):

Economic development alters the social structure of a nation. As nations become more economically developed, three major changes occur: (1) the relative size of the upper and middle classes becomes greater; (2) larger numbers of citizens are concentrated in the urban areas; and (3) the density and complexity of economic and secondary organisations increase. These social changes imply political changes. Greater proportions of the population find themselves in life situations which lead to increased political information, political awareness, sense of personal political efficacy, and other relevant attitudes. These attitude changes, in turn, lead to increases in political participation.

If South Africa's Black middle class grew not only quantitatively, but also shifted qualitatively from an owning class (land) to an (mainly) income/occupation based one, what implications will this have for questions of poverty and inequality as well as the structures of political participation in the new democracy?

The post-apartheid administration of the ANC – invoking the 'the power of global markets' (Hart 2002: 7) – has seen promises of redistributive social change being supplanted by neo-liberal policies of market-led economic growth and export orientation. What is the role of land and property-ownership in a neo-liberal regime? Can, for example, the landed Black middle class of the former Bantustans, be a motor for change in the rural areas, where agricultural production has been 'stagnating' (Redding 1993: 515)?

Or must the descendants of this middle class commit class suicide⁷ and become the core of an agrarian movement, something which is sorely lacking in South Africa (Hart 2002; Ntsebeza & Hall 2007); Fanon (2001[1961]) considers the latter unlikely and thus challenges Jordan (1997) and Netshitenze (1996). He argues that the middle class can never play a revolutionary role in transformation. The middle class, according to Fanon, is an essentially traditional and self-focussed class who would not sacrifice its own interests in favour of the well-being of the majority.

The case of the Ncambedlana Black middle class is important to these debates. Firstly, it addresses the basic theoretical question of the role of land and its interaction with education/occupation in reproducing the fundamental structure of this group as well as how that structure has changed over time. The focus on land in the definition of a Black middle class is missing from most studies of this kind in South Africa. The book also addresses the weaknesses in contemporary sociology which do not consider the rural-urban linkages of the Black middle class.

Secondly, the relevance of land to transformation has been framed in terms of poverty alleviation as well as in terms of commercial agriculture (see also CDE 2005, 2008; Ntsebeza 2007; Hall 2010). Serious questions have been posed on the ambiguities of the South African government's objective of land redistribution. For example, to develop a Black commercial farming class on the one side, as envisaged by the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme, and to distribute land to the poor on the other (DLA 2001; Hall 2007). On the basis of evidence which will be presented in this book, it can be argued that without access to capital, technology and markets, it is doubtful that the government's land redistribution programme can have the desired results.

Chapter outline

In addition to this introduction, the book contains four chapters and a conclusion. Chapter 2 provides a literature review of study of the Black middle class and its history in the South African context. The chapter discusses the historical development of the Black middle class from the mid-nineteenth century onwards and critiques the income/occupation-based view and definition of the middle class. The chapter argues that, historically, land is part and parcel of middle-class livelihood strategies, and therefore needs to be included in any conceptualisation of the middle class in the Bantustans.

⁷ From a Marxist perspective, Cabral (cited in Meisenhelder 1993) argued that social revolution and true independence ultimately depended on the post-independence middle class committing 'class suicide'. This would bring the forces of production under the control of the majority rather than state power benefiting a minority.

Chapter 3 traces the development of the Black middle class through the life history of one individual, Elisha Mda. He was among the first generation of Ncambedlana's Black middle class. The chapter argues that the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906 was critical to the formation of this first generation of land owners. In order to finance the building of a new dam the city sold land to both Black and white buyers. This allowed groups of Black professionals to gain a foothold on land ownership. The study argues – in line with Redding – that this enabled a Black middle class that combined occupation and land ownership to develop in Ncambedlana at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Chapter 4 discusses the second generation of Ncambedlana's Black middle class, born in the 1920s and 1930s. Unlike the first generation, members of the second generation used the land not only for farming, but also began to live in the area. The chapter shows how Ncambedlana developed into a neighbourhood and class-based community, united by shared values – education, hard work, Christianity – from the 1950s onwards. In particular, the role of women in the reproduction of this class is discussed. The chapter provides evidence of the continuation of the Ncambedlana Black middle class beyond the 1950s.

Chapter 5 discusses the decline of agriculture and the conversion of land to residential usages in Ncambedlana. Financial, ecological as well as ideological/attitudinal reasons for the decline are presented. The chapter shows that agricultural decline did not mean discontinuities in terms of land ownership within this class. It argues that agricultural decline coincided with a generational shift (second to a third generation). The chapter shows how land conversion from agriculture to residential took place in response to new political and economic opportunities.

Chapter 6 presents the key findings of the study. The chapter also highlights the contribution of the study of the Ncambedlana Black middle class to current debates about the middle class and the land question, and identifies areas for future research.

The study of the Black middle class in South Africa

Although the term 'middle class' originally meant persons of independent means such as shopkeepers, professionals and small landowners, modern usage has broadened the meaning of the term to include managerial and executive workers and the army of white collar workers. For the distinction between classes is no longer one based purely on one's role in the economic life, but on whether there is an accepted identity of interests in the members of a given class.

Nimrod Mkele, *The Black middle class* (1961)

Introduction

This chapter argues that in order to understand the question of the Black middle class, one must take into account the historical perspective. This also means that one should analyse the role of land in the formation of this class. The widespread conversion of Africans to wage labourers after the discovery of minerals in the nineteenth century, and especially, after the promulgation of the Natives Land Act of 1913, has led to many scholars neglecting the persistence of land ownership among certain sections of African society.

Yet, small pockets of Black land ownership continued. For example, in the nineteenth century Cape Colony, where the combination of education and land-ownership qualified some Blacks to be on the voters roll, in what was known as the qualified franchise (Ntsebeza 2006; Peires 1992; Jordan 1984). In the reserves, later called Bantustans or homelands, the same resilience of land ownership has been recorded (see, for example, Redding 1993 and Murray 1992). Redding, in particular, on whose work the current study is based, argues that a Black middle class that combined occupation and land developed, indeed thrived, in the Mthatha municipality of the former Transkei Bantustan between 1908 and 1950.

Before focussing on the case study, it is worth discussing the broader historical context of middle class formation in South Africa. The chapter is divided into four sections followed by a short conclusion. The first section traces the historical development of the Black middle class up to the 1913 Natives Land Act. The next section discusses processes of proletarianisation and urbanisation. The majority of studies dealing with these issues focus on the period leading up to the rise of apartheid and up to the 1960s. This is followed by a third section which looks at the period roughly between 1970 and the end of apartheid in 1994. In this section the main focus is on understanding academic conceptualisations of the Black middle class during the era of ‘high apartheid’ (1972-1984, cf. Hyslop 2005), and in contexts of advanced capitalist production. The last section looks at descriptions and analyses of the Black middle class in the former Transkei Bantustan, that is, the area where the case study is located. The conclusion summarises the main argument and briefly looks at post-apartheid conceptions of the middle class. Throughout, the focus of the discussion will be on changing definitions of the middle class, with particular attention to the role attributed to land.

The growth of a Black middle class: Colonialism, mission education and capitalism

Contact with the British colonial empire and its political as well as cultural institutions led to far-reaching social changes in indigenous African societies (Jordan 1984). Traditionally, Nguni and Sotho social formations were organised according to kinship ties and village communities (Mafeje 2003; Evans 1997; Crais 1992). Land and cattle played a central role in socio-economic as well as political life (Crais 1992). While cattle reflected individual ownership and wealth, access to land was not on the basis of individual private property, as in Europe and Asia, but was distributed to members of a village by the chief. Individual access to land was based on a complex combination of factors. These included: Prior settlement, heredity, kinship structures such as clan affiliation, as well as usufruct rights – the legal right to enjoy or use another’s property or produce – based on ‘social labour’ (Mafeje 2003; Evans 1997). That is, neighbours would pool their resources, e.g. oxen and ploughs, under the principle of *ilima*, that is, work parties that worked the fields in rotation (McAlister 2004; Evans 1997). This shows that land was not limited to pasture, but extended to cultivation. In addition, it allowed for fixed homestead settlement. This was called *umzi* and constituted the central unit of production and consumption. Scharpera & Goodwin (1937: 157) summarise the system as follows, and emphasise the fact that land was not ‘owned’ in the Western sense and could thus not be sold for material gain:

Every household-head has an exclusive right to land for building his home and for cultivation (...) Once a man has taken up or been granted land, it remains in his possession as long

as he lives there. He has a prescriptive right over his arable land, whether it is still uncleared, being cultivated, or lying fallow (...) no one can cultivate it without his permission, and on his death it is usually inherited by his children. He also has the right, subject to the approval of his headman, to give away part of it to a relative or friend, or to lend it to someone else. But he can never sell it or dispose of it in any other way in return for material consideration.

Although the traditional system of land tenure was resilient and continues to the present day, other aspects of social organisation were fundamentally transformed. Among the cultural institutions of colonialism, the mission stations were perhaps the most important ones. The mission stations introduced new technologies, such as the mechanical plough, and established stores that sold clothing and agricultural implements. The mission stations, Bundy (1988) argues, tied African societies firmly into the British colonial economy. Missionary publications such as the *Kaffir Express* encouraged missionaries to increase their efforts to 'effect a social revolution'. Small differences were indicative of larger social changes. Thus, encouraging people to build square houses (rather than the traditional *ron-davel*) would lay the foundations for a consumerist lifestyle, deeply embedded in the logic of capitalism and beneficial to the colonial economy. The *Kaffir Express* spelled this out in these terms:

With a proper house, then comes a table, then chairs, a clean cloth, paper or whitewash for the walls, wife and daughters dressed in calico prints, and so forth (...) The church going Kaffirs purchase three times as much clothing, groceries, and other articles in the shops as the red Kaffirs¹; but with a change in their habitations the existing native trade would soon be doubled. (Cited in Bundy 1988: 37)

The missionaries' influence thus went beyond religion: They were also the torch-bearers of capitalist social and economic norms. Mission stations were not only centres of Christianity and conversion, but also of commercial activity and trade, as well as Western education (see Hodgson 1997; Comaroff & Comaroff 1991).

The acquisition of missionary education and new agricultural techniques and technologies were central to the formation of a new, post-traditional class based on private landownership (Bundy 1988; Williams 1978). Missionary educational institutions, such as Lovedale College, came to play a crucial role in the process of social differentiation (Duncan 2003; Bundy 1988; Rich 1987). Christian peasants were trained in new agricultural techniques by the missionaries, and literacy/numeracy skills facilitated record-keeping and economic transactions. Bundy (1988: 42) suggests that title deeds to about 70,000 acres of land had been issued to mission stations by the Cape colonial government by 1848. This meant that missionaries now had the power to grant land access and favour those who were willing to convert. The profits these early converts obtained from agriculture were not only re-invested in livestock and crops, but also in education. As a re-

¹ See Chapter 1 for a brief discussion of school and red people.

sult the descendants of the first generation of Christian peasants became equipped with marketable skills that could be exchanged in the emerging capitalist labour market. These allowed them to access economic resources that surpassed those gained from unskilled occupations. Thus, a Black middle class based on educational skills and located mainly in clerical, teaching, priesthood and language interpreting occupations emerged in mid-nineteenth century (Peires 1989; Bundy 1988). Their salaries allowed them to accumulate cash resources which they used to buy land. Peires (1989: 328-329) argues that when the first land market opened in British Kaffraria in the 1850s, few Africans could afford to buy land, often at more exorbitant prices than those offered to whites. Even though they were few in numbers, the holding of land under freehold title broke with traditional forms of land tenure and allowed middle class formation on the basis of private land ownership (often combined with education).

The promotion of a 'Christianised' mission educated and land-owning class of Africans as an alternate centre of moral authority was aimed, first and foremost, at curbing the influence of the patriotic chiefs who had resisted colonialism (see Ntsebeza & Hall 2007; Crais 1992; Peires 1989; Jordan 1984). Once people were no longer depended on the 'troublesome' chiefs for access to land, their opposition to colonialism would be weakened. Through the availability of free-hold title for Africans, the chiefs were removed from the source of their great power, land allocation. This, in turn, opened the way for the creation of common interests between former adversaries, mission-educated Africans and the colonial empire. Holding the land in freehold as opposed to communal tenure was in line with the colonial objective of transforming traditional society according to capitalist social relations and western cultural norms. Jordan (1984) argues that the very nature of the Cape franchise which gave voting rights to Blacks, who fulfilled certain educational and property requirements, created a form of racially mixed agrarian capitalism. Many successful Black convert farmers who came to own sizeable farms that produced grain, wool, cattle and other cash crops for the market, qualified to be on the voters roll (see Giliomee & Mbenga 2007; Ntsebeza 2006; Jordan 1984).

However, with the discovery of minerals, and the transition from an agrarian to an industrial-based capitalism, colonial strategy changed with respect to Black landownership (Ntsebeza & Hall 2007; Legassick 1975[1971]; Wolpe 1972). While previously the Cape colonial government had encouraged the development of a landed Black farming class, it now sought to free labour from land thereby compelling Africans into wage labour on the mines (also Webster 1978). The final wars of dispossession unfolded over the entire country in the late nineteenth century. Feinstein (2005) argues that the needs of a colonial, industrializing economy could no longer afford the existence of independent African kingdoms.

For example, the development of the rail network linking the Transvaal and Natal with the Cape diamond mines made it necessary to destroy the *baPedi* kingdom. Across the country, Black labour was needed on farms and for public works projects, especially the development of the East London port and the rail link to the mining towns of Kimberley and Johannesburg (Gon 1982). These were followed by British attempts to assert their authority over the Boer republics in what became known as the South African War of 1899-1902.

Following the destruction of native pre-colonial independence, the British imperialist and then Prime Minister of the Cape, Cecil John Rhodes, sought to introduce a system of government that would not only marginalise and reduce the power of chiefs but would also effectively remove Africans from the common voters' roll in the Cape. The introduction of the Glen Grey Act in 1894 was part of an array of measures designed to free land and labour for colonial exploitation (Ntsebeza & Hall 2007; Bundy 1988; Webster 1978).

The Glen Grey Act's measures included a limitation on land accumulation by Blacks to no more than five morgen (Hendricks & Ntsebeza 1999). The main objective of the Act was the creation of a reservoir of cheap Black labour. With severely limited access to land, the vast majority of Africans would have no option but to work on the mines and white commercial farms. In this way, the Act inserted the modality of race into South Africa's capitalism and paved the way for subsequent racial legislation. It also continued the gradual destruction of Black farmers that had begun in the 1870s via rural taxes and other forms of restrictive legislation (see for example Peires 1989).

The Glen Grey Act also created separate areas for Blacks known as 'reserves' (Hendricks & Ntsebeza 1999). The Transkei territories comprising of Fingoland, Gcalekaland and Mpondoland became one such reserve. These areas were to be administered by a so-called 'council system' which had at its head a white magistrate and a lower hierarchy of government-appointed Black district counsellors, or headmen (Southall 1982: 89). The intention was to give Blacks the illusion that they were governing themselves, thus breaking resistance against colonial rule. The destroyed structures of traditional governance were resuscitated. However, the patriotic chiefs who had resisted colonial land grab were replaced by lackeys of the colonial government (Molteno 1977).

By creating a system of pseudo self-governance in the reserves, the Act also aimed to steer Blacks away from the Cape franchise. The Black land-owning middle class, in particular, had to be discouraged from thinking they could ever have equality with whites. Motivating for a racially segregated system of governance, Cecil John Rhodes put it this way:

They are a very clever people, fond of argument and debate, so we must give them something to occupy their minds, for if we don't, within a hundred years, nay, I say fifty, they will be debating with us in these chambers. (Ntantala 1992: 39)

Thus, the Glen Grey Act laid the foundation for the Bantustan strategy that was to be introduced by the apartheid regime in the 1950s. The provisions of the Glen Grey Act later formed the core of the Natives Land Act of 1913.

The Land Act of 1913 is generally regarded as the major legislation responsible for the mass proletarianisation of Africans. The writer Bessie Head (1995: ix) remarks on the effects of the 1913 Act as follows:

It is possible that no other legislation has so deeply affected the lives of Black people in South Africa as the Natives' Land Act of 1913. It created overnight a floating landless proletariat whose labour could be used and manipulated at will, and ensured that ownership of the land had finally and securely passed into the hands of the ruling white race. On it rest the pass laws, the migratory labour system, influx control and a thousand other evils which affect the lives of Black people in South Africa today.

Under the 1913 Land Act, Blacks were forbidden from accessing and owning land outside of the reserves. Black sharecroppers and labour tenants were the most affected. They had worked the land as independent producers in areas now reserved for white occupation only. They were forcefully removed to the reserves which had been created by the Glen Grey Act, and amounted to only around seven percent of South Africa's land surface (Bundy 1988; Mafeje 1988; Platjje 1995[1912]).²

In sum, the combination of the wars of dispossession in the late nineteenth century and the legislative measures adopted at the turn of the twentieth century are believed to have resulted in widespread African proletarianisation (Feinstein 2005; Bundy 1988; Peires 1989). However, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, the landed Black middle class which had emerged at the mission stations in the mid-nineteenth century was not entirely destroyed; even though some had lost their lands in those areas which were now designated 'white', they reinvented themselves in the reserves.

The Black middle class, 1940s-1960s: Focus on urbanisation

With the exception of a few studies (e.g. Redding 1993; Cobley 1990), very little has been written on the subject of the Black middle class in the years between 1913 and the dawn of apartheid in the late 1940s. Much scholarly effort regarding this period seems to have focused on the emerging Black working class. Seekings & Nattrass (2006), for example, argue that before 1948 Blacks were drawn into the industrializing economy through migrant labour. However, they still maintained a hold on land and livestock in the reserves and thus, resisted total proletarianisation.

² The total area of the reserves was later consolidated to 13 percent through the Native Trust and Land Act of 1936 (Hendricks 1995; Lapping 1986).

1948 is the year in which the National Party came to power. The National Party government set about to perfect previous policies founded on race (Molteno 1977; Sizwe 1979).³ At the centre of the apartheid ideology of the National Party government was the Bantustan strategy which aimed at retribalizing Africans, thus removing them from a common political framework within South Africa. Only Blacks who had Section 10 rights under the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act of 1945 qualified for urban residence (Seekings & Nattrass 2006). According to Section 10, urban residence was possible if one had been employed for a certain length of time, or was born in the city.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, scholarly attention to social stratification focused primarily on the urban environment. Moreover, land begins to disappear from local studies of the Black middle class, as most writers focus on the transformation from an agrarian to an industrialised economy. Research on the Black middle class during those years was informed by anthropological perspectives and methodologies. Of particular interest were issues of self-identification and other-identification, and the aim was to articulate an emic perspective of how Black urban residents experienced and described social stratification. Important examples of this anthropologically-informed tradition are: (a) the study of Black urbanisation in East London (Mayer 1961; Pauw 1963), (b) Wilson & Mafeje's (1963) study of social stratification in Langa, and (c) Brandel-Syrier's (1971) study of Reeftown. Kuper's (1965) study of Durban's Black middle class followed a similar approach, however, his theoretical orientation is more sociological (Seekings 2009).

From the perspective of sociology and social theory, all these studies reflect a broadly Weberian tradition. Seekings (2009) suggests that Weberian and quasi-Weberian approaches to the study of the Black middle class in South Africa took their cue from studies of the American South that examined the relationship between race and class. These studies show a tendency implicit in Weber's writings, namely, 'to elide class and status' (Seekings 2009: 868). The work of Frazier, in particular, influenced many of these studies. Frazier (1957) argued that because of their marginalisation in American society, the African American middle class was indeed obsessed with status. They engaged in conspicuous consumption and put an emphasis on 'appropriate' and 'respectable' behaviour to distinguish themselves from others of a lower class.

Wilson & Mafeje's (1963) ethnography of Langa, a township in Cape Town, evokes a similar discourse. They suggest that social stratification and group formation, because of marginalisation from white society, was based mainly on status distinctions. They elaborate as follows:

³ No Sizwe was the *nom de guerre* for Neville Alexander.

There is a lively consciousness of differentiation within the African group and a struggle to achieve recognition as 'civilised' as opposed to 'barbarian', partly because so many whites do not accept any Africans as civilised. (p. 142)

Langa's middle class is presented as an illustration of the evolving modernisation of urban-based Blacks, that is, the adoption of behaviour in line with the values of Christianity and 'western' civilisation. Wilson & Mafeje (1963: 26-27; see also 145) continue:

They pride themselves on being respectably dressed, and gentle and polite in their manner (...) English is used in many situations among themselves (...) Those with highest status in Langa are those who have absorbed most of Western culture (...) the reference group whom they seek to resemble is the white middle class.

Similarly to Frazier's African American middle class, education is the main marker of distinction in Langa (Wilson & Mafeje 1963). Apartheid policies which confined all Blacks to the townships meant that the middle class lived 'cheek by jowl' with the working class. In this context, status differences assumed great importance as affluence, based on occupations, allowed 'distinctive styles of life' and various forms of conspicuous consumption. These were expressed, typically, by living in the 'right' part of the township, the clothing one wore, preferred cosmetics – such as the use of skin lightening facial creams and hair straightening – the ownership of a car, the type of furniture one bought and a general embrace of the many trappings of 'western civilisation'.

The Langa middle class is identified as the *ooscuse me*, named such, somewhat derogatorily, because of their haughty ways and their preference for the use of English. In addition to attitudes, behaviour and linguistic preference, this group can be defined, as noted above, according to education and occupation. It consists of 'those in professional jobs' such as teachers, lawyers, doctors, clergymen, nurses as well as routine white collar employees (Wilson & Mafeje 1963: 27). In other words, professions which presuppose some degree of formal education. Marriages within this middle class tended to be endogamous, transcended tribal affiliation, were countrywide and even extended across the continent (Jabavu 1961; Matthews 1995).

Langa's middle class practices forms of social closure and even relatives, who do not qualify in terms of status, can be 'dropped' (Wilson & Mafeje 1963: 85). The Langa middle class consistently articulates notions of what constitutes appropriate behaviour and, to distinguish themselves from others, would remark: 'Educated people don't do that' (p. 145). Church affiliation also played a role in differentiating this middle class from the working class, both Cape-born and rural-born. The *ooscuse me* typically belonged to established churches, mainly the Anglican church, whereas the others frequented Black Independent churches, or practiced traditional religion. These practices were frowned upon by the middle class. Importantly, traditional forms of differentiation, such as gender and age,

are giving way to new class-based status differences even in rural settings: '[A]t country weddings the middle class will be invited to sit down at table, and Given rather different food from the crowd of villagers feasting on meat outside' (Wilson & Mafeje 1963: 141).

Wilson & Mafeje, however, argue that the development of this middle class was constrained by low quality education (when compared to the white middle class) and, especially property ownership, which was severely restricted for Africans in the urban environment. Thus, unlike the rural-born migrants who still had access to land back home, Wilson and Mafeje portray a middle class that was completely urbanised with no links to land and the countryside. Although subsequently Mafeje (1975) offered a more analytical re-formulation of the material, the Langa study is mainly descriptive, providing a wealth of ethnographic detail with limited theoretical engagement (see Sharp 2008 for an insightful discussion). Overall, Wilson & Mafeje argue that race is the main limiting factor to class advancement. The racist policies of the National Party flattened class distinctions and relegated all Blacks to an inferior caste.

In the sociological study of the Black middle class of Durban, Kuper (1965) offers a similar class-caste analysis. Like Wilson & Mafeje, Kuper defines the middle class in terms of occupation and includes professionals and clerks, but also successful shopkeepers. Although acknowledging intra-class distinctions in Black society, Kuper argues that even for those who managed to achieve educational success, upward mobility was limited because of the lack of property ownership.

Kuper discusses status on two levels: Firstly at the level of race, that is, apartheid social divisions are analysed as resembling a fixed caste-like system, involving a higher caste composed of whites and a lower one of Blacks. Within this paradigm all Blacks are consigned to the same caste as neither 'education' nor 'wealth' can free them 'from the indelible racial status'. He concludes: 'Proletariat might seem more appropriate for all Blacks' (Kuper 1965: 5).

Secondly, there existed also class-based status distinctions within Black society (middle class vs. working class). In other words, middle class position, defined by education, occupation and income, afforded a high degree of respectability, as well as better opportunities for socio-economic advancement than working class location. Kuper suggests that although race was the overarching mechanism affecting life chances, the life chances of the Black middle class were significantly improved due to education, he writes: 'To be born of educated parents enhances life chances among Africans as it does in the wider South African society' (Kuper 1965: 7).

In sum, Kuper argues that class was less significant than race in determining life chances in the South African context. While this analysis is powerful, it also

simplifies the complexities and layered nature of social stratification in a given historical context. In other words, the internal dynamics of Black societies are back-grounded and described as if they possess no agency of their own, apart from their position within the racially determined structure. The nature of intra-class differences and the various forms of historically conditioned capital, such as continuities of intergenerational ownership of wealth and education, are not analysed outside of the apparent racial commonalities.

Others, however, have cast their gaze beyond status distinctions and the urban environment. Particularly noteworthy in this context is Brandel-Syrier's (1971) *Reeftown Elite* (see also Nyquist 1983). As in Langa and Durban, members of the *Reeftown* middle class – a pseudonym for a Black township in the Gauteng Province – were educated and held positions such as school principals, school teachers, doctors, nurses, clerks, employed and self-employed professionals, ministers of religion, salesmen, and shopkeepers.

The overarching significance of Brandel Syrier's work, however, lies in her clear articulation of the urban-rural linkages of the Black middle class. She demonstrates that the success of this middle class in the urban environment of *Reeftown* was made possible not only by their education but also by the persistence of rural landownership. She describes the rural background of this urban elite as follows:

All but one of the fathers had been born and brought up in the country, and almost all had begun their lives as farmers. Although quite a number had combined this farming with other remunerative activities, farming had remained the main occupation of half of them. But even those whose main occupational emphasis had shifted to any one of the newly clerical or professional occupations did not for this reason relinquish their farms entirely. Town was a temporary stage; their investments were land, their values were counted in terms of head of cattle. Most of them even those who came to settle in town, continued to look to country as their only security, their main purpose and their ultimate destination; as the proper place for their children to be reared and for themselves to die. (p. 76)

Brandel-Syrier (1971) shows that although the Black middle class might appear 'landless' in urban contexts, they (or their close family) often have land in the Bantustans (where they could also hold title deeds). Land and farming remained central even after they moved to town. The *Reeftown* middle class was thus internally differentiated not only according to education, but also according to property ownership.

Importantly, Brandel-Syrier (1971: 69) argues that occupational income alone was not a true reflection of earnings for this middle class. They also earned rents in cash or stock payments from freehold land in the Bantustans. Land thus contributed to income and played a role in affording urban residents social distinction through consumption and education, the latter of which also required a financial investment. Thus, Brandel-Syrier (1971: 67) argues that while education alone could be an important marker of status, 'wealth with education' was held in

even higher esteem. In this way she demonstrates that while class and status tend to be closely linked, prestige and honour accorded is a function of an individual's overall economic position. And the latter is more than education/occupation/income alone: In order to grasp the economic aspect one needs to move beyond income and consider persistent material possessions such as land.

In similar fashion to Wilson & Mafeje's (1963) Langa middle class, norms of 'appropriate' behaviour also played an important role in *Reeftown*. For example, even if one qualified in terms of wealth and education to be included in 'elite' society, heavy drinking, an unkempt house and personal appearance, as well as the company one kept, could result in status demotion (Brandel-Syrier 1971: 107). Thus, education and wealth without 'proper' behaviour did not accord high status in *Reeftown*. What this shows is that class also transcends the merely economic; it always entails an embodiment of social attitudes and behaviour.

The Black middle class in urban South Africa during high apartheid

From the 1970s onwards scholarly attention became focused on the relationship between economic growth and racial inequality. Economic growth in the 1960s, coupled with changes within apartheid and capitalist production processes, had seen an increase in the numbers of the urban, occupationally-based Black middle class (Seekings & Nattrass 2006; Crankshaw 1997; Charney 1988; Wolpe 1977). The increasing size of this class was a result of the opening up of new occupational opportunities in the manufacturing and service sectors. The growth of this class in a context of heightened political repression and resistance also raised questions about class unity – or dis-unity – in the struggle against apartheid (see Nzimande 1990; Wolpe 1988; Nolutshungu 1982; Southall 1982).

These questions also provoked intense debates on the relation between capitalism and apartheid (see for example Lipton 1976, 1979; Nattrass 1977; Legassick & Innes 1977; Davis 1979). However, with respect to the analysis of the Black middle class, these debates narrowly focused on industry in the urban environment and not on land and the rural areas (see also Ntsebeza 2006). The few exceptions that paid attention to the question of the Black middle class in the rural areas focused on the political dimensions of this class, their contribution – or lack of contribution – to the struggle. In other words, even in the Bantustan contexts where land ownership was possible, land is largely missing from a conceptualisation of this class.

The studies of the Black middle class during this period can be divided into two groups:

- (a) Those that focused their attention on the development of urban stratification as a result of changes within apartheid and capitalist production processes (e.g. Seekings & Nattrass 2006; Crankshaw 1997), and
- (b) Those that considered the Black middle class from a political perspective (e.g. Nzimande 1990; Wolpe 1988; Nolutshungu 1982; Southall 1982).

The studies of the urban Black middle class during this period – in contrast to the earlier studies that had focussed on status differences and were situated within an ethnographic framework – prioritised exchange relations as the determining factor influencing class. According to this view, only when individuals exchange goods and services in the market can they be members of a class: ‘The kind of chance in the market is the decisive moment which presents a common condition for the individual’s fate’ (Miller 1963: 44-45). Thus, Crankshaw (1997: 20, 176) focuses on occupational class and defines the Black middle class as those belonging to management, professional, semi-professional and routine white collar occupations.

Crankshaw’s middle-class occupational categories are broadly informed by Goldthorpe’s (1997) work. Crankshaw’s (1997: 9-10) classification takes into account: (a) the requisite education and training for different occupations, (b) the degree of authority, and (c) the salary and wages involved. He argues, on the basis of the above criteria, for the separation of managers, professionals and semi-professionals whom, he claims, are often grouped into a single category. According to Crankshaw, semi-professionals, such as teachers, nurses and technicians, cannot be compared to managers and professionals as they are poorly paid and their chances for promotion are limited. Furthermore, the required educational qualifications for these occupations vary between a university degree for professionals (such as lawyers, doctors, and engineers) and a diploma for most semi-professionals. The management category, on the other hand, entails a leadership and command function, a role which Crankshaw suggests, ‘is influenced by the racial hierarchy of South African society at large’ (p. 9). Routine white-collar occupations are also distinguished by level of certification. Crankshaw thus separates occupations that require *post-school* accreditation, in the form of diplomas or university degrees, from the general clerical and sales work that require either a junior or matric certificate.

Overall Crankshaw’s scheme is useful and important as it draws attention to the complex internal stratification of the middle class in terms of education and income. However, the term ‘semi-professional’ is unfortunate as it carries with it connotations of an occupational group that is only half-trained and half-competent. To group nurses and teachers – who require specific professional training and undergo stringent processes of professional accreditation – under the label ‘semi-professional’ is misleading. For the sake of terminological consis-

tency Crankshaw's labels will be applied in this work, however, the 'semi-professional' will be used throughout with inverted commas to indicate its problematic nature.

Crankshaw (1997) locates the growth of this middle class within a context of changing apartheid policies and capitalist production processes. He argues that the introduction of machinery and technology in the labour process affected occupational categories and their racial structuring. As unskilled manual labour was largely taken over by machines, Black workers moved into semi-skilled or skilled manual labour and whites moved into clerical and supervisory occupations.

In addition, the economic boom of the 1960s led to a shortage of skills. Whites who had enjoyed preferential job reservation could no longer supply all the skills required by the labour market and employers turned to Black labour to fill the gaps, especially in the categories of routine white collar and supervision work. This caused job reservation to erode but the colour bar 'floated' upwards as whites moved up the occupational hierarchy and to higher incomes (Crankshaw 1997: 74-75, 117). The growing economy required ever more people with qualifications and skills. The fact that social services, including education, were segregated under apartheid also meant that new work opportunities arose as these sectors increased in size to meet demand. Thus, for example, more Black teachers had to be employed to train the growing number of urban Blacks (*Ibid.*: 14, 23, 117).

Crankshaw (1997) argues that the expansion of the Black middle class led to increased social stratification and inequality among Blacks by creating significant wage gaps (also Seekings & Natrass 2006). This resulted in visible social differentiation demonstrated, for example, by residential patterns which saw the formation of well-defined middle class areas in the Black townships as well as movement by some into white suburbs from the late 1980s (Crankshaw 1997: 119). However, Crankshaw maintains that this occupational advancement of Blacks had not fundamentally changed the racial division of labour as the professional and managerial categories remained largely white.

Crankshaw's approach is refreshing in that it looks at differences at the workplace and labour market. However, while he notes the importance of education in accessing occupations, the role of various forms of property in enabling education is not conceptualised. Thus, by defining the Black middle class according to occupation only, Crankshaw overlooks the historical and mutually reinforcing relationship between land and education in the evolution of the Black middle class. The importance of land for class reproduction was demonstrated – as noted above and in Chapter 1 – by Brandel Syrier (1971) for the mid-twentieth century,

by Murray (1992) for the nineteenth century, and by Redding (1993) for the early twentieth century.

Like Crankshaw, Seekings & Natrass' (2006) work is situated within the income/occupation thesis of class as discussed in Chapter 1, that is, they operationalise class in terms occupation and income. They argue that the effects of public policy from the 1960s onwards, such as urban welfare schemes and spending on education, have created a privileged urban workforce and a marginal rural population. They suggest that urban Black households lost their hold on land during this period and thus came to depend 'entirely, rather than primarily' on wages (p. 90). At the same time, the majority of Black South Africans were prohibited from settlement in urban areas and remained 'hidden' in the Bantustans, where they were confined to low pay and subsistence farming in the rural agricultural sector.

However, although apartheid legislation aimed to keep Blacks out of the urban areas, it also granted permanent urban residence to about five to six million Blacks by 1980 (Simkins 1982b, cited in Seekings & Natrass 2006). These 'legalised' urban Blacks had access to municipal housing and, social services. Education and urbanisation affected middle class continuities as children found new and better paying jobs than their parents. Thus, Seekings & Natrass argue that besides the racial division of labour, income inequalities were conditioned among other things, by geographic location (i.e. rural or urban based).

Unlike Crankshaw, however, Seekings & Natrass (2006) include some of those belonging to what they call the 'core working class' as part of the middle class. Their reason for the inclusion of the core working class into the middle class is that 'skilled manual workers enjoy a degree of economic power comparable to that of supervisory and routine non-manual employees' (Seekings & Natrass 2006: 247-248). In other words, according to their analysis, the urban working class was 'really the middle class' at the end of apartheid (p. 309). They explain their position as follows:

Because of unemployment and the absence of small holder agriculture, the classes in the middle of the social structure were actually the working classes, and the so called middle classes were actually a very privileged elite. (p. 269)

This privileged elite should be called 'upper class': They enjoyed significantly higher incomes as well as benefits, such as health insurance, and can be compared to the professional class as discussed by Crankshaw. Thus, following Seekings & Natrass' analysis, there was a small urban Black upper class and a larger urban middle class which included Crankshaw's 'semi-professionals' and routine-white-collar as well as the skilled urban working class.

While Seekings & Natrass (2006) include assets such as land and businesses in their class scheme, their operationalisation of wealth in terms of income only misses an important aspect of property ownership. Thus, ownership of land is

dismissed as insignificant to incomes, except for the white commercial farmers (pp. 220-221). However, the real value of wealth assets lies in the command over future resources that it gives the owner (see Oliver & Shapiro 2006, as discussed in Chapter 1). For example, land and livestock can be mobilised to raise cash or securities when needed. Thus, a person who owns material resources is qualitatively differentiated from one who owns no property.

The Black middle class in the Bantustans

Analyses of the Black middle class in the Bantustans have focused on the role of the state in the creation of this class and thus its political loyalties. The consolidation of the Bantustan strategy in the 1970s saw the Transkei Bantustan granted so-called 'independence' in 1976. Three more Bantustans followed the 'independence' route namely, Bophuthatswana in 1977, Venda in 1979, and the Ciskei in 1981.

It has been argued that the state plays an important role in the creation and growth of the middle class in the Global South, that is, late-developer and post-colonial states (see Gerschenkron 1962; Brown & Jones 1995; Bell 1998, Jones 1998). In the South African context, Marxist analyses have suggested that with the intensified resistance to apartheid during the 1970s, the white ruling classes began to look for allies among the Black population (Nzimande 1990; Wolpe 1988; Southall 1982). This meant, among other things, the promotion of a commercial and trading fraction of the Black middle class, both in the urban areas of the republic (as discussed above by Seekings & Nattrass 2006) and in the newly 'independent' Bantustans.

In the former Transkei Bantustan, where this case study is located, the following fractions of the Black middle class were identified by Southall (1982; also Josana 1989):

- (a) At the top was the *'bourgeoisie'* or *governing class* of elected and appointed officials. The elected officials were those politicians who gained seats, through an election, to the Transkei legislative assembly. The appointed officials consisted of chiefs who would sit in parliament *ex officio*. Together they controlled the machinery and economic resources of the Bantustan state on the basis of 'patronage, ideology and repression' (Nzimande 1990: 182). Southall (1982: 173-174) has argued that the Bantustan *governing class* established their socio-economically dominant position through exorbitant salary increases in an area renowned for low wages and scarcity of employment. The granting of self-governing status to the Transkei in 1963, for example, saw the salaries of chiefs increase from as little as R48 per annum in 1963 to between R176 and R448 in 1967 (also Josana

1989). Per capita income for the average Bantustan citizen, on the other hand, rose from R54 to R173 between 1960 and 1973. Salary increases for the *governing class* continued after ‘independence’, and by 1986, the annual salary for members of the legislature had increased to R12,420 plus a R20 daily allowance when parliament was in session (Josana 1989). Thus, the power and wealth of the Bantustan ruling elite, led many scholars to argue that since their privileged existence was tied to the continuation of the apartheid and Bantustan policies, this fraction of the Black middle class would be opposed to the national liberation movement (see for example Nzimande 1990; Josana 1989; Southall 1982).

- (b) The *bureaucratic class* were the managers and administrators of the Bantustan apparatus. This class had benefitted from the progressive Africanisation of top administrative structures which saw the number of seconded white officials drop from 4.3 percent in 1972 to 0.2 in 1984 (Josana 1989). The bureaucrats were distinguished from the majority of the population by education and income. The expansion of the civil service, coupled with high rates of promotions, incentivised individuals to ‘better themselves’ by improving their educational and technical qualifications (Southall 1982: 178). Salary scales of public servants ranged from R600 for low level officials with a *Junior Certificate of Education* to R6,000 per annum for higher grades in 1972. These scales rose steadily throughout the years and between 1978 and 1986 top civil servants were earning up to R40,000 per annum. Meanwhile, the bulk of the Bantustan population had to make do with meagre returns from migrant labour. Table 2.1 shows the rise of salary scales between 1978 and 1986.

Table 2.1 Civil servant’s salary scales in the Transkei between 1977 and 1986 (in rands)

| | 1977-78 | 1983-84 | 1984-85 | 1985-86 |
|---------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Secretary | 10,800 | 30,255 | 30,255 | 40,605 |
| Deputy secretary | 9,180 | 29,220 | 29,220 | 39,570 |
| Assistant secretary | - | 20,835 | 21,700 | 39,570 |
| Senior clerk | 7,260 | 13,345 | - | 17,200 |

Source: Josana (1989).

Apart from relatively high incomes, the bureaucrats, by virtue of their control of the Bantustan political and economic apparatus, were also better placed to accumulate wealth outside of their employment. Southall (1982) and Josana (1989) have noted the overlap between the civil service and the private sector. In other

words, the bureaucrats used their position to acquire businesses that had been taken over by the government from whites after the 1976 'independence'. They also acquired wealth through the rental of their homes while they occupied government subsidised housing. Southall and Josana conclude that, just as members of the *governing class* discussed above, members of the bureaucratic class were beneficiaries of apartheid and thus their interests were vested in the continued survival of the system (also Nzimande 1990).

Peires (1992: 383), however, challenges such generalised claims of collaboration and argues:

Even though the Transkei bourgeoisie might privately admit that they have benefited from the system, they do not regard themselves as sell-outs nor are they satisfied with what they see as the crumbs which have fallen from the white man's table. They see their capital as Pretoria not Umtata, and they share a common interest with the Black middle classes elsewhere in the country who would prefer a Black South African government to the present white one.

Yet, Ntsebeza (forthc.) argues that even though the above beneficiaries never saw the Bantustans as legitimate, their embrace of the liberation movement in the last days of apartheid could be argued as opportunistic, especially as this came when it was clear that apartheid was on the way out. This shows the middle class to be 'janus-faced', at times supportive of democracy even if this may compromise their personal well-being; at other times focused on personal enrichment and willing to collaborate with authoritarian and undemocratic rulers.

(c) Southall and Josana identify a third fraction of the Bantustan middle class, the *entrepreneurial class* (also Nzimande 1990). The Bantustans were, in part, meant to nurture the development of a middle class of 'economically independent entrepreneurs, industrialists, businessmen or farmers' (Sizwe 1979: 71). In the Transkei Bantustan in particular, this fraction, whose interests were represented by the Transkei Chamber of Commerce (TRACOC), had benefitted from the Africanisation policies pursued by that Bantustan's rulers since the granting of self-governing status in 1963. For example, licensing restrictions which had been put in place for the protection of white capital were progressively lifted. These measures had entrenched white monopoly in trade and commerce since the incorporation of the Transkei in late nineteenth century. No trading stores could be established within two miles of an existing store, thus, effectively protecting white monopoly on rural trade. In 1964, these measures were lifted and the licensing of new businesses became the responsibility of the new ruling elite and thus a source of patronage for loyal supporters (Southall 1982: 186-187).

Charged with the mission of developing a Black business class in the Transkei and Ciskei the Xhosa Development Corporation (XDC) was formed in 1965, in alliance with white capital (Southall 1982; Stultz 1980). By 1975, the XDC had transferred 562 out of 653 formerly white owned trading stations in the Transkei to Blacks. For example, by the late 1970s, out of the 50 hotels operating in the Transkei 29 were under Black management; out of 32 garages and filling stations 18 had been transferred to Blacks, and 5 were under Black management. In the transport sector, support for Black entrepreneurs came in the form of loans rather than transfers. This was because Black entrepreneurs had a long standing involvement already, especially in bus operations (Josana 1989). Hart (1972) argues that recipients of XDC loans were carefully screened. Apart from their high educational credentials, they had to have clean police records. This ruled out many political opponents of the ruling class. Socio-economic success thus required political collaboration or, at least, acceptance.

New momentum was added to the entrepreneurial class post-1976. According to Southall (1982: 197) closer links, including overlapping board membership, were forged between Transkei Chamber of Commerce and the Transkei Development Corporation (TDC) which replaced the XDC in 1976. Thus, political and economic power often overlapped. The ruling family of the Matanzimas, especially, was heavily involved in a variety of economic ventures and regularly violated their own laws which stipulated that public servants should not be involved in the private sector to avoid a conflict of interest. The condition of the entrepreneurial class in the Bantustans might seem to indicate a nascent Black bourgeoisie but in the words of Fanon (2001[1961]) this was a 'comprador bourgeoisie'. In other words, it was a class not involved in production but dependent upon state capital, as well as white capital in the republic, and was thus subordinated to the latter.

- (d) The last category consists of *civil servants* in the Bantustan administration. Included in this group were Crankshaw's 'semi-professional' categories of teachers, clerks and nurses. They formed the bulk of the Bantustan middle class (Nzimande 1990; Southall 1982). For example, the number of Black civil servants in the Transkei increased from 10,291 before 'independence' to 19,800 in 1979 (Josana 1989). The Africanisation drive of the self-government and 'independence' periods also saw teacher numbers grow from 4,848 to 13,984, an increase of 189 percent between 1962 and 1979 (Southall 1982: 182).

The teacher profession was attractive in the Transkei as the Transkei Legislative Assembly rejected the Bantu Education policy of the apartheid government in 1964, and reverted to the Cape (European) education syllabus, albeit adjusted

(Southall 1982: 182). The major tenet of Bantu Education was the reproduction of Black labour for the needs of capital (Christie & Collins 1984). In this regard Blacks had to be subordinated to whites and given a lower level education which was in keeping with their subservient function and position in society. Southall (1982) argues that the rejection of the Bantu education policy by the Transkei ruling class was part of their attempts at gaining legitimacy for the generally unpopular separate development strategy which underpinned the establishment of Bantustans.

Although the salaries of *civil servants*, including teachers, were high when compared to the majority of the Transkei population, and increased steadily through the Bantustan period, they were nevertheless low when compared to the salaries of white civil servants as well as those of the *governing* and *bureaucratic classes* in the Transkei. As a result many teachers struggled financially and relied on income from land or businesses to supplement low incomes – as will be shown in detail in Chapter 4. Both Southall (1982) and Nzimande (1990) suggest that the middle class group of civil servants, teachers and nurses were the most likely allies of the working class and liberation forces because they shared many of the conditions of the proletariat in the apartheid state and Bantustans. This notwithstanding, teachers and civil servants were also beneficiaries of the system, their class position and relative affluence was directly linked to the Bantustan strategy.

In sum, Southall's and Josana's analyses of class formation in the Transkei have focused on the role of the state in creating the four different groups of beneficiaries discussed in this section. Their work has enhanced our understanding of the Bantustan middle class as an integral part of the Bantustan political economy and a collaborator of the apartheid regime. However, like Crankshaw and Seekings & Natrass, they overlook the role of land in class formation, even in the Bantustan context where Blacks could own land, and focus, yet again, on the education/occupation/income nexus. It is quite possible that the beneficiaries of Transkei's 'independence' were not only created by state entities post-1976, but that some already had a longstanding foothold in property (see for example Redding 1987). They had exploited loopholes in the colonial legislative framework and were thus better placed to benefit from the opening up of opportunities during the self-government and 'independence' periods. The next chapters will present a detailed case study of a middle-class group which combined education, occupation and landownership.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the historical origins of the Black middle class are traceable to the colonial era. Small-scale private land ownership and education

differentiated the Black middle class from the rest of the Black population. The combination of occupation and landownership was negatively affected by the 1913 Land Act (as well as the earlier Glen Grey Act), which separated many Africans from land. Following this Act, the development of the Black middle class is believed to have followed an occupational trajectory, largely due to urban migration as a result of growing industrialisation in the 1940s to 1960s.

In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars frequently adopted an ethnographic approach and focused on the urban environment in the republic. They defined the Black middle class mainly according to status, that is, the prestige and honour that was afforded them. This class was presented as differentiated from the majority of the urban township community along educational lines, norms of appropriate behaviour and consumption patterns, modelling themselves to a fair degree after the white middle class. Importantly, land does not feature in most scholarly accounts of the middle class during this period.

As a result of the economic boom of the 1960s, the Black middle class is believed to have grown in size, especially in the service sector, due to declining job reservation and the growth of Black urban social services. Thus, in the period between the 1970s and 1994, the Black middle class became highly represented in the categories of routine white-collar and 'semi-professional' occupations. Because of better incomes, the Black middle class began to separate themselves even in the townships as middle class residential sections developed. Thus, scholars such as Crankshaw and Seekings & Natrass, defined the Black middle class according to occupation and income (both of which were contingent on education). However, the *Reeftown* study had demonstrated already in the 1970s that it is not enough to look at incomes and occupations only to understand the urban Black middle class in its complexity. The study showed that looking at this class solely from an urban vantage point, misses the importance of urban/rural linkages: There was an urban middle class who had land, albeit not in the same area, and derived a living from it.

Even in the Bantustans where Blacks could own land, the middle class continued to be defined by occupation and income. In the Transkei Bantustan, four distinct groups within the middle class were identified as *beneficiaries* of the apartheid strategy of separate development. In other words, this class is presented as largely created by the state to stem the revolutionary tide sweeping the country. The same income/occupation thesis of class has been applied to the middle class in the democratic era (see Chapter 1). Like the Bantustan middle class before it, this 'new' Black middle class is a product of changed social and political conditions, supported by state-led labour market interventions, e.g. Affirmative Action (AA). Importantly, as discussed in Chapter 1, this 'new' Black middle class does not generally own property.

The first generation – Elisha Mda and the Umtata Water Scheme, 1908-1950

It is evident that in Umtata and other Transkeian towns we have a class of Native who has never lived in an urban Native location and has for many years lived away from communally occupied location. He is a man of education and good character and has grown accustomed to a European standard of living. He has in many ways saved money and with his few hundreds acquired a property at Ncambedlana. (Mr. G.K. Hemming, M.P. 18 February, 1937¹)

Introduction

As outlined in Chapter 1, this study examines the role of land in the definition of Mthatha's Black middle class during the segregation, apartheid and post-apartheid eras. The case study grapples with the concepts of middle class formation and grounds the centrality of land ownership in the development and reproduction of this class. It brings out the contextual and conceptual issues that have arisen historically pertaining to ownership, dispossession and de-agrarianisation as well as the meaning and uses of land in the twenty-first century.

The case study is divided into three chapters. This chapter examines the development of landownership within Mthatha's middle class. Redding's (1987, 1993) historical study of Mthatha (1887-1950), which notes the development of a landowning Black middle class at the turn of the twentieth century, is used as an entry point. The middle class, as described by Redding, covers roughly the period from 1908 to 1950, and will be referred to in this work as the first generation.

This chapter will discuss the broad historical context, in which the first generation emerged, through the life story of Elisha Mda, whom Redding (1993) identifies as one of the early Black middle class land owners in Mthatha. Elisha

¹ MAR 2/14/4, file no. 15/314, extract from Minutes of Meeting of Natives held at Umtata by MESSRS. Nichols, Conroy & Young, Members of the Native Affairs Commission, dated 18 Feb. 1937.

Mda's life story not only demonstrates the development of Black landownership in Mthatha, but it also 'puts a face' to the broad historical facts of Black land ownership and dispossession since the arrival of the British at the Cape. His life-story represents a case study within a case study, and illustrates the relationship between education/occupation and landownership in the development of the Black middle class in general, and the Mthatha middle class in particular.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The first section reviews Redding's work on the Black middle class of Mthatha. Redding argues that the development of this Bantustan middle class is rooted in the initial successes of the nineteenth century peasantry. Redding's work helps us understand what happened to the middle class between the 1913 Land Act and the 1950s. Most importantly, it demonstrates the importance of land for the Bantustan middle class. This will be followed by the life history of Elisha Mda.

The next section, based mainly on archival evidence, argues that the development of the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906 was central to the formation of the first generation of Mthatha's land-owning Black middle class. It provides some of the background details missing from Redding's work, including opposition to the water scheme which nearly derailed the development of this middle class. The final section looks at the political economy of Mthatha and the Transkei Reserve. In this section I will argue that the economic and political clout of Mthatha's Black middle class enabled them to resist government attempts to limit their accumulation of property within the municipality. It will also take a brief look at some of the key members of the first generation, such as T.M. Makiwane and, again, Elisha Mda, both well-known members of the first generation. The examples of Elisha Mda & T.M. Makiwane demonstrate that economic and political power did not necessarily reside in the same individual (an overlap of political/economic power was suggested by Southall 1982: 197). The conclusion will summarise the main points made in this chapter.

Historical background

As discussed in the previous chapter, the dominant narrative of South African social history is about how Black peasant agriculture was destroyed in the nineteenth century to free labour for the mining industry and to protect the interests of white commercial agriculture. Legislative measures such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and Natives Land Act of 1913 are some of the major tools that were used to destroy the Black peasantry, which Mafeje (1988: 100) describes as 'the most dynamic agricultural producers in South Africa'. The result was that many sharecroppers and labour tenants, especially, were driven into wage labour as they became landless almost overnight (see also Plaatjie 1996[1916]). Thus, the political restrictions placed on Black agriculture, along with natural disasters, such as

rinderpest, are believed to have compelled many in the Black countryside into migrant labour.

Redding (1987, 1992, 1993) argues that scholars have rarely analysed how the initial success of the Black peasantry described by, for example, Bundy (1988), might have reproduced itself over time (see also Lewis 1984). She shows that descendants of this early peasantry often pursued education and established themselves in white collar occupations in reserve towns such as Mthatha. Their marketable skills included literacy in two or three languages, arithmetic, the ability to translate, and a thorough knowledge of African affairs (Redding 1992: 75). Since these skills were in short supply locally, it allowed those thus employed to command relatively high salaries of £3-£4/month (80-100 shillings), compared to the fifteen to forty shillings earned by unskilled and skilled workers ('butcher's boys'). Thus, from the beginnings of peasant agriculture arose a new middle class.

In addition to education, land ownership became a central feature of this middle class. This was a result of the Mthatha municipality's decision to allow Blacks to partake in the land auction at Ncambedlana in 1908. Ncambedlana, also known as *Lahla Ngubo* (see Chapter 1), lies along the N2 to Durban, just outside of town (see Map 3.1). It occupies an important place within the urban history of South Africa: As a place where a landowning Black middle class developed at the turn of the twentieth century.

What is important with this development is that the land lay within the municipal area, and not in the countryside (where Black landownership was permitted; Redding 1992). At the beginning of the twentieth century, Mthatha was a colonial town with significant white commercial interests (Best & Young 1972; Siyongwana 1999). The South African Native Affairs Commission of 1903-1905 had recommended segregation within the urban environment. This would have meant the exclusion of Blacks from urban property ownership (Redding 1992). However, Redding (1992), argues that restricting the land auction to whites only would have lowered prices. And this would have been a problem for the municipal council which needed funds to finance the municipal water scheme. Since there were not enough whites with sufficient economic power to purchase all the plots on auction, Black urban landownership became possible.

Many of the Black buyers had economic and political clout. They were civil servants in the colonial administration. Their salaries allowed them to afford the relatively high asking prices of £54 and £23 for agricultural and building plots respectively (Redding 1993). They were also active in local political organisations, and had been on the common voters roll until 1936 (Cape franchise), and were quite adept at using their vote for their benefit. Even after 1936 (when

Blacks were taken off the national voter's roll), they continued to have influence in the local electoral politics (Redding 1992).

Redding (1992) argues that the social transformation of the town of Mthatha helped cement the status of this urban middle class. The demand for labour by the growing white population attracted more Black labourers to the town. This led to a growth of urban administrative structures, and, consequently, more Black civil servants were needed. These salaried clerks and a variety of entrepreneurs became the nucleus of Mthatha's Black middle class. They were the largest and most influential consumers in the town and became trend-setters with respect to fashion and life style, as well as farming and farming technology.

Map 3.1 Map of Mthatha (1999)



Source: Chief Directorate, Surveys and Mapping, Mowbray, Cape Town

Redding's work (1993) shows that 43 percent of the urban land buyers in 1908 were Black, and by 1938 they constituted two-thirds of the landowners in Ncambedlana. This was about 15 percent of the total African population of Mthatha. Redding argues that the success of Mthatha's Black middle class in the first half of the twentieth century was founded on their unique combination of occupation and land ownership. In addition to their occupations, they practiced commercial agriculture, often selling produce at the local market. They obtained rents from building plots which they rented out to 'poorer African labourers'. They were also engaged in land speculation, often reselling land at high profits (*Ibid.*: 535). And finally, profits from land were often reinvested in land or used for the education of children. Thus, apart from salaries, land played a huge role in the reproduction of this class.

Redding's study, like Brandel-Syrier's (1971) work as discussed in the previous chapter, brings into focus the relationship between land and education/occupation for the livelihoods of the Black middle class. One might indeed argue that land-ownership was the springboard for education and occupation. While Redding argues that commercial agriculture within this class and the Transkei region in general had declined by 1950, in the next chapter I will show that a *second generation* of this middle class developed in the 1950s and engaged in a mixture of commercial and subsistence agriculture until the early 1990s.

The story of Elisha Mda (1800s-1908) – the dialectic of dispossession and ownership

The story of Elisha Mda, who Redding (1993) identifies as one of the early landowners in Ncambedlana, enriches our understanding of the Black middle class. Based mainly on oral evidence, the rich history of Elisha Mda's life helps us understand the pathways to middle class formation. It helps us to analyse the relationship between the struggle for land and the adoption of western norms of civilisation, such as education. It shows that these were not isolated or mutually exclusive processes – as sometimes suggested by the 'red' and 'school' people dichotomies (see Chapter 1) – but were part of the broader anti-colonial struggle and the need to make sense of changed conditions under colonial domination. Furthermore, oral evidence suggests that Elisha Mda's experience of land ownership preceded his Mthatha years. His story was narrated by his grandson, Mda Mda (born 1922), a retired lawyer, public intellectual and well known political activist (see Kotane 1949). Mda Mda is known locally as 'the historian', or 'the walking encyclopaedia' because of his prodigious memory and knowledge of, as well as interest in, history. He is often a featured speaker at funerals, especially when memories of the political struggle are to be narrated. An example was the

funeral of struggle stalwart and author, Livingstone Mqotsi² in 2009. He was also one of the main speakers at the Special Official Funeral of Judge Fikile Bam, Judge President of the Lands Claim Court (1995-2011) in December 2011.³ Although oral evidence has its limitations, Mda Mda's energy and clear grasp for detail belie his advanced years. In addition, his testimony could be confirmed by reference to the literature and archival sources.

Elisha Mda came to Mthatha in 1893 as an interpreter. Prior to this appointment, Elisha Mda had worked as a teacher at Ntshatshongo (Fort Malan). The circumstances under which Elisha came to Mthatha appear to have been rather fortuitous. After the conclusion of the War of Ngcayechibi (1877-1878, also known as the Last Frontier War), the then Chief Magistrate of Tembuland and the Transkei Territories, Major Sir Henry Elliot, undertook a mission to persuade the *amaGcaleka* chiefs – Manxiwa in Willowvale, Mcothama in Centani and Sgidi in Dutywa – to participate in the colonial administration. Major Elliot was with a certain Mr Makawula, a member of the *amaBhaca* ethnic group from Mt. Frere, who had grown up with missionaries. Mda Mda relates the story as follows:

I forget the details but this child (Mr. Makawula) had survived, got educated and went to England. He returned a fine English speaker but his isiXhosa was very poor. It was compounded by the fact that he was an isiBhaca speaker originally, and also by his extended stay in England. So, his isiXhosa was very poor. When Major Elliot had left them alone, the chiefs debated among themselves, 'We do not speak English, who is going to interpret for us?' They decided that they should get 'the teacher' (Elisha Mda) to interpret. So, grandfather went with those chiefs to interpret and it is alleged that he was a born interpreter and made such a fine impression, so much that Major Elliot said, 'I am going back to Umtata with you, you are my interpreter'. That is how grandfather came to Mthatha, in 1893.⁴

While the fate of Mr. Makawula, who was suddenly replaced, is unknown, Elisha Mda's role demonstrates the prestige in which Blacks in professional occupations, such as teachers, were held. They were thus set apart from the majority and were structurally located as intermediaries between colonial and indigenous societies (Ndletyana 2008).

Before focussing on Elisha's life in Mthatha, it is worth discussing his background as this offers a broader historical context to the development of the first generation. Elisha Mda's father, Goniwe, migrated to the *amaNdlambe* territory

² Livingstone Mqotsi was the former secretary of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the former general secretary of the African Peoples Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA; Kayser & Adhikari 2004).

³ Judge Bam was granted the Special Official Funeral Category II with Police Ceremonial Honours, which is reserved for distinguished people in society (*The Presidency* 22 December 2011).

⁴ Interview with Mda Mda, Mthatha, 09/07/2010. Unless otherwise indicated all quotes and historical information in this chapter come from Mda Mda's interview.

from present day KwaZulu-Natal at the beginning of the nineteenth century. According to Mda Mda, Goniwe's westward migration was ahead that of the large group of the so-called *amaMfengu* ('Fingoes') or *abaMbo* who arrived in Gcalekaland (present day Dutywa and Butterworth districts) in the 1820s. The *abaMbo* are Nguni groups allegedly displaced by the *Mfecane*.⁵ Originally from KwaZulu Natal, they found refuge with the *amaXhosa* around the time of the arrival of the 1820 British settlers (Ayliff & Whiteside 1912).⁶

Goniwe is alleged to have been highly skilled in traditional medicines. This knowledge in raising livestock was greatly valued, and he thus became a favourite servant and medicine man of Chief Ndlambe. The Ndlambe chieftaincy had been a central force in the early wars between the colonisers – the Dutch and the British – and the *amaXhosa*. However, anti-colonial resistance notwithstanding, each war had ended with more land being lost and the boundaries of the colony being further extended to make room for more British settlement. Colonial penetration saw the *amaNdlambe* territory becoming increasingly reduced. Its borders, which had extended to the Sundays River in the 1790s, had been pushed back beyond the Fish River by the turn of the nineteenth century. By the time of Chief Ndlambe's death in 1828, the border had been pushed back further, to around Grahamstown (Crais 1992; Marks 1982; Peires 1982). After Ndlambe's death, Goniwe served under Ndlambe's son, Chief Mhala, a central figure in British Kaffraria.⁷

At the outbreak of Mlanjeni's War, also known as the Eight Frontier War (1851-1853), the borders between the Cape colony and Mhala's territory had been rolled back to around East London and its environs. According to Mda Mda's narrative, the end of Mlanjeni's War saw the 'heart of Xhosaland' declared British Kaffraria; that is, the territory between the Keiskamma and Kei Rivers, comprising present-day districts of East London and King William's Town (see also Peires 1989). At this point, the only remaining independence for the *amaXhosa* lay beyond the Kei River, in Gcalekaland. British Kaffraria represented the furthest incursion by the British colony into *amXhosa* territory thus far.

According to Mda Mda, Goniwe and his kin were expelled across the Kei River with the rest of Mhala's subjects in the aftermath of the Nongqawuse millenarian movement (1856-1858). The end of Nongqawuse saw Mhala and the rest of the patriotic chiefs sentenced to imprisonment on Robben Island. Mda

⁵ Cobbing (1988) has argued that the *Mfecane* is a neologism meaning 'the crushing'. It was coined by one E. A. Walker and has no roots in any African language.

⁶ The ethnic designation *abaMbo* refers to the actual nationality of the so-called *amaMfengu* ('Fingoes'). The word *Mfengu* is derived from *ukumfenguza*, which connotes dispersion and begging (Scheub 1996).

⁷ For a detailed discussion of Chief Mhala, see Peires (1989).

Mda's account of Mhala's arrest and expulsion of his people is confirmed by the literature (see for example Peires 1989; Theal 1919). As a result, the land of the *amaXhosa* in the Ciskei area came under colonial occupation. The power of chiefs was broken as they were subordinated under the system of colonial magistrates. This meant that a white magistrate was now above the local chief – a precursor to the administrative system introduced by the Glen Grey Act (see Chapter 2). The system stood in contrast to earlier treaties which placed the jurisdiction of Blacks under chiefly authority (Worden 2000; Peires 1989). It marked the end of an independent *amaXhosa* territory west of the Kei River.

Although Elisha Mda's exact date of birth is unknown, his birth is generally associated with the great drought of 1860 which followed the Nongqawuse millenarian movement. According to Mda Mda, great events were often used to record approximate dates of birth, i.e. it is possible that Elisha was born even two to three years before or after 1860. Following their expulsion from the mouth of the Buffalo River, Elisha and his family settled in Gwadwana, in Dutywa under the protection of Bonkolo (also known as Smith), Mhala's right hand son. According to Theal (1919), Bonkolo had been banished to Dutywa by Major Gawler, the magistrate in Mhala territory during the time of the Nongqawuse movement. It was in Dutywa that Elisha's future education and eventual qualification as a teacher was cast. Mda Mda narrates the circumstances around Elisha's education:

We were red people from Ndlambe's territory (...) now great-grandfather (Goniwe) came to be settled here in Gwadana. Then, his sister arrives. She's married to (...) oh (...) 1865, this land, Butterworth, Ngqamakhwe and Tsomo has been given to the *amaMfengu* (...) yes 1865. Now in Tsomo in Mbulu village, the headman is Moni ka Ndima who is married to Mda's (Goniwe) sister. They were unsuccessful in conceiving a male child so, they come home to ask for a boy and then they were given grandfather (Elisha) to raise as their own.

At the time, Gwadana – where Goniwe and his family had been resettled and Elisha Mda grew up – had not been yet been penetrated by colonialism. In contrast, areas such as Tsomo, which fell under Fingoland and reportedly enjoyed the protection of the crown colony, had seen the introduction of western norms such as education and Christianity much earlier (Ntsebeza 2006; Crais 1992; Peires 1989). Gcalekaland, which was not yet under colonial rule, and included Gwadana among others, was regarded as barbarian or 'red' territory (Theal 1919). Thus, Elisha Mda's move from Gwadana to Tsomo was more than a change of family and caregivers; it was also a move from one cultural context to another, from a life steeped in proud tradition to one at the colonial frontier.

Mda Mda's account of Elisha's schooling, however, shows the permeability of the so called 'red' and 'school' people boundary. For example, it was not uncommon for families to be composed of both types of people. Mda Mda continues:

Elisha went to stay with his aunt in the land of the *amaZizi* clan (Tsono). There, a missionary school had been established by the whites. The land (Fingoland) was under white rule. So, he attended school. And because the boy was clever, he was well liked by the teachers and missionaries. The feeling here at home (Gwadana) was, 'Folks, it looks like the whites are gaining the upper hand. It would be wise to have our own representatives even in this new regime. Let's leave this boy to attend school because he wouldn't go to school if he was here (Gcalekaland) because here, an educated person is regarded as a lackey of the whites'. So, he went to school and even went to the college (Lovedale) in Alice. By the end of the last war, the War of Ngcayichibi, 1877 to 1878, he had completed his education in Alice.

It is clear from the above account that the decision to embrace education by Elisha's 'red' elders represented a highly conscious decision, informed by the developments they saw unfolding. They anticipated the eventual colonial reign over the entire land and reasoned that it would be to their benefit to have one of their own schooled in the ways of the British colonial rulers. In the context of impending defeat, educated blacks such as Elisha were expected to provide leadership to their communities in negotiating their changed circumstances (see also Odendaal 1984; Gerhart 1978). Thus, Elisha's adoption by the Ndimas and his schooling in Tsono was not only meant to satisfy their immediate parenting needs or Elisha's individual interests, but his 'red' elders ultimately anticipated the important role education would play for African nationalism.

Photo 3.1 Students at Lovedale



Source: Shepherd (1940: 272).

By the time Elisha had finished his education in Lovedale and qualified as a teacher, his kin had been through no less than five wars of resistance since their arrival in the Eastern Cape. The history of the Mda family demonstrates that whenever colonialism gained the upper hand, loss of land and forced removals followed. This pattern was to continue when Elisha reached adulthood. Having completed his education at Lovedale, Elisha became one of the first teachers at a newly opened school in Ntshatshongo (Fort Malan) in the 1870s. It is around this time that Elisha became a landowner for the first time. His occupation as a teacher had enabled him to invest in transport. Evoking images from Hollywood's popular depiction of the American Wild West, Bundy (1988: 76) laments the lack of recognition for transport riders in South Africa:

They are reminiscent of the wagoners and transporters who plied a similar trade in the American interior before the completion of the railway lines there. But while Wells Fargo and the Pony Express have become part of the popular image of the West, South Africa's transport riders with their wagons, Cape carts and Scotch carts, have been relegated to an almost total obscurity. They deserve a saga to themselves.

Elisha Mda was one those who transported goods across the country. He used the proceeds from the transport riding to buy land. Mda Mda explains how Elisha bought land in British Kaffraria:

After the *amaNdlambe* were removed from there (British Kaffraria) and brought to Dutywa, that's how we (the Mda family) came to be settled in Gwadana. After they were removed, the land was then put on the market. That's how he got to buy a farm in Ndubungela along the Gqunube (Gonubie) River. What he did was while at Dutywa, there was trade in skins and he decided to buy a wagon and got into transport (transport riding). He continued (with that) and that is how he even bought that farm.

The above suggests that Elisha belonged to a middle class defined not only by mission education and occupation, but also ownership of land well before he became a landowner in Mthatha. Furthermore, it illustrates the historical pathways to the landed black middle class discussed in the previous chapter. Bundy (1988), for example, argues that entrepreneurial activity such as transport riding was the bridge towards land ownership or rent. Focusing on the peasantry, he makes the following observation (*Ibid.*: 77):

Many peasants resorted to transport riding once their own crops were harvested: Typically, a Mfengu would make the trip from Tsomo or Ngqamakwe to Queenstown or Kingwilliams-town to sell his own produce, and then return to Fingoland with a consignment of goods for local traders. Transport riding was also a convenient means of earning enough money to obtain land: Many Africans at this time would pursue full-time occupations as teamsters or wagoners until they had accumulated sufficient wealth to purchase or hire lands and set up as farmers.

It is possible that some of the people that Bundy has generally described as peasants were in fact a highly differentiated group and included elements of occupational classes as demonstrated by the case of Elisha Mda. His story provides

evidence that the dynamic of transport riding as a way to land ownership was not confined to the peasantry. It can be argued that some of those who bought land were in fact middle class. This is confirmed by Peires (1989: 329) who, for example, notes the unequal and discriminatory nature of land sales in British Kaffraria:

Since white farmers were not interested in buying such expensive properties, Grey was forced to virtually give it away to them at a quitrent of £2 per annum for 1,000 acres. Potential Black farmers were given no such concessions, however, but were required to pay the original £1 an acre. Even though there was much enthusiasm among both Xhosa and Mfengu for individual properties of this type, very few of them – mainly government interpreters and other salaried employees – were able to afford it.

Thus, although private property in land was out of reach for most Blacks, those with white collar salaries were able to afford land. The *War of Ngcayichibi*, however, meant the end of Elisha's farm in British Kaffraria as he and others who were seen to be supporting the enemies of the British lost their land. Mda Mda narrates:

But when the last War of Ngcayichibi came, he was on the wrong side, on the side of the *amaXhosa*. *AmaXhosa* then lost all their land as they had been removed from areas such as Keiskamahoe to Bholo (near Stutterheim), and the remaining ones put in the reserve, which they now lost in the last war.⁸ This meant the end of Black land in the Ciskei. Even that farm was lost because he was on the wrong side.

The War of Ngcayichibi completed a historic cycle of Black dispossession in the Cape. It had started with the Ndlambe chieftaincy in the Zuurveld at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and concluded with the last remaining independent kingdom of the *amaXhosa* at the close of the nineteenth century. In the meantime, the cleared lands west of the Kei were subdivided and sold by public auction to Europeans on quitrent tenure (Theal 1919). Yet, as Redding (1993) has noted, and as we shall also see below, Elisha was to reinvent himself once more as a landowner in Mthatha. The story of Elisha Mda thus embodies the dialectic of dispossession and ownership in the lifespan of one individual: Land lost, land obtained, land lost again, with education being his ticket for a new chance and new land in Mthatha.

The Umtata Water Scheme, 1906-1908

The town of Mthatha, which was to become Elisha Mda's new home, was established as a European settlement in 1871. The town was named after the river, Mthatha, along which it was founded (Umtata 1982). According to local folklore, the name of the river had been in existence since 1686. A clan of the *abaTembu* used the river to bury their dead. While doing so, they would entreat the gods

⁸ Already after the War of Mlanjeni (1850-53) the defeated *amaNgqika* were disposed and confined to a reserve between the Amathole and the Kei River (Peires 1989).

with the words *mthathe bawo*, which literally means, ‘take him father’ (*Ibid.*). According to this account, the name of the river and town is derived from the verb *mthathe*, ‘to take’. The river constituted the border between Tembuland and Western Mpondoland. Paramount chiefs Ngangelizwe and Nqwiliso, of the *abaTembu* and *amaMpondo* respectively, donated land on either side of the river for European settlement in 1871. The settlers were to act as a buffer between the warring *amaMpondo* and *abaTembu* (Redding 1992; Umtata 1982). The exact conditions of this ‘donation’ however, are not known. The town of Mthatha was annexed to the Cape colony in 1882. It was recognised as a ‘European’ or white town in the same year (1882) by the Village Management Board. The Village Management Board had been established in the previous year under the Village Management Act of 1881. Umtata was proclaimed a municipality in terms of the Municipal Act of 1882 (Umtata 1982).

How did Elisha, after losing his farm in British Kaffraria in the late 1870s, come to be one of the first generation Black landowners in Mthatha at the turn of the twentieth century? Based on analysis of archival material, I argue that the emergence of a substantial and well-defined first generation of the Mthatha Black middle class was closely linked to the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906. The decision to sell land to both Black and white buyers in order to finance this scheme allowed the accumulation of land in the hands of a hitherto largely occupationally-based, mission-educated Black middle class.

The Umtata Municipal Council had been looking at ways to improve its water supply since 1905. The expansion of the town together with the health issues that had arisen as a result of the pollution of the Mthatha River had compromised the available water resources. This necessitated that a safe and fresh source of supply be sought and, thus, was born the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906.⁹ The scheme involved the construction of a dam in the Kambi area, just outside the municipal boundaries. Analysis of archival materials suggests that the Umtata Municipal Council faced a number of problems in their quest for a new source of water supply. The first hurdle revolved around financial resources. The council was insolvent and did not have the necessary funds for its ambitious water project. Initial projections put the cost of a new dam at about £30,000. The Mayor, G.T. Owen, had suggested diverting £10,000 from the Town Hall Fund towards the water scheme. These were funds earmarked for the completion of the town hall which was under construction at the time. However, the motion to divert funds from the Town Hall Fund was defeated at a meeting of ratepayers by 16 to 8 votes.¹⁰

Another plan involved raising a loan of about £20,000 from the Cape government. However, as evidenced by the letter of the Under Colonial Secretary to the

⁹ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, undated minute no. 53 of council meeting in 1906.

¹⁰ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 69, of the meeting of Umtata Rate Payers, 7 Jan 1907.

Resident Magistrate of Umtata, the Cape government had serious reservations about the town's ability to repay the loan.¹¹ Previous attempts to raise council revenues such as the request that quitrents on properties within the municipal area be ceded to the council had not been accepted by the Cape government.¹² The subject of quitrents was taken up with Prime Minister Dr. Jameson, during his visit to the area, but was again rejected. Dr Jameson's reply was that the quitrents were used to supplement low government finances.¹³

A second option under discussion was that the council could opt for a cheaper scheme that would cost only £20,000. The difference in cost was due to the thickness of the steel to be used: if an 8 inch steel were to be used, the cost would be £30,000; 6 inch steel would cut the price by £10,000. The latter option was duly chosen by the council.¹⁴ Now, the municipality turned its attention to acquiring the necessary finances.

The archival record suggests that the council had been expecting title deeds to a land grant from the Cape government since 1906, but that a final decision on this land was still outstanding. The land 'on the other side of the river' which had been promised to the municipal council was plot E, later known as Ncambedlana. The idea was to sell this land in order to finance the water scheme.¹⁵ Originally, Ncambedlana fell outside the municipal boundaries of Mthatha; it was located in trust lands on the *amaMpondo* side of the river. Oral testimony suggests that the *amaMpondo* Paramount Chief, Henry Bokleni, was persuaded to cede Ncambedlana to the Cape government in 1905. According to Mda Mda's narrative:

In about 1905, Bokleni, the father of Poto, was persuaded to convince the two chiefs, Bensile and Fundangaye, to sell the land from Ncambedlana, from the Ncambedlana stream, for a pittance. That's when it [Ncambedlana] was incorporated into the municipality.

The 'pittance' mentioned by Mda Mda was exactly £425, 11s and 3d.¹⁶ Subsequently, the council nervously and repeatedly asked when it would receive the land. Correspondence between council and the Chief Magistrate, Mr. A. H. Stanford, suggests that there had been an 'administrative delay' in finalizing the land grant.¹⁷ The 'administrative delay' probably referred to the still on-going negotiations between the *amaMpondo* chieftaincy and the Cape government. Other cor-

¹¹ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 634, letter from Under Colonial Secretary to Resident Magistrate, 11 Dec. 1907.

¹² WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 102, of council meeting in 1906, forwarded letter from Under Colonial Secretary to Resident Magistrate of Umtata (no date given).

¹³ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 116, meeting of Umtata Municipal Council with Premier Dr. Jameson and Commissioner for Public Works, 28 Jan. 1907.

¹⁴ WCAARS 3UTA, 1/1/1/6 minute no. 40, council meeting, Jan. 1907 (day not given).

¹⁵ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minutes no. 109-114, council meeting, Jan. 1907 (day not given).

¹⁶ WCAARS, 3/UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 177, Surveyor General's letter read at council meeting, 20 Feb. 1907.

¹⁷ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minutes no. 109-114, council meeting, Jan. 1907 (day not given).

respondence between the council and the Secretary for Native Affairs, suggests that at stake was the fate of the *amMpondo* residents in the area, once the sale had gone through. The council had raised the question of native rights as it expected Ncambedlana to be ceded to it, and wanted to follow proper procedure. However, the Secretary for Native Affairs advised the council to ‘disregard’ native rights altogether.¹⁸ The Secretary warned council to leave the matter of native rights to the Cape government otherwise the water bill ran the risk of being thrown out if council dealt with this question, as the ‘affected natives had not been served with notices’ (*Ibid.*). A Mr. Robinson proposed that it was ‘best to ignore the natives altogether’ and that the council deals directly with government instead of the natives concerned. The motion was carried through unanimously (*Ibid.*).

The above exchange suggests a tension between the council and the Department of Native Affairs over who bore responsibility for the Native question. As noted above, towns like Mthatha, although located within the Transkei reserve, were regarded as ‘European’ settlements because of the substantial presence of European commercial interests.¹⁹ This meant that the council had no jurisdiction on land outside the municipal boundaries, areas which were designated ‘native’. The South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC), 1903-1905, had recommended that everything concerning so-called natives, that is Black Africans, should fall within the purview of the Department of Native Affairs (DNA). However, confusion as regards its responsibilities continued up until the 1930s (Evans 1997). Both parties, however, agreed with regard to the ultimate outcome: The removal of the *amaMpondo*. It is possible that these original residents – and/or their descendants – came to provide agricultural labour for Ncambedlana’s Black middle class (see Chapter 4).

The Ncambedlana land grant was finally approved by the Surveyor General in May 1907,²⁰ and the council turned its attention towards the dam itself. The building of dams is always fraught with struggles against displacement and dispossession of local residents. The award winning Hollywood movie *Chinatown* (1974) has immortalised, in the public’s imagination, the struggles around the building of an aqueduct to divert water from the Owens Valley in Los Angeles during the Great Depression in the 1930s. In Southern Africa, pitched struggles in the 1990s associated with the Lesotho Highlands Water Project – the building of the Katse dam to supply water to South Africa’s Gauteng province – were

¹⁸ WCAARS, 3/UTA, 1/1/1/6, minutes no. 117-119, council meeting, Feb. 1907 (day not given).

¹⁹ MAR, 4/24/13/2, file no. 4/10/2, letter by H. F. Verwoerd Minister of Native Affairs addressed to the secretary, Ncambedlana Ratepayers Association, dated 15 Sept. 1951.

²⁰ WCAARS, 3/UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 339, Surveyor General’s letter to the council, 8 May 1907.

waged (Hoover 2001). The building of dams, as demonstrated in the above cases, is often accompanied by the destruction of the livelihoods of those within the catchment area. This was also the case with regards to the Umtata Water Scheme. The disregard for Black rights, however, did not go unchallenged. The courageous fight of one man in particular, Cameron Ngudle, as will be discussed below, almost derailed the scheme, and with it the creation of the first generation of Mthatha's Black middle class.

The proposed dam for the Umtata Water Scheme was to be located at Kambi Village, a native trust area which fell under the Tsolo Magisterial District. Just as in the case of Ncambedlana, it appears that the council had ignored to consult the affected villagers about the location of the dam and the boundaries of the catchment area as required by law. Cameron Ngudle, a resident of Kambi, was concerned that the proposed catchment area would affect his grazing lands and had appealed to the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo. The Resident Magistrate of Tsolo, in turn wrote to the Assistant Chief Magistrate of Umtata asking that the matter be clarified. In his appeal for clarity the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo suggested that the concerned residents were uninformed and thus likely to object to the water scheme 'through ignorance than otherwise'.²¹

However, ignorance was certainly not part of Cameron Ngudle's appeal and it was quite obvious to what he and many Kambi villagers objected. Not only did they draw water from the Ntembezi stream, which was to form part of the catchment area, but they also grazed their livestock within the proposed catchment.²² Analysis of archival sources suggests that the council had simply ignored to consult the affected parties, to canvass and address their objections as required by law. As demonstrated by the letter of the Hon. T.L. Schreiner, MP for Tembuland, this process had to be followed before the water scheme could be promoted and introduced as a bill before the Cape parliament.²³ This had not been done with respect to the residents of Kambi, and only the predominately white ratepayers of Mthatha had been consulted.²⁴ In terms of Act 35 of 1885, a public meeting of ratepayers had been called to obtain approval for the council to introduce and promote the water bill before parliament. Act 35, however, also required that the number of affected villagers be taken into consideration and this allowed Cameron Ngudle to object to the proposed water scheme. He took up the

²¹ WCAARS 3UTA, 1/1/1/6 Minutes no. 342, letter by the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo to the Assistant Chief Magistrate, 8 May 1907.

²² WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 381, letter from Messrs Walther and Jacobsohn, 29 May 1907.

²³ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no.188, undated letter by the Hon. T.L. Schreiner read in council meeting, Feb 1907.

²⁴ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no.160, public meeting of Umtata Rate Payers, 20 Feb. 1907.

matter with the Hon. T.L. Schreiner who had been tasked with promoting the Umtata Water Bill before parliament. Mr. Schreiner urged the council to obtain Cameron Ngudle's assent to the scheme.

After the intervention of the Hon. Schreiner, a Mr. Percy was sent by the council to negotiate with the Kambi villagers. According to his report, only Cameron Ngudle's interests and a small portion of another headman's grazing were affected.²⁵ Reading between the lines, however, it is possible that the other villagers were persuaded – if not coerced – to agree to the scheme and not to voice further objections once matters had been 'explained' to them. Mr. Percy wrote the following in his report:

The other headmen were under the impression that their interests were also involved *but on matters being explained*, they agreed that Ngudle was practically the only one interested. Ngudle promised to think the matter over and see the magistrate of Tsolo again in the matter (*Ibid.*; my emphasis).

However, it appears that Cameron Ngudle was still not satisfied, for another letter from the Hon T.L. Schreiner informed the council that 'Cameron Ngudle and other natives are opposing the Bill'.²⁶ The Hon. Schreiner insisted that the council should deal with Cameron Ngudle as he could jeopardize the passing of the bill. The mention of 'other natives' in Schreiner's letter suggests that not only Cameron Ngudle's rights were affected as Mr. Percy had suggested in his report. This also shows the courage of Cameron Ngudle who simply refused to buckle under colonial pressure. Schreiner's letter was followed by another letter from the council's legal team, Messrs Walther and Jacobsohn.²⁷ They strongly urged that 'no effort be spared to get Cameron Ngudle's consent to the water scheme. They advised that the number of those affected be looked into, for example, 'How many use the Ntembezi stream or graze in the catchment area and how many will be affected?' (*Ibid.*). This led to a meeting between Cameron Ngudle, the Mayor and his legal advisor, Mr. Gush, the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo and other villagers. The outcome of this meeting was that the bill was finally amended. Grazing, for example, could now occur within the catchment area. Although Cameron Ngudle had won these concessions from the council, he still refused to withdraw his opposition to the bill.²⁸ Yet this could not stop the bill and

²⁵ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 367, council meeting, 29 May 1907.

²⁶ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 369, letter from T.L. Schreiner informing council about the progress of the Umtata Water Bill, 20 May 1907.

²⁷ WCAARS 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 381, letter from Messrs Walther and Jacobsohn, 29 May 1907.

²⁸ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 387, regarding a meeting between the Mayor, his legal adviser Mr Gush and Mr. Ngudle, the Resident Magistrate of Tsolo and other headmen on 19 of June 1907.

the Umtata Municipal Water Supply Act of 1907 was duly passed on 12 September 1907, under Act no 21 of 1907.²⁹

With the passage of the Umtata Municipal Water Supply Act, the sale of plots in Ncambedlana became urgent as money now had to be raised. Redding (1992: 76) argues that the all-white municipal council, backed by the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories wanted to exclude Blacks from the land auction. However, whites didn't have sufficient financial muscle and the numbers to buy all the plots on sale. So, were the sales to exclude Black buyers, this would have consequently 'lowered prices and left some plots unsold' (*Ibid.*). Whether to allow Blacks to take part in the land auction therefore, became the subject of heated debates in council meetings towards the end of 1907. Analysis of council records suggests that the council initially sought to exclude Blacks from the sale. As evidenced by the letter from the council's legal adviser, Mr. Gush, two main legal challenges stood in the way of Black exclusion from the land sales. The first obstacle was the Municipal Act of 1882. Sections 160-161 of this Act directed that the permission of the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope be sought for any sales of municipal lands. Furthermore, council was required to post a written notice, informing the public of the intended sale of land and the terms and conditions of the sale, at least two weeks before applying to the governor (Statutes of the Cape of Good Hope 1874). Thus, the envisaged land sale could not be done without attracting the attention of Black buyers, who would certainly object to being excluded and as a result, could have introduced lengthy delays to the process.

The second obstacle, as pointed out by Mr. Gush, was that putting restrictions on Black ownership would be 'ill advised as this was contrary to present Native Policy'. The council undertook to approach the Cape government with the view that Blacks be banned from taking part in the auction of land in Ncambedlana, scheduled for 4 February 1908. The council was hoping that the governor could be persuaded to exclude Blacks from the purchase of land as he was known to have given his consent in other cases where conditions of title 'excluded native purchases'.³⁰ Ultimately, council took the issue to a meeting of ratepayers who resolved that no restriction be placed regarding the purchase of land in Ncambedlana since this would limit their ability to resell plots at a later stage. Accordingly and indeed finally, the council allowed Blacks to take part in the public auction of land in Ncambedlana in 1908.³¹ The urgent need for finances had proved to be greater than the segregation preferences of a predominantly white council and the

²⁹ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no 502, telegram by the Hon. T.L. Schreiner to the Umtata Municipal Council about the passage of the water bill, 12 Sept. 1907.

³⁰ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 703, wire from Mr. Gush, 17 January 1908.

³¹ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 728, ratepayers meeting regarding 'the Sale of Land to Natives', 16 Feb. 1908.

Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories (see also Redding 1992). This decision set into motion the development of a land-owning Black middle class in Mthatha.

The first generation, 1908-1950

As the economy gradually shifted from an agrarian to an industrial base, towns and cities became the new focal point of land struggles (Redding 1987). Because Mthatha was classified an urban area in terms of the Village Management Act of 1882, this meant that as opposed to the rural hinterland of the Transkei reserve, Mthatha and other reserve towns were administered by a municipal council rather than structures of traditional authority.

The town of Mthatha had become an important administrative centre as the seat of the Regional Government of the Transkei Territories in 1903. As a thriving commercial town in the middle of a reserve, the town attracted a number of well-to-do Blacks intent on investing in land or other business ventures. According to Redding, these formed 'the nucleus of the Black petty bourgeoisie' of the town. The first generation of land owners included people who were drawn from the colonial civil service, such as Elisha Mda, A.C. Zibi, Luke Yako, David Noah, and T.M. Makiwane (Redding 1993). The structural location of Mthatha as the commercial capital of the Transkei reserve, with its railways linking the Transkei countryside with the industrial centres of the republic, also meant that the town attracted migrant labourers with hopes of a passage to the industrial metropolis, of especially, Johannesburg. Some of these migrants were absorbed by the labour demands of the growing white population (Redding 1992).

The increasing number of Blacks in urban areas became a problem which the South African government sought to discourage through the 1923 Natives Urban Areas Act. This Act sought to prevent the permanent urban settlement of Blacks (Sizwe 1979). The 1923 Native Urban Areas Act also put pressure on the Umtata Municipal Council to control the problem of Black urbanisation within the city. However, subsection (1) of section 4 of the Act exempted those who already owned property valued at £75 or more from being forced to reside either in a designated Black urban 'location' (also called 'township'), an urban hostel, or a village. In addition, subsection 1(b) extended these provisions to descendants who acquired such property in the form of inheritance. Thus, the first generation of Mthatha's Black middle class survived the 1923 Act. Meanwhile, the council was compelled by the Act to provide segregated housing for other Blacks outside the town and, thus, the Black location of Ngangelizwe was developed in 1930 (Redding 1992).

The Native Trust and Land Act of 1936, however, brought new pressures to the rights of Mthatha's landed Black middle class. The Act of 1936, although

celebrated as having increased land set aside for Blacks from 7 percent (1913 Land Act) to 13 percent, simultaneously forbade Blacks from buying or owning land outside the designated reserves (Lapping 1986). What this meant is that the landed Black middle class of Mthatha could not continue to hold onto their land as Ncambedlana fell within the Mthatha municipality (Redding 1992). Thus, with the passage of the Act, the position of Black landownership within the municipality came, once again, under threat.

The Ncambedlana landed Black middle class, however, resisted expropriation attempts by the council. The issue of Black landownership rights in Mthatha – in light of the 1936 Act – was taken up with the visiting members of the Native Affairs Commission (Messrs Nichols, Conroy and Young). The Black landowners opposed losing their freehold title and rather proposed that Ncambedlana be excised from the municipality so it could be ‘thrown open for Native occupation’.³² This would also allow them to buy out the white landowners and therefore circumvent the much feared ‘mixing of the races’ in Ncambedlana. The latter flouted segregation laws operating throughout the republic and was causing consternation among local whites and government circles (see Redding 1993).

Above all, the Black middle class landowners objected to being forcibly removed to the Ngangelizwe location. And they received support from within government structures. According to G.K. Hemming, M.P., who argued for Black ownership rights before the above members of the Native Affairs Commission, Mthatha’s landed Black middle class was ‘more advanced and progressive’ than their township bound, property-less counterparts and thus could not be expected to live in Ngangelizwe. G.K. Hemming continues:

I wish to emphasise that the owner occupier [Native] cannot under the Act be compelled to live in a Native location and unless the Municipality expropriates the Native holdings, they would be entitled to remain there. To expropriate without offering them an adequate alternative would be a very harsh proceeding (...) I wish to emphasise that the Natives desire to retain the ordinary freehold title to their land. Unless land can be acquired by them in that area under ordinary freehold title the application would not be pressed. They are definitely opposed to any other form of title deed.³³

Thus, rather than lose their freehold rights on account of the 1936 Act, Mthatha’s landed Black middle class campaigned for excision of Ncambedlana from the municipality. This seemed like a calculated manoeuvre on their part. There was also the question of white and coloured ownership which the council would have had to consider. In light of the parlous state of council revenues, expropriation would have been a costly as well as a highly charged political move

³² MAR 2/14/4, file no. 15/314, extract from minutes of meeting of natives held at Umtata by Messrs. Nichols, Conroy and Young, members of the Native Affairs Commission, 18 Nov. 1937.

³³ *Ibid.*

that the local administration wanted to avoid. The municipal council supported by the Resident Magistrate condemned the idea of excision and at the same time let slip that there were no intentions to dispossess Black landowners. In a letter addressed to the Chief Magistrate, the Mthatha magistrate emphasises his support for Black landownership in Ncambedlana, while at the same time expressing a strong resistance to any attempts to increase the size of land owned by Blacks, those who wish so are branded ‘selfish’ rather than ‘industrious’ or ‘entrepreneurial’:

In my opinion the natives have been badly advised to open this question. So far as I’m aware there has not been any move by the Council to alter the position of the native owners in the Ncambedlana township. The relationship between the Council and the Native population is a happy one and the so-called progressive natives have made themselves miserable by visualising their ejection from their erven. The natives are displaying a decidedly selfish attitude in the matter of land acquisition: they are pressing for the purchase of all surrounding farms for their occupation and also for as much of the ground within the Municipality as they can get.³⁴

Ownership of plots in Ncambedlana during this time was distributed as follows: Blacks owned 118 plots, those under white ownership amounted to 93 plots, and Coloureds owned eight plots.³⁵

Central government further attempted to close the loopholes that had existed with respect to Black property ownership with the passage of the 1937 Native Amendment Act and the Bantu (Urban Areas) Consolidation Act (No. 25 of 1945). The latter Act prohibited, under Section 6 (1), the acquisition of land by a ‘native’ from a ‘non native’. In effect, this Act not only prevented urban land acquisition by Blacks but also criminalised the sale of land between thus defined ‘racial’ groups. Special permission had to be sought from the governor before a sale between ‘racial’ groups could proceed. Also, white neighbours had to give their consent to the sale of land to a Black person. The Governor-General also had to be supplied with the names and ‘racial’ identification of owners of all adjoining properties.³⁶ Thus, it was not enough to have financial resources to be considered a prospective buyer. Black acquisition of land normally went through at least five cumbersome steps from start to finish. These steps can be illustrated with reference to the archival documentation of the sale of land to one Fanaye Peter:

³⁴ MAR, 2/14/4, file no. 2/14/4/1, letter by the Magistrate of Umtata to the Chief Magistrate, 30 March 1938.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ MRA, 4/24/13/2, [file number missing], letter from R.A.H. Bruce and Sons to the town clerk, detailing consent of white neighbours to sell land to Fanaye Peter, 7 Aug. 1958.

- (a) The municipality had to be notified of one's intention to buy or sell;³⁷
- (b) Once the consent of council had been obtained, the application would then be forwarded to the magistrate of Mthatha and the race of the seller and the buyer had to be specified in terms of section 6(1) of Act no 25 of 1945;³⁸
- (c) The magistrate would then recommend 'for submission' of the application to the Governor-General via the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories;³⁹
- (d) The Chief Magistrate would indicate his approval (if applicable) and forward the application to the Secretary for Native Affairs;⁴⁰
- (e) Finally a certificate of approval would be issued by the Governor General through the Secretary for Native Affairs and only then could the land be transferred to the new Black owner.⁴¹

However, even these measures failed to stem Black accumulation of land in Mthatha. Redding (1992: 71) argues that the struggles of the Black middle class against the limitation of their property rights eventually forced the central government into declaring Mthatha a Black urban area in 1954 (Redding 1987: 274). This was unlike other municipalities.

J. Maqubela, a long-standing resident of Mthatha, describes in his interview the first generation as a 'generation of elites' who always married within what they considered to be 'their class'. They often had attended the same missionary schools as their spouses. Their influence extended to the cultural realm where they organised and ran 'eisteddfods' with choirs from as far afield as Kimberley coming to Mthatha to compete.⁴² As a result, Ncambedlana became enshrined in the popular imagination as an important place in the urban history of South Africa. J. Maqubela puts it this way:

Let me say Ncambedlana here in Mthatha is known as (...) or here in South Africa, is known as the first place to have Black people buy land in an urban area. Most of these people, according to the literature, were people such as Mr. Tennyson [Makiwane] and Mr. Elisha Mda.⁴³

³⁷ MRA, 4/24/13/2 file no. 126/c, letter from Mr. H. Perry, Town Clerk, to Messrs Gush, Muggleston and Heathchote, 26 Feb. 1954.

³⁸ MRA, 4/24/13/2, file no. N9/6/2, letter from Messrs Gush et al. to the Magistrate of Umtata, 4 March 1954.

³⁹ MRA, 4/24/13/2, file no. N9/6/2, letter of the Magistrate of Umtata to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, R. Wronsky, 8 March 1954.

⁴⁰ MRA, 4/24/13/2, file no. 32/6/4, letter from R. Wronsky, Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, to the Secretary for Native Affairs, 12 March 1954.

⁴¹ MRA, 4/24/13/2, file no. 189/313L, Governor General's certificate of approval, 4 May 1954.

⁴² Interview with Mr. J. Maqubela, Mthatha, 19/07/2010. Mr. Maqubela is presently writing a biography of Mr. T. M. Makiwane).

⁴³ *Ibid.*

The contrasting backgrounds of Tennyson M. Makiwane and Elisha Mda provide an insightful picture of the first generation. Additionally, they show that political and economic power did not always reside in one individual. In these two important historical actors we see two types: The politician and the entrepreneur.

Like Elisha Mda, T.M. Makiwane, the son of Elijah Makiwane,⁴⁴ had graduated from Lovedale College and became a teacher (Redding 1993). In 1910, he bought land in Ncambedlana and left Lovedale to take up a position as a clerk for the Transkeian Territories General Council.⁴⁵ T.M. Makiwane was also active in local political/civic organisations, for example, he was an elected member of the Umtata Native Advisory Board, a member of the Ncambedlana Ratepayers Association, *Iliso Lomzi* (the Native Vigilance Association), the Native Welfare Society, and the Umtata Joint Council of Europeans, Natives and Coloured People (Redding 1993). While maintaining his occupation as clerk, T.M. Makiwane was also a successful farmer. The profits from agriculture, together with his salary, allowed him to educate not only his children, but also his wife (Virginia) who established her own career as a social worker. In 1943, he bought six more plots in Ncambedlana for £800 – at a time when the salary for an experienced African clerk was around £160 per annum (*Ibid.*). Mda Mda describes T.M. Makiwane as the ‘first natural politician’ among the Black civil servants:

Gambu [his clan name] was dissatisfied, because it was said that the *Bunga* [Native Representative Council] was meant for Blacks but now every government structure had to reflect European supremacy and Black subordination. All right, Gambu was chafing under this. So, when Poto [Mpondo Paramount chief] took over in Nyandeni, he [Makiwane] saw what was happening in Eastern Mpondoland under Marhelane and his secretary Tshongwane. T.M. Makiwane was at the Bunga and he left to become Poto’s secretary, thinking he was going to emulate what was happening in Eastern Pondoland.

According to Mda Mda, what T.M. Makiwane tried to emulate was the defiant approach to colonial structures that was exhibited by Marhelane and Tshongwane:

Marhelane would not even go to the magistrate offices in Lusikisiki. If the magistrate wanted to address anything regarding *amaMpondo* he had to go to Qawukeni [the place of the chief].

According to Mda Mda’s interpretation, the government had to ‘go gently’ in dealing with the *amaMpondo* because the *amaMpondo* upheld the fact that they had not been defeated. Once they realised that the colonial government had designs on their land, they started negotiations for a protectorate status but were eventually annexed to the Cape colony without their having been conquered militarily (see Southall 1982: 62, 67). Apparently, T.M. Makiwane was inspired by

⁴⁴ Mid-nineteenth century Church and African education movement leader.

⁴⁵ Also known as *Bunga*, this was a form of local government based on district councils of elected Black members under the chairmanship of white magistrates (Hammond-Tooke 1968).

what he saw in Eastern Mpondoland, where the relations between the *amaMpondo* and the government were as if between ‘one state and another’, and tried to emulate this in Western Mpondoland under Paramount Chief Victor Poto. T.M. Makiwane’s stay in Western Mpondoland did, however, not last long due to a plot to undermine him, instigated by the Chief Magistrate.

The Chief Magistrate played upon the insecurities of Poto’s younger brother Notsolo. According to Mda Mda’s narrative, the Chief Magistrate is alleged to have remarked:

‘Notsolo, who is the real younger brother to Poto, is it Makiwane now? I see everywhere, it’s Poto and Makiwane. Even in the meetings the person by Poto’s side is Makiwane. You on the other hand, have been pushed aside’. In the next meeting, while Makiwane was still arranging his books, Notsolo said, ‘Heh Makiwane khawudeda’ pho’ (‘Makiwane move away from there’!) Makiwane laughed, not knowing if this was a joke. Then Notsolo took out a sjambok and let fly on Makiwane. What I’m trying to say is that whites incited people to fight among themselves.

When Makiwane came back to Mthatha he started the civic organisation, *umLungiseleli waBantu* (‘Native Welfare Society’). Mda Mda remembers being called to its meetings so that decisions would have a broader base and would be more representative. According to both Mda Mda and J. Maqubela, the Transkei Native Library was also the ‘brainchild’ of T.M. Makiwane. The Umtata library was for whites only and Blacks could not access it. Mda Mda narrates:

When I was doing my law studies and exploited by the whites, you are doing your articles, you do not get a cent, nothing! You cannot even afford to buy the books nor can you access the office library. Mr. Makiwane then had to help. I would go to him and say ‘Mr. Makiwane can you please look up such and such a book for me’.

T.M. Makiwane is also credited with opposing government attempts to take away native trust lands such as Hillcrest, and resettle Coloured people that were being displaced by apartheid from villages such as Kroza. Importantly, Hillcrest was a commonage used by the Ncamedlana’s Black middle class for grazing their cattle. T.M. Makiwane pointed to the fact that the land had been incorporated under the Native Trust in 1936 and didn’t belong to the government or the municipality. This apparently saved the day as according to Mda Mda, ‘very few people knew such details’. He continued: ‘That’s what I mean when I say he is the first natural real politician’. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, this commonage was eventually lost to housing development.

This characterisation of Makiwane as a civic-spirited individual is also confirmed by J. Maqubela, who explained that Makiwane was referred to as *ubomi be Transkei* (‘the life and soul of the Transkei’), precisely because of his involvement in civic and political activities. He was also the editor of the bi-monthly English/isiXhosa agricultural journal, *Umcebesi Womlimi Nomfuyi/Agricultural and Pastoral Guide*, founded in 1925 and published by the Ag-

riculture Department of the United Transkeian Territories General Council (see Switzer & Switzer 1979). On retirement T.M. Makiwane became the editor of the weekly newspaper *Umthunywa* ('The Messenger') and his place in *Umcebisi* was taken by Mr. Mthongana another member of the first generation. Like Mda Mda, J. Maqubela describes Mr. Makiwane as 'very helpful'. When chiefs were in trouble with the government, they would run to him and he would advise and draft their letters of reply: 'That's why he was called the life and soul of the Transkei, he was that kind of person, very helpful, very helpful.'⁴⁶ Apart from his editorial work, T.M. Makiwane is also credited with promoting agricultural shows all over the Transkei, together with his great friend Mr. C.K. Sakwe, also a member of the first generation.⁴⁷ His civic and political activism is celebrated by the poet St. J. Page Yako in the poem *Izibongo zika Gambu* – 'The praises of Gambu'.⁴⁸

Elisha Mda, on the other hand, seems to have made his mark in the economic sphere. Elisha Mda's status as a man of means is aptly captured by his moniker of *unohamba bengamthandi ngenxa yeento zakhe*, which literally means, 'one who goes unloved because of his material resources'.⁴⁹ Archival and oral sources suggest that Elisha Mda had managed to reinvent himself as landowner in the town even prior to the 1908 land auction in Ncambedlana. A couple of entries in the council records of 1907 support the assertion by Mda Mda that Elisha Mda was indeed the first Black ratepayer in Mthatha. His name is the only Black one that appears in dealings with the council. For example, an application to make bricks on a lot previously used by a certain Rigney 'on the East side of the Um-tata River' is noted and granted by the council.⁵⁰ Another entry deals with a damages complaint. A municipal scotch cart had emptied a load of stones, damaging Mda's fence and causing injury to his stock at 'No. 3 Isidwadwa'.⁵¹ Elisha Mda demanded that the driver of the cart be charged with the expense of repairing the fence. Elisha Mda had secured the place at Isidwadwa after the council had ruled that livestock should not be kept in town. Mda Mda explains:

As the town expanded, cattle were no longer allowed. Earlier, people had kraals even in the town but it was decided that cattle should be removed from the town, 'no livestock here'! This meant grandfather had to get a new place. The place is now called Sidwadwa Valley. He had a livestock pen there and kept a lot of cattle and sheep.

⁴⁶ Interview with Mr. J. Maqubela, Mthatha, 19/07/2010.

⁴⁷ Personal correspondence with Mr. Mthobi Makiwane, letter dated 1/08/2010.

⁴⁸ *Umcebisi* Womlimi Nomfuyi/Agricultural and Pastoral Guide, May 1950.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no.784, application for brick licence by Elisha Mda, 4 March 1907.

⁵¹ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 221, letter of complaint by Elisha Mda, 17April 1907.

From the above accounts it is clear therefore that Elisha already had a hold on land and livestock in Mthatha before 1908. Archival and oral sources clearly demonstrate his social standing in the town. It is possible that association with the Chief Magistrate of the Transkei, Major Sir Henry Elliot, provided him with important social capital that allowed him to recuperate ownership of land after his dispossession in the last war (on social capital see Bourdieu 1986). Major Sir Henry Elliot had reportedly settled loyal Africans on Mpondomise land near the town and gave them captured livestock after the latter's Rebellion of 1880 (Redding 1993).

The importance of social connections is yet again demonstrated in how Elisha obtained land in Ncambedlana. Mda Mda continues:

When Ncambedlana was being plotted, Klette⁵² came and spoke to grandfather 'Mda, you are a Xhosa man who likes livestock, now you stay here [in town] and then have to wake up and travel [to Sidwadwa]. I'll give you a place in Ncambedlana, there is more scope there. Give me your place in Blakeway Road and take mine'. You see Ntsele's [Makiwane's son] home? That was grandfather's farm, that's where he was. He got it from Klette.

Elisha appears to have been a seasoned entrepreneur. As with his transport riding and farm in British Kaffraria, and livestock and brick making in Mthatha, even in Ncambedlana he quickly proved his mettle:

He was smart. You see, the place on top, that is Nyinyibhoxo's, Reverend Jafta's, place. It belonged to the Zibi family. Beyond that, the whole place belonged to grandfather. He took all [the plots], five morgen, five morgen and consolidated them.

Elisha's accumulation of land in Ncambedlana, as outlined by Mda Mda, is also recorded in the council records. For example, minutes of the Umtata Municipal Council meeting of 9 June 1908 show that Elisha was contesting the valuation of about six plots he intended buying.⁵³ However, according to Sastrie Mda, another of Elisha's grandsons and Mda Mda's brother, Elisha died indigent in 1936. With three others, he was persuaded by some white lawyer to buy land in the Orange Free State and sunk all his resources into this venture only to discover later that the land was heavily mortgaged.⁵⁴

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the role of land in the definition of the Black middle class in the former Bantustans needs to be recognised. Redding's study of the Mthatha middle class that developed at the turn of the twentieth century demon-

⁵² E.J. Klette was the auctioneer for the Ncambedlana plots (see WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minutes no. 734 and 1139, Council Meetings, 10 Feb. and 11 Nov. 1908; also Redding 1993).

⁵³ WCAARS, 3UTA, 1/1/1/6, minute no. 948, council meeting, 9 June 1908.

⁵⁴ Interview with Sastrie Mda, Mthatha, 14/07/2010.

strates how this middle class developed as a result of their combination of land and occupation. In this chapter, the so-called first generation was discussed.

The first generation emerged in 1908, when land was auctioned to Blacks in Ncambedlana, and consolidated in the following decades. Redding has argued that proletarianisation was uneven and that the first generation were descendents of the nineteenth century peasantry who pursued an education and became a middle class in the reserve towns. This chapter provided a broader picture of this middle class through the life story Elisha Mda, one of the members of this class as identified by Redding. Elisha Mda's life story demonstrates how the acquisition of education involved agency on the part of his patriotic 'red' elders in light of the unfolding colonial land dispossession and domination. It also showed how education became a means of expressing social status and, importantly, a springboard for accumulation of land. Thus, his story provides a fuller insight of the relationship between education, landownership and the development of the Black middle class even before 1908.

This chapter has also argued that the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906 is of importance if one wants to understand why land became available to Blacks in 1908. It is part and parcel of the bigger story. Moreover, it draws attention to the fact that as some educated and affluent Blacks were able to purchase land, others were displaced because of exactly this opportunity.

Lastly the contrasting economic and political pursuits of the members of the first generation as represented by Elisha Mda and T.M. Makiwane show that political and economic power in the Bantustans did not always coincide in the same individual as argued by Southall (1982). In the case of these two, each concentrated his skills in a particular domain: Politics and entrepreneurship respectively. The following chapter discusses the second generation of the Ncambedlana middle class, that is, those who purchased land after 1950.

The second generation – building a community, 1950-1963

It was a very close community, and a community (...) when I say close (...) when something happens here in Ncambedlana, say somebody has passed away, maybe on the other side [of Ncambedlana], it would be known the same day and everybody used to go and give support. When I say support, I don't mean to go for prayers only. Some would bring milk, others juice, because there would be visitors throughout the week. And everybody would be involved in the planning of the ceremony whether it's a wedding or a funeral or whatever (...) but everybody. All the families here were close. One didn't wait to be asked for support.¹

Introduction

This chapter looks at Ncambedlana's Black middle class in a period defined by the rise of apartheid and the development of the Bantustan strategy. The political-ideological underpinnings of the National Party's apartheid strategy were that South Africa was a multi-national state composed of whites and non-whites, who were separated, among other things, by culture, language and traditions, and thus should develop separately (Molteno 1977; Sizwe 1979). In line with this logic, Blacks were seen as being composed of different 'nationalities' and so, were to be separated from the South African body politic and located in separate 'national' states', or Homelands, where they could enjoy political rights. As a result, as discussed earlier, the Transkei Bantustan was granted self-government in 1963 and 'independence' in 1976 (see also Ntsebeza forthc.). Various scholars have argued that the objective of the Bantustan strategy was the destruction of growing African nationalism and Black working class unity, both of which transcended ethnic boundaries. In addition, the strategy aimed at keeping the value of

¹ Interview with Mrs. Nomonde Bam, Mthatha, 19/07/2010.

labour low as migrant labourers continued to rely, in part, on rural subsistence (Southall 1982: 281; Sizwe 1979: 63; Molteno 1977). However, the creation of a 'comprador' Black bourgeoisie, which included the middle class, marked a major departure from the historically contingent development expressed by the reserve strategy (Molteno 1977: 30).

Chapter 2 discussed how the earlier reserve system had destroyed the peasantry in the early twentieth century and driven many Blacks into wage labour. Redding (1993) argues that commercial farming in Mthatha, which had protected the middle class from sliding into migrant labour, had declined by 1950. What implications, if any, did the rise of National Party have for the continuities and discontinuities of the Ncambedlana middle class?

This chapter argues that the Mthatha middle class that combined occupation and landownership continued after the 1950s. Mthatha's landed middle class which developed in Ncambedlana during this period will be classified as the second generation.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section discusses the post 1950s development of a second generation middle class in Ncambedlana. This took place within the context of the newly installed National Party government's attempts to limit Black urban property ownership. The development and growth of this class in spite of attempts to limit its accumulation potential, shows that the Bantustan strategy – to create a Black bourgeoisie – did not emerge smoothly (see also Sizwe 1979: 62ff.). Importantly, this section will show the uncertainties of the apartheid planners with regard to the status of the town of Mthatha and Black land rights within the town's boundaries. It also suggests that scholars who have focused on the apartheid state's role in strategically creating *beneficiaries* of the Bantustan strategy (see Southall 1982: 172ff.; Josana 1989) might have overlooked the organic development of this class.

The second section proposes a typology of the second generation and the ways in which its internal differentiations manifest themselves in the commercial/subsistence models of agriculture practiced by members of this group. In addition, this section also provides a comparison between the first and second generation. The third section looks at the central role of women in the organisation of agricultural production. In addition, their contribution to the reproduction of middle class values in their homes, as well as in the neighbourhood in general, will be discussed. The final section, followed by a short conclusion, argues that Ncambedlana's development into a residential neighbourhood with a distinct middle class identity coincided with the period of the second generation, that is, the years after 1950.

The second generation, 1950-1963

The development of the second generation came at a time when the National Party set about tightening segregation laws. One such law, the Group Areas Act of 1950, demarcated separate residential and business areas for Blacks and whites. It heralded a time of forced removals. The end result was that Blacks were herded into locations which were often far away from the places of work (Horrell 1971: 30). Black business owners were relegated to trade outside the Central Business Districts (CBDs) of cities to remove them from fair competition with whites and thus negatively affecting their chances at economic success and prosperity. Yet, at the same time as people were being removed from areas such as Sophiatown and District Six, the second generation in Ncambedlana was acquiring land and urban property. This was unusual because towns such as Mthatha were not part of the reserves but regarded as 'white spots'. They were thus subject to the same legislation that transformed urban communities in 'white' South Africa (Southall 1982: 147ff.). It is only much later, in 1976 when 'independence' was declared, that the entire territory of the Transkei, including the towns, fell under the Bantustan government. How can one understand the seeming paradox of the apartheid strategy, which, on the one hand, attempted to prevent the permanent urbanisation of Blacks by confining them to the reserves (Seeking & Nattrass 2006: 103; Sizwe 1979: 65); while at the same time allowing Black property accumulation within reserve towns?

A number of explanations have been offered for this apparent discord. One view suggests that the minority white interests in the reserves were far removed from the bulk of the white electorate constituency of the National Party government. As a result, they were not a central pre-occupation for the regime (Redding 1993; Southall 1982: 151ff.). Another view argues that the apartheid strategy did not evolve linearly but in 'twists and turns', and that the central component of this strategy – the Bantustan strategy – did not crystallise until after the 1960s (Sizwe 1979: 62ff.).

The position of the National Party government on the question of Black property ownership within the Mthatha municipality was contradictory. Tensions around this issue resurfaced as the nationalists sought to enforce segregation according to the Group Areas Act in the early 1950s. In a letter addressed to the Ncambedlana Ratepayers Association, H.F. Verwoerd, who became the Prime Minister of South Africa in 1958, outlined government policy with regard to Mthatha as follows:

Umtata is at present the centre of all governmental activities in the Transkeian Territories and is also probably the largest and most important commercial centre. As a result it has a large European population, and many of the Europeans have large vested interests involving a considerable amount of capital. For the moment this centre accordingly be regarded as

European in character and in general the policy of the government in regard to it must be identical with that pertaining elsewhere throughout the Union.²

Verwoerd's letter, copied to the Chief Magistrates of the Transkeian Territories and Mthatha respectively, seemed to have spurred Mthatha's whites – who resented Black town residency as well as envied Black business prosperity in the town (see Redding 1993) – into action. They collected petitions aimed at the removal of Black properties in the CBD. Among the few who managed to hang onto their properties was Mr. E.Z. Mzimba, a leading poultry producer and one time chairperson of the Transkei Natives Representative Council (Bunga). As narrated by Mda Mda, the circumstances that led to the Mzimbas becoming the only Black household remaining in the CBD are as follows:

When the apartheid government came to power, it became clear that Blacks could not have property in town. They were raided and uprooted from town. The Afrikaners were doing the rounds collecting petitions regarding the Black spots. The Mzimba home was the only Black one remaining. They were told to move but others [whites] complained saying 'not the Mzimbas'. Mr. Mzimba was a leading chicken and egg producer, so much that the market master, Richardson, when it was time to sell Mzimba's produce, would say: 'Mzimba's eggs, er (...) ladies and gentlemen, the best in the market'

While E.Z. Mzimba's status as a leading poultry producer appears to have saved him from eviction, a significant number of Blacks were chased away from town. The move to drive Blacks from the CBD was not only motivated by race politics but also by profit interests. The following excerpt of a letter from J.J. Nte, addressed to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, suggests lack of transparency when it came to obtaining and making use of urban property (spelling and grammar as per original). In 1956, J.J. Nte had applied to the council to grant him permission to open a garage and shop in Ncamedlana on his erf 1686. The matter was not approved by the council and a lengthy correspondence followed. In 1960, J.J. Nte complained:

I wish to state that when I made my application the council advised me that the grounds for refusing a grant was because the National Roads Department objected and also that it was in conflict with the Town Planners Scheme. I then lodged in an appeal when I was advised that I should wait until the objections of the provincial planning scheme were invited. In November, 1957 I lodged in my objections. Up to that stage I had been led to believe, by council, that Council had no objection and would recommend the matter but the National Road and the Town Planner raised the objections. Apparently this was not done.

I may add that the personel of the Council consists of all *Commercial men, apparently safeguarding their own interests, thus maintaining a monopoly*, despite the fact that a few priviledges have been extended to us. To further substantiate my contention, during the year 1956 Council urged the Police to round up Bantu Business men running various businesses in the Town who apparently had not the permission of the Governor General to occupy premises. Several men, including myself, were threatened with prosecution. I, together with others abandoned our businesses of only livelihood, and the rest remained because of repre-

² MAR, 4/24/13/2, file no. 4/10/2, letter by H. F Verwoerd (Minister of Native Affairs) to the secretary, Ncamedlana Ratepayers Association, dated 15 Sept. 1951.

sentations made on their behalf by their Land Lords, to the Group Areas Board and the matter of prosecution has since been dropped.

I then decided to open up business in Ncambedlana Township, *a place set aside for Bantus*, and in accordance with the Government Policy, amongst my own people. To my disappointment and surprise, I am being denied even the only chance I have to earn descent livelihood like others. Last but not least I may further add the fact that I served the Union Government for approximately 30 years and was retired, owing to ill health, at Umtata my place of domicile. The retirement beyond my control, has now thrown me out of the market and I can only exist by my own efforts.³ (My emphases)

The case of J.J. Nte highlights highly questionable practices: The council's attempts to annihilate Black competition by denying them the opportunity to use their land as they see fit for commercial purposes, using offices such as the town planners and the National Roads Department as excuses for their decision, forcibly removing Black business owners from town and threatening them with prosecution. Importantly, these practices were not limited to the CBD but extended to Ncambedlana which members of the Black middle class saw as the only place in Mthatha where they could still prosper.

Such evidence for the harassment of Mthatha's Black middle class during the 1950s and 1960s suggests that the Bantustan strategy was not yet firmly in place and that the process was gradual rather than sudden. It also lays bare the race and class contradictions in which the second generation found themselves. While they were in a privileged position as property owners, they were subjected to the same race laws that affected the general Black populace.

Perhaps the most salient point in the above letter concerns the 'life chances' of those who aspired to entrepreneurship and economic strategies which went beyond salaried occupations. The example of J.J. Nte demonstrates the resilience of material foundations of class compared to occupational foundations of class. His forced retirement due to 'ill-health' did not result in destitution. Even when he was evicted from town, he had a chance to 'earn a decent living' and to exist by his 'own efforts'. His case highlights the limitations of defining the middle class by occupation only.

Besides the businessmen, those evicted from town included teachers and other professionals who had lived in rented accommodation in various boarding houses. This group came to form the nucleus of the second generation of Ncambedlana's landed Black middle class as will be discussed in more detail below. Once again, the fact that they managed to buy land in Ncambedlana during this period points to the ambiguities of the apartheid strategy with regard to the Bantustan towns (see also Southall 1982: 146ff.).

³ MAR, 4/24/13/2, [file number missing], letter by J.J. Nte to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, 10 June 1960. The letter forms part of an extensive correspondence regarding the matter.

As discussed earlier, Ncambedlana became part of the Umtata Municipality in 1907. This meant that in principle, it was part of 'white' South Africa. However, during the reserve period, Black land accumulation had been allowed for the reasons discussed in the previous chapter. Sizwe (1979: 76ff.) argues that between 1948 and 1957, the National Party government had merely continued with the reserve strategy. This possibly explains why Black landownership continued in Ncambedlana whereas it came under pressure in the Mthatha CBD. Ncambedlana is presented as a unique challenge to the NP government by H.F. Verwoerd in the earlier cited letter (1951):

I realise that the position at Ncambedlana is unique in that the area borders on the Native Reserves and that the general authority permitting the acquisition of freehold title to the lots in that area was granted with the full consent of the local authority. I have, therefore, agreed that the position there should remain unchanged, although I would prefer to see Ncambedlana excised from the Municipal area, if this could be done without prejudice to the occupants of the lots in so far as the provision of services and amenities by the Umtata Municipality is concerned.⁴

While the Umtata Municipal Council had vehemently opposed the excision of Ncambedlana from the municipality during the reserve period (see previous chapter), the newly installed National Party government now appeared in favour of such a move. Most whites in the Transkei reserve, including the Umtata Municipal Council, were aligned to the United Party, which was defeated by the National Party in the 1948 election (see Southall 1982: 149). This demonstrates the strategies of the different ruling classes with regard to the Black middle class. The liberal 'bourgeoisie' represented by the United Party had attempted to co-opt the Black middle class into a class alliance to ward off growing worker militancy (Sizwe 1979: 59ff.). On the other hand, the national 'bourgeoisie' represented by the National Party government, informed by their own Afrikaner sectionalist experience, appreciated the development of a 'bourgeois' class along similar lines. Through their Bantustan strategy, they sought to stimulate a Black middle class that they could control and thus, drive popular struggles 'into the sand'.

However, for the time being, the question of Black ownership in Ncambedlana was a *fait accompli* and the National Party government appeared to be in a dilemma with regard to how to balance ideological factors, which operated at the level of race, and political factors, which necessitated a new strategy, the Bantustan strategy. The apartheid policies developed by the National Party government were directed at the political and the economic exclusion of Blacks. The urban areas, in particular, were viewed as white terrain where Blacks should only so-

⁴ See footnote 2 for full reference. The letter addresses a wide range of issues concerning Mthatha and environs. Other topics addressed by Verwoerd in this lengthy letter are concerns about business zoning, native trading opportunities in villages, and provision of services.

journal temporarily to service the labour needs of the white economy. Reserve towns, however, had an ambiguous identity.

The development of the second generation in Ncambedlana preceded the full implementation of the Bantustan strategy and was thus not a creation of the apartheid state. However, they were better situated to exploit the effects of this strategy such as, opportunities created by the granting of self-government to the Transkei in 1963.

A typology of the second generation

Although the first and second generation came from roughly the same occupational background (i.e. white collar professionals), it appears that teachers played a particularly important role in the second generation. They were a highly status-conscious group and occasionally, were known to flaunt their university qualifications to distinguish themselves. According to Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, who settled in Ncambedlana in the 1960s:

The majority of them were teachers, eh, the majority of them had degrees, studied at Fort Hare and Lovedale, we used to boast about those things. That if you didn't study in Lovedale or Fort Hare then, you were really a nobody. You were a nobody. But in their simple way, they were people who were accommodative, they did not really look down upon those who really were not able to reach the highest educational standards.⁵

Thus, unlike the first generation, who were mostly college graduates, a high proportion of the second generation had university education. Besides the 'semi-professional' group, i.e. teachers, nurses, clergy and clerks, the second generation included professionals, i.e. lawyers and doctors (according to Crankshaw's, 1997, classification), as well as entrepreneurs, mostly in the transport sector. The transport entrepreneurs provided much needed communications between Mthatha, the capital and commercial centre, and the rural towns of the Transkei. Servicing these routes enabled people to come to Mthatha to purchase goods as well as to take these back home. This also meant migrants could be easily brought to the railway station in Mthatha as they travelled back and forth between the mines of Johannesburg and the Transkei hinterland (see also Chapter 2 regarding loans given to transport entrepreneurs by the XDC).

What was common to all three groups was that they practiced agriculture in addition to other forms of employment. According to Aunt Laura, agriculture was a lifestyle in most second generation households. Aunt Laura continues:

Some of them came and welcomed me in the area and said, 'We are pleased to hear that there are young couples like you'. Most of them were in the ages of 50 and 60 at that time when we arrived in 1963. So, they welcomed us and then they told us how they were living. They had cattle, they were selling *amasi* [sour-milk]. They used to do a lot of agriculture.

⁵ Interview with Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha 20/07/2010.

And *umbona* [maize] was one of the main things which they were thriving with. And then they used to sell those. And they used to deliver milk to some of the houses in town, to the hospital in town, to the nurses who wanted *amasi* [sour-milk] and so on.

This extract shows clearly that commercial agriculture continued in Ncambedlana beyond the 1950s.

Internal stratification of the second generation is reflected in the model of agriculture practiced. It was mostly the ‘semi-professionals’ who engaged in a combination of subsistence and commercial agriculture. The reason for this is clear. Compared to the professional category, they earned a comparatively lower salary (see Crankshaw 1997: 10; Nzimande 1990: 182). Land provided them with an important material base which allowed them to transcend the sole reliance on salaries. At the same time, it provided them with food. The proceeds from agriculture were often the basis on which education was funded. Take for example the Mpumlwanas, who supplied the local shops in the CBD with fresh produce from their farm, Reverend Mpumlwana’s son, Loyiso narrates:

We sold vegetables! That’s how we got educated. We sold it here in town. People sold, you know! They sold door to door. Others would come with vans, park them and sell cabbage. I mean there was a market which was down there, if you still remember. People would go there, store their goods and sell. So, it was a market! The market was there so we sold in that market, Mthatha Market which was next to Jubilee Hall. So, there was a lot of this subsistence farming and commercial farming. People would consume and also sell (...) *people managed to put their kids to school. We got our education on the basis of commercial farming.* We had a donkey cart at home and we sold. We would load it and sell here in town.⁶ (My emphasis)

Another example, illustrating the continuation of agriculture within the second generation, is represented by the Moahloli family who came to Mthatha from Herschel in 1955. Mr. Moahloli’s father in law, C. Mnyani (a member of the first generation), owned five small holdings in Ncambedlana. He had sold two of these to a Mr. Maqubela and when he heard that Mr. Maqubela was re-selling he contacted his son-in-law in Herschel. The Moahloli family thus bought back the 10 hectare small holding which had previously been in the family. Locally, C. Mnyani was regarded as a progressive man in that he included his two daughters in his will, something which was ‘unusual in those days’ (as noted by Loyiso Mpumlwana). According to Moahloli’s son, Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli, C. Mnyani’s three sons inherited the remaining small holdings while the daughters, including Peter’s mother, got cattle. Peter’s mother, for example, got two oxen.

The Moahlolis practiced a mixture of subsistence and commercial farming on their small holding. Mr. Moahloli worked during the week as a school principal while his wife stayed home and looked after the farm. Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli explains:

⁶ Interview with Mr. Loyiso Mpumlwana, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

For instance in my home, we didn't buy milk. We didn't buy eggs. We didn't buy vegetables. We didn't buy chicken. Those we never bought. We would buy meat because we don't have it. We'd buy pork (...) we had a piggery but never for slaughter, it was to sell (...) every Saturday I would get a wheelbarrow full of vegetables to go and sell. So, I would go house to house. So, what I'm trying to say, these were self-sustainable farm plots. We were not commercial as such no, no, but we would sell excess, but mainly it was for food consumption in the house. My father was a principal of a school, he'd be working but my mother was a typical housewife who works in the garden.⁷

The commercial/subsistence farming combination, characteristic of many of Africa's food producers, has often remained hidden because farming is conventionally categorised as being either subsistence or commercial (Mafeje 2003). A mixture of these two, a form of semi-commercial farming, is generally believed to have terminated with Bundy's (1988) 'rise and fall' thesis. The urban location of Mthatha has further hidden this activity from the gaze of researchers: farming is commonly associated with rural areas, and is also not a feature of the middle class as commonly envisaged in sociology, i.e. as those who gain their class position largely through occupation (see Chapter 2). The town of Mthatha thus poses important challenges to what sociologists understand to be 'the urban condition'. Instead of looking at urban-rural linkages *across space* (see Brandel-Syrier 1971, discussed in Chapter 2), Mthatha forces researchers to redirect their gaze and recognise urban-rural unity *in one place*. Ncambedlana's second generation demonstrates the continuation of the subsistence/commercial combination in the second half of the twentieth century. Perhaps this allows us to talk of a 'rise and rise' thesis, that is, an ongoing combination of African subsistence/commercial agricultural production, albeit in a different class location, i.e. the middle class rather than the peasantry discussed by Bundy.

However, not all members of the second generation engaged in commercial agriculture. Although the professional group and entrepreneurs also owned land, they did not engage in commercial agriculture as such. They mostly kept livestock and engaged in agriculture for their own consumption. The transport entrepreneurs, especially, besides using land for residential and subsistence agriculture, also used it for business purposes such as office space, bus servicing station, as well as fleet transport parking. In general, the sale of livestock was not common with any of the members of the second generation. Livestock served mainly as an economic investment, reserved for a 'rainy day' when major finances were needed. However, livestock were used for ceremonial purposes, such as weddings and funerals. K.M.N. Guzana, who succeeded Paramount Chief Victor Poto as leader of the official opposition, the Democratic Party, in the Transkei legislature in 1966 (Southall 1982: 127ff.), belonged to this professional category. He originated from the Ciskei and had trained as a teacher before becoming

⁷ Interview with Mr. Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

a lawyer. After graduating from Fort Hare, he taught at Langa High School in Cape Town before moving to Buntingville College and then St. Johns College in Mthatha. According to Mr. Sastrie Mda, a former colleague of K.M.N. Guzana, students and colleagues at St. John's felt that K.M.N. Guzana was much more knowledgeable and better suited to teach English at Matric level than the white teacher who had completed only a junior course in English.⁸ Guzana, on the other hand, had majored in English at Fort Hare. Mr. Guzana, acclaimed as a highly accomplished public speaker, dominated the Transkei Legislative Assembly with 'flowery rhetoric and appeals to classical learning'. While impressive, it nonetheless went above the heads of his Mqanduli constituency (Southall 1982: 129). Guzana came from a teaching background, he had left due to professional frustration and the introduction of Bantu Education in the 1950s and trained as a lawyer. He later opened a law practice in the nearby town of Mqanduli. Importantly, a teaching qualification was often the springboard to other professional occupations (Nzimande 1990: 181).

K.M.N. Guzana is an example of the professional category of the second generation, that combined occupation with farming activities. Unlike the teachers, the latter activities within this group were mainly for private consumption. Gardening was frequently undertaken on residential plots. These were large, located on double erven sized stands. Mr. Guzana's eldest daughter, Monica, narrates:

Oh, it was lovely, we grew up well. Vegetables and all we got from the garden. We only bought meat and other things like *mealie-meal* [maize meal]. But vegetables we got from the garden: Beetroot, carrots, onion, cabbage, lettuce, everything! We picked from the garden. Mostly this side (pointing) was used only for vegetables. On that side, we sometimes put in potatoes only or maize. There would be so much maize! Growing up, we had to wake up early and do our bit of work there. Then, we would come back in the afternoon, when the sun is going down to finish up. When we came back from school, mom would be in the garden. She would have made us lunch and when we finished eating we would go to the garden. Dad would come back from work, we would go in to make supper and serve them supper. So, that was our way of life.⁹

Apart from food production, the Guzanas also engaged in horticulture on their residential plot. However, it does not appear as if this was commercial in any sense. Monica Guzana again:

Flower gardening! We called them by name, dahlias, carnations, roses! There was even a small rose plot that dad had planted. Lilies, begonias, every one of them, we knew by name. We knew that the Christmas tree had to be pruned at a specific time. After it had been pruned, we knew at which time it would bloom. Fertiliser would be put in at a specific time. Our moms knew all those things! Even the trees outside (pointing), we planted them with mom. She loved bushes a lot. She would plant bushes, dad would bring them.

⁸ Interview with Sastrie Mda, Mthatha, 13/7/2010, and Monica Guzana, Mthatha, 29/7/2010.

⁹ Interview with Monica Guzana, Mthatha, 29/7/2010.

The above cited extract illustrates that the second generation used land not only for food production but also for environmental purposes and home aesthetics. The planting of flowers in home gardens was something that middle class women's organisations like *Zenzele*, (literally 'do it for your-self') encouraged explicitly.¹⁰ It also shows that the women and children of these households played an important role in the reproduction of this middle class. In other words, while the husband and father was more often engaged in salaried occupational activities, wives and children provided household and agricultural labour. The labour practices of the second generation, as well as the role of women in the reproduction of this class, will be dealt with more fully in the following section.

Another example of how land continued to play an important role in the lives of the second generation is that of transport entrepreneur Albert M. Raziya who only had little formal education. Albert M. Raziya bought two one hectare plots in 1952 for a total sum of £1000.¹¹ The Raziya's ran a bus service called *Mayibuye I Afrika Bus Service* from 1947 to 1979. The routes stretched between Mthatha, Engcobo, Mqanduli and Tsolo. *Mayibuye I Afrika* (literally 'let Africa come back') was a popular motto of the ANC in its early years. It reflected a clarion call for regaining Africa's independence, to use her lands and wealth for the dignity and livelihood of her people and, most importantly, to recognise Africans as full citizens in South Africa (Buthelezi 2002: 46ff.). Albert Raziya's, wife, M.M.M. Raziya, was the one who decided on the name for the bus company.¹² She was a registered nursing sister trained in the missionary institutions of Clarkebury Institute, Lovedale Training College and Victoria Hospital. In the 1960s, she left nursing to focus her energies on the family business.

According to their son Mziwanele 'Poni' Raziya, their father Albert Raziya, used one of the plots he had purchased to open a grocery store and thus to expand their business interests. Mr. Raziya also had a farm in Ncambedlana where they did some agriculture for a short period and kept livestock. Like others, their family did not buy milk and vegetables but produced their own. After Albert Raziya passed away in 1969, his son 'Poni' converted their farmland into a workshop and parking garage for their fleet of buses.¹³

Another entrepreneur who used land for non-agricultural purposes was Ngubethole Bam. Ngubethole Bam bought land in Ncambedlana in 1952. He was a teacher and graduate of Fort Hare. He eventually left teaching and went into the taxi business, using first his private car to ferry passengers in and around town.

¹⁰ See for example the minutes of the meeting of the Clarkebury Men and Women Farmers Union on 12 April 1947 (reported in *Umcebisi Womlimo Nomfuyi*, May 1947).

¹¹ MAR, 4/24/13/2, file no. 2/9/3/15, record of purchase by Albert M. Raziya, lot 1644 and lot 1645, 3 Jan. 1952.

¹² Interview with Mrs. M.M.M. Raziya, East London, 04/6/2010.

¹³ Interview with Mziwanele 'Poni' Raziya, Mthatha, 31/7/2010.

In time he ran more than one taxi and eventually a fleet of buses in the 1970s, the *Bam Brothers' Bus Service*. In addition to providing space for building a house, which also served as office space, he used his property to build a workshop for the buses. Later, the Bams diversified into other businesses, including a restaurant in Dutywa and a bottle store and hotel in Mt. Ayliff.¹⁴

His daughter-in-law, Nomonde Bam, recalls that other Fort Hare graduates thought Ngubethole Bam had embarrassed them by going into the taxi business, and reported him at his *alma mater*.

[He was] a graduate, he was a teacher at Manzimtoti [a school in Durban, established by John L. Dube, first president of the ANC] during those years. According to what I hear, the story goes that he went on and got frustrated with teaching. He went and bought himself a car, put his degree cap to the side and became a taxi man. As a result of doing that he was seen as a very bad example by other graduates who went on to report him at Fort Hare, that he had embarrassed them, that he was a taxi man, he goes with other taxi men, dressed in a long coat tied with a string [working class clothing]. He goes with taxi men, a whole graduate of Fort Hare, and they felt that he had embarrassed them, but he knew what he wanted.

This anecdote shows the second generation to be a status conscious group, something also noted by Aunt Laura (above). In other words, property ownership and affluence did not necessarily mean acceptance and status. Styles of life, and how one made one's money, were subject to certain norms and standards of acceptability and propriety. Those who were seen as violating these codes or standards could be subjected to censure, as in the case of Ngubethole Bam (see also Mkele 1961).

A family who moved from full-time professional employment to entrepreneurship are the the Mpahlwas who bought land in Ncambedlana in 1963. Initially they mainly used their land for residential and subsistence purposes. Laura Mpahlwa was a nursing sister while her husband Max was a boarding master at St. John's College. She cites the inadequacy of salaries as the reason for starting out in business:

For example, I was a nurse and I just couldn't survive with the money which I was getting as a nurse. I used to sell pantyhoses, necklaces from the boot of my car. When I was off duty, I moved around and sold these things and made money. And when I made money eventually, I decided to leave nursing [in 1973] and opened the shop because I could see that there was more income from business.¹⁵

In time Aunt Laura's husband Max also left his work and went full time into the family business.¹⁶ This indicates that both middle class men and women were

¹⁴ Interview with Ngubethole Bam's daughter-in-law, Nomonde Bam, Mthatha, 19/07/2010.

¹⁵ Interview with Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 20/07/2010.

¹⁶ Southall (1982: 197) discusses complaints leveled against the involvement of civil servants, including teachers, in business. These businesses were typically registered under the wives' names to circumvent regulations which barred civil servants and senior bureaucrats from engaging in private business.

active in commercial activities, and often ran such ventures as a family business. The next chapter will discuss other land and property acquisitions of the Mpahlwas. It will also show how they have influenced the widespread conversion from agriculture to residential land uses that characterise this middle class today.

Black middle class women, labour and class reproduction

Understanding the role of women is critical in analyzing how Ncambedlana's middle class reproduced itself across time. Too often occupational class schemes are based mainly on the occupation of the household head, which in many contexts refers to the male breadwinner (Seekings & Natrass 2006: 245ff; Horn 1991). As most of the women of the second generation were homemakers, they displayed, what Wright (1997) calls 'mediated class locations'. In other words, they were assigned the class position of their employed husbands. However, simply focusing on occupations of the men would obscure the lived experience of these women. Bradford's (2000) feminist critique of the 'rise and fall' thesis, for example, centres on the silencing of women voices as an integral and active part of the Black peasantry. Women, according to Bradford, were crucial to the success of this peasantry, but their contribution has been written out by scholars.

Most of the women of the second generation had similar qualifications and had gone to the same missionary institutions as their male counterparts. However, they often found their careers cut short once they got married. For example, married women teachers had only very limited employment opportunities due to gender-based discrimination by the apartheid education department, a form of discrimination which singled out 'married women':

A married woman was not considered for a permanent position as principal, deputy principal or vice principal; and in competition for any post, regardless of experience or ability, preference is given to males and single women and what is defined as 'a married woman who may compete': One whose husband for health reasons is unable to support her, 'who may be allowed by the Department to compete on an equal footing with unmarried teachers, subject to such conditions as may be laid down by the Department'. (Van den Heever 1975, cited in Kotecha 1994)

The position of married women teachers was the same in the Transkei, at least until self-government in 1963. With their career prospects limited by gender discriminatory policies, the women of the second generation became central in the organisation and supervision of household production activities. The second generation exploited various types of labour in agricultural production to satisfy household consumption needs and to produce a surplus for sale. The household worked the farm together, in other words, the labour power of available household members was used. Households were mostly composed of nuclear families, a structure typical of middle classes elsewhere; few Ncambedlana families lived with their extended family (although this occurred now and then). Household la-

bour would often be in short supply due to the husband/father being engaged in salaried work, and the children being at school. However, whenever available, everyone, including the children, would partake in farming and marketing activities.

In many cases an elderly man would be hired to look after the livestock. The reasoning behind this was that the cattle needed a mature and responsible person to look after them. Such a person would know, for example, when the cattle needed to be taken for a drink of water. The use of an adult employee was also a safeguard against stock loss. Children were not deemed responsible enough to look after cattle properly. Often they would neglect them, resulting in stock loss or damage, such as in cattle injuries.¹⁷

The homebound women saw to it that production targets were met and were also in charge of labour remuneration when hired or co-operative labour was used. With regard to hired labour, this was usually in the form of casual labour that was paid according to productivity. Mr. Vuyisa Mbangatha explains how this worked:

After they had ploughed, mom would say, 'Count for me, where did you start and where did you stop'? And then they would count the number of hoes for each target worked and then she would say, 'Oh you have hoed this much, go and buy sugar'. She would give them money as payment.¹⁸

In some extreme cases prison labour was used. In the 1960s and 1970s especially, the use of prison labour was common in the Transkei.¹⁹ One could hire a 'span' of between six and ten prisoners. Prices ranged from 20c per prisoner in the early days to R2 per head in the 1980s. The money would not be paid to individual prisoners but to the local prison. If a prison guard was included the rate would be higher. In cases where no prison guard was needed, the employer would be supplied with a spear with which to guard the prisoners. The latter was a duty carried out only by men. The use of prison labour constituted a form of cheap and exploitative labour for the Ncambedlana farmers.

The most commonly deployed labour type, however, was the *ilima* or co-operative labour group (see McAllister 2004). The co-operative labour groups would be made up of indigent labourers from neighbouring villages. It is possible that some of these were the *amaMpondo* residents who were removed from the area in 1907 (see Chapter 3). These labourers were fed and supplied with traditional beverages like *amarhewu* (a maize meal drink) or traditional beer instead of a cash payment. This particular form of labour was overseen and managed by the women.

¹⁷ Interview with Mrs. Sakhwe, Mthatha, 12/07/2010.

¹⁸ Interview with Vuyisa Mbangatha, Mthatha, 12/01/2010.

¹⁹ Interview with Zobho Maliwa, Mthatha, 23/07/2010.

The use of co-operative labour also shows the continued importance of urban-rural linkages. And indeed some members of this generation originated from the nearby rural areas. They often kept some of their stock in their home villages as well as farmed land on a customary tenure basis in these villages. The Maliwa family, for example, had access to communal land in Viedgesville, a village outside Mthatha, and used this land for farming and livestock production.²⁰ Vuyisa Mbangatha's father came from Mbalisweni, a village in Qumbu, about 60 Km from Mthatha. Mr. Mbangatha had trained as teacher on the insistence of his father who was a wealthy villager (a 'peasant' in Bundy's terminology). When he bought land in Ncamedlana he brought some of his father's cattle with him from the village. Vuyisa Mbangatha explains:

When he came to Ncamedlana the fellow [Mr. Mbangatha] went back home because grandfather had a lot of cattle. So he went back home took grandfather's cattle and built a kraal here [in Ncamedlana] and farmed with them.²¹

It is also possible that the rural origins of Ncamedlana's middle class might have influenced their practice of *ilima*, or co-operative labour groups. Moore (1975, cited in McAllister 2004) identifies two types of co-operative labour groups. The 'reciprocal or exchange labour group' is a smaller group that evolves out of good neighbourly relations. Typically, the households work for each other in rotation in a reciprocal manner. This type of group is often formally organised, with fixed membership and leadership roles. Though the host might provide a daily meal for the duration of the work, this group is founded primarily on reciprocity; festivities or beer drinking are not its defining feature. In the second and often larger group, however, the 'festive work group', festivities such as beer and food consumption are an integral part and often conclude the work of the group. Both types of groups are formed on an *ad hoc* basis and are disbanded once the work is completed.

The festive work group is the one that appears to have been used by the second generation. Moore (1975, cited in McAllister 2004: 100) describes this type of labour organisation as being based on 'weak' ties, or bonds. However, they are nevertheless bonds and the oral evidence collected suggests that in many cases the ties between *ilima* worker and 'employer' continued beyond the completion of the work. For example, even after the harvest, those who had been members of this group would come to ask for food.²² They would be directed to the fields to pick some of the maize and pumpkins that had been left unharvested for precisely this purpose.²³ This practice was seen as a form of social responsibility and

²⁰ Interview with Zobho Maliwa, Mthatha, 23/07/2010.

²¹ Interview with Vuyisa Mbangatha, Mthatha, 12/07/2010.

²² Interview with Malibongwe Mphako, Mthatha, 13/07/2010.

²³ In addition, part of the unharvested produce was used for stock feeding.

helped to establish good neighbourly relations. In this way, crime was also kept to a minimum as no one needed to steal in order to eat.

The production relations of the second generation can thus be classified as exploitative. This class not only employed its own labour but exploited cheap labour to produce a surplus for the market. Wright (1997, 2001) defines the middle class as occupying an ambiguous, or contradictory, class location: The middle classes are owners of private property (albeit modest) and exploiters of workers (wage labour) at the same time.

The role of women in the production process can be compared to that of managers. Zobho Maliwa – whose father Mr. A.E.V Maliwa, a teacher, had bought a one hectare plot in 1950 and a 5 morgen (about 4 hectares) one in 1952²⁴ – explains:

Mostly the women were at home during those days. It was like that even in the other households. You would find that the people who looked after these households, while the men were at work as teachers, clerks and so on, were the women. They were the ones who were mostly in charge of agriculture, monitoring, selling and so on. Mom was a teacher by profession but female teachers were not allowed once married. There were also no female clerks. Most of the women in Ncambedlana were not employed. They worked in their households, only the men were employed. During those times there was an agricultural show, yes I almost forgot that. People took their produce to the show. Here at home we often took chicken, we also had a Jersey [cow]. We also took it to the show and sometimes we selected the best cobs of *mealies* (maize) and pumpkins heads, all those things. One paid to take part in the show. I think the government tried to encourage people to practice agriculture. So, a person would win and get some money. But the people who were responsible and showcased agricultural produce were the women. Maybe the men were responsible for taking the cattle, but those who planted were the women.

He continues to outline how arrangements worked at his home: His father would follow his teaching profession while his mother would sell agricultural produce, a practice his father frowned upon. Only sales of livestock were done by his father.

But my mom, for me to know this thing that they sold, she would let him go [to work] and afterwards she would go to the storage tank, take out bags of mealies [maize] and sell to people who wanted to buy mealies, just like the milk. My father never used to collect milk money, it was my mother who was responsible for collecting those, including for mealies. She would let him go to school and that is how she managed to have cash on the side. What my father would sell was an ox, you understand?²⁵

The above interview extracts clearly demonstrates the gendered division of labour in Ncambedlana. They bring into sharp relief the central role played by the women in the organisation, control and marketing of agricultural production, that is, in what is commonly referred to as the domestic mode of production. Feminist

²⁴ MAR, 4/24/13/2 , file no. 2/9/5, dated 26 July 1950, and file no. 2/93/15 dated 31 July 1951, record of purchase A.E.V. Maliwa, erf no. 1560 and lot 78.

²⁵ Interview with Zobho Maliwa, Mthatha, 23/07/2010.

critique of Marxist class analyses argues that the domestic sector of production – child rearing, domestic service and production – is overlooked by analyses which focus only on the industrial mode of production. Horn (1991: 3) suggests that in the domestic mode, married women engage in unpaid labour in exchange for ‘being maintained’ in the class position of their husbands (also Bozzoli 1983; Delphy & Leonard 1984). The example of the second generation middle class women, however, shows that the women were certainly not ‘maintained’. Rather they themselves were central in maintaining their families, including their husbands, and contributing to the family’s ability to maintain a middle class lifestyle. Although land was usually registered in the name of the male household head, there were a number of women landowners in Ncambedlana. Examples are Elizabeth ‘Bettie’ Mankazana who bought four lots in 1943 for £200 in cash, Christina Maxatule two lots for a total of £150 in 1944, and Dinah James (‘a native woman married out of community of property’) bought one lot for £200 (also 1944).²⁶

Women were also engaged in what one might call ‘educational entrepreneurship’. Local children attended home-based crèches before enrolling at the local primary school. Zobho Maliwa continues his reflections:

You see, Mrs. Stofile, while she was still down here, we started there in what we call the crèche today. That’s where I started, all of us, Vusumzi Mbuli, Zamuxolo Raziya and KK [Stofile], her son, we all went to crèche there. She ran that crèche. We would go from there to start school at E.W. Pearce [Primary School]. We were prepared there [at the crèche] and then after that we enrolled at school.

Thus, besides their central role in household agricultural production, the second generation middle class women also engaged, actively and productively, in the inter-generational reproduction of middle class values in the neighbourhood. They fostered an environment in which respect for education, hard work and good public conduct was held in high esteem – not only in their homes, but also in the neighbourhood more generally.²⁷

The children of parents who formed part of the second generation articulated a strong belief that the constant presence of these women in the community helped entrench a culture of respect and appropriate behaviour. Children were discouraged from engaging in anti-social activities in front of elders. Thus, with their professional lives frustrated by employment practices that discriminated against

²⁶ MAR 2/14/4, (file number missing), record of purchase for Elizabeth ‘Bettie’ Mankazana, lots 29b, 30b, 31b and 32b, October 1943; record of purchase for Christina Maxatule, lot 38, 6 July 1944; record of purchase for Dinah James, lot 15, 28 July 1944. All three were represented by the law firm Gush & Mugglestone. These are just three examples; many more female owners of land are listed in the records of the deeds office. However, in the case of the interviewees for this study, ownership was always with the male head of the household.

²⁷ See also Mkele (1961) on values of the Black middle class.

married women, the Ncamedlana women turned their skills to household production activities as well as community building.

Community formation

The development of the second generation, composed mainly of teachers and a few professionals and entrepreneurs, changed Ncamedlana from a settlement and place where land ownership was permitted, into a recognizable community. The usefulness of the term 'community' as an analytical tool has however been questioned by some scholars. Anderson (1991: 6), for example, argues that often communities are not real but imaginary creations for ideological reasons. This applies, in particular, to perception of the nation as a community (see e.g. O'Meara 1983 on Afrikaner nationalism). For many theorists, interaction is key to the notion of community (Bridger *et al.* 2002; Wilkinson 1991). Thus, people who share common space (territory) and interact regularly face to face with one another, can be referred to as a community. These regular interactions lead to the emergence of social practices, norms of behaviour, attitudes and ideologies.

In Ncamedlana, the emergence of a sense of community is derived from the actions of its residents in pursuing common interests relating to their life in a specific place. Importantly, as Anderson (1991: 6) also suggests, this notion of community is based on face-to-face interactions rather than imagined connections over a wide space. As already indicated, members of this neighbourhood community were largely drawn from a similar class position, based on professional occupations and landownership. These class determinants have shaped both the first and second generation, however, it is the latter that is associated with the evolution of a middle class identity and sense of community in Ncamedlana.

The second generation transformed Ncamedlana from a farming area to a residential neighbourhood.²⁸ They moved in with their families and built houses according to municipally approved building plans. Most of the first generation did not necessarily live in the area. They either rented their residential plots to poor labourers (see Redding 1993), or in the case of those that had bought agricultural plots, they kept rudimentary structures of mud and zinc for periodic visits during planting or harvest seasons. Thus, before the 1950s, Ncamedlana functioned largely as a farming area, an appendage of Mthatha which was referred to as 'Ncamedlana farms'.

For example, when D.M. Finca bought his farm in 1937, his family continued to live at their 'great' home in Zimbane, outside the town.²⁹ His daughter, Mama-

²⁸ Interviews with Mda Mda, Mthatha, 9 July 2010, and Lungisile Stofile, Mthatha, 13 July 2010.

²⁹ Interview with Mamazana Finca, Mthatha 20/07/2010.

zana Finca, explains the impact of the second generation on Ncambedlana's development into a residential neighbourhood:

(...) but as time went on, when I was twelve, we would often go there [Ncambedlana] during holidays. We would go there because our great home was in Zimbane. We would load ploughs during planting season but the one [season] we got mostly [in Ncambedlana] was in June, during harvesting. We would load up, we had transport! These things would be loaded and we would stay there for two weeks. There was just a small dwelling because that was not a home, it was at the farm. It was the same with our neighbours, the Makiwanes. *When the teachers came, they came, built houses and stayed.* (My emphasis)

Most of these teachers had been living in rented accommodation in and around town. As discussed above, they had been displaced from the town centre by the introduction of the Group Areas Act. Others had lived in rented accommodation in the native township of Ngangelizwe, while others were recent arrivals from all over the country. What seems to have attracted them was the chance to buy land in Mthatha. Archival records show that people wrote from as far afield as Johannesburg, enquiring about the possibility to buy land:

I wish to enquire whether it is true that there are sites at Ncambedlana for sale to natives and if it is so to be furnished with the necessary details as I'm interested in buying one.³⁰

Most of the teachers knew each other from their university days at Fort Hare. They appear to have embarked on a more or less conscious strategy to transform Ncambedlana into a middle class neighbourhood. H.N. Yako, a teacher at the prestigious local high school of St. John's College, graduated from Fort Hare in 1934. He is credited with recruiting a number of the second generation teachers to Ncambedlana. His daughter, Thandeka Yako, explains:

They recruited each other. My father was teaching at St. Johns College, being the first graduate. He graduated from Fort Hare in 1934, I still have his certificate. When he came down here, he got Mr. Mbhobho to come and teach with him at St. Johns College. He got Mr. Zwakala to come and teach at St. Johns, he got Mr. Maliwa, he also taught at St John's and he also got, who else? Mr. Kobus!³¹

Thus, these members of the second generation used their networks of mutual acquaintance, which often stretched to their university days, to create opportunities for themselves and others like them (Bourdieu 1986, describes such economically productive linkages as 'social capital', see above). Their strong social networks afforded them access to jobs at the local high school of St. Johns as well as land in Ncambedlana. This allowed for the evolution of the close middle class community which is described in the excerpt at the beginning of this chapter.

³⁰ MAR 4/24/13/2, (file number missing), letter from Sinbad M. Xuba to the Chief Magistrate of the Transkeian Territories, dated 9 Feb 1960.

³¹ Interview with Thandeka Yako, daughter of Harvey Yako, Mthatha, 23/07/2010. Kobus is also a Xhosa surname. It is believed that original surname was Kobese, changed to Kobus in Cape Town (probably in order to pass as Coloured).

Apart from education, knowledge of, and proficiency in, English became an important marker of social status (see also Deumert 2009; Gewertz & Errington 1999; Wilson & Mafeje 1963). Thandeka Yako continues:

They were really the elites of the place because I remember what used to fascinate us when we saw them arriving here [at the Yako's home]. They would be coming here for a meeting or something. What fascinated us was the fact they spoke English. This made one think the whole thing is so high flowing, these really are learned people! They spoke of constructive things and you would never find them engaging in idle chat.

The choice of English is reminiscent of Wilson & Mafeje's (1963) observations of the *ooscuse me* group in Langa. By speaking English, members of the Black middle class gained prestige and admiration in the eyes of others. However, in contrast to the *ooscuse me* who were regarded as aloof to the extent of 'dropping' relatives from a lower class (*Ibid.*: 85), the Ncambedlana Black middle class is reported to have been 'accommodative' and did not look down on the lower classes (see above).

Whether it was through their use of English or their occupational qualifications, the prestige with which the second generation was associated acted as a magnet in attracting others to Ncambedlana. Aunt Laura Mpahlwa explains the reasons for her family's decision to settle in Ncambedlana in the 1960s:

Well, from its olden days, it was definitely known as one of the areas where the elites were well to do (...) and those who were aspiring to be something. I thought Ncambedlana was a right place, it had a right environment, conducive to a better living for all. And, eh, families which were here were renowned for their higher education qualifications. They were people who were really focused in life and who wanted their children to achieve even more than they had achieved.

Thus, apart from opportunities for land ownership, Ncambedlana provided the attraction of a middle class community, 'the right environment', which put a premium on 'achievement' and high educational qualifications. In an era where only a few Blacks had university education (Southall 1982: 183; Mkele 1961), possession of an address in Ncambedlana represented mobility and status. The use of English by the second generation reflected this desire to encourage a 'good educational standard' for the children, Aunt Laura continues:

The educational standard was really good. *Abantwana* [the children] got a very good background of English, what then used to be called Royal Readers. The people who were teachers were Royal Readers so, the children of Ncambedlana knew English like anything and they spoke good English. They wrote good English and were getting very good marks.³²

The above can be understood as some form of community learning to beat an educational system which offered no tuition in the vernaculars, and inadequate access to English prior to school enrolment. This served the children well when they entered the local primary school of E.W. Pearce.

³² Interview with Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 20/07/2010.

The high value for education displayed by the second generation is consistent with their missionary schooling background. At the core of the civilizing project was the transformation of the world view of Africans according to Christian and capitalist norms (Bundy 1988; Jordan 1984; Molteno 1984). Education played the role of effecting stratification and social control by embedding a value system that legitimates and entrenches differentiation. In the case of the second generation, educational qualifications became the vehicle to land ownership via salaried professions. At the same time, educational qualifications bestowed status, social prestige and created a sense of community, a community which was united by common values and interests. It is this combination of ownership, relative affluence and social distinction which is characteristic of Ncamedlana's middle class.

While it can be said that the Black middle class, by acquiring education and thus reinforcing stratification and various forms of distinction, shows a positive disposition towards capitalist individualism, the ambiguities of this class lay at the political level. It was their exclusion from the country's structures and institutions on the basis of race which led them to act in inclusive and collective ways with their racially oppressed Black working class counterparts (Tabata 1950; ANC 1969). Thus, while proud of their achievements, they also accommodated others to some extent.

The second generation was also instrumental in the socio-economic, residential and cultural development of the neighbourhood. Their civic activism between the 1950s and early 1970s had resulted in the electrification of Ncamedlana as well as the introduction of the water borne sewerage system. Also during this time the Anglican and Methodist churches were built as well as a community hall and a lay ministry training centre. The churches served a dual function of preaching the gospel and providing education in the form of pre-schooling during the week. In 1963, a primary school, E.W. Pearce, was established through resident's efforts. Thandeka Yako explains the history of its establishment:

So, when we got to pre-school stage, my father and Mr. Liqela, who came from Kokstad and married a woman from the Matume family, decided to come together and said they wanted to make the pre-school for the children of the area. The only school that was there was St. Johns College. So, we were the first pre-school children. In the book case I have in East London I even have the donations [certificate] that my father made because they donated two shillings and six pence, him and Mr. Liqela, towards paying the teacher, Mrs. Duba. And because these were very few families, we were very few. As a result, ourselves being the first ones from Sub A to Standard 3, we were only seven in our class. Then the classes below ours had more, but us, the very first ones, were only seven. It was myself, Tutu Tshandu, Sbondiseni Madala, Nomsa Hela, another one from the Gana family, a guy from the Nzengu family, Mhleli Raziya. So, we were only seven. So, when they started motivating that there should be a school here, most of us were attending classes at the Methodist church. So, all the classes that came after us were also attending classes there. So when my father motivated for a school here, the inspector of schools at the time was E.W. Pearce. So, after all this

fieldwork and the money they had pumped into the school for all these years, when it came to naming this school, it was named after the inspector, because they were whites. Not the people who started the school, you see?

The development of schooling in Ncamedlana highlights the actions taken by members of the second generation for the collective good of residents, and the establishment of a self-sufficient neighbourhood. Yet, the naming of the school demonstrates the ways in which local communities were excluded from taking ownership of their own initiatives during the apartheid era. In 1975, a community hall was built, and in 1979 a high school named after a member of the second generation, the Attwell Madala High School opened the doors of learning yet further. Also a clinic and a TB hospital were built.³³ The granting of self-government status to the Transkei in 1963 had opened up additional opportunities for this middle class. The effects of the laws allowing for Black advancement in the civil service as well as the commercial sector will be discussed in the following chapter

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the development of the Mthatha middle class that combined salaried occupation with land ownership in a period characterised by the rise of apartheid and the Bantustan strategy.

The chapter has argued that a second generation of the Ncamedlana middle class emerged during this period, despite the newly installed apartheid government's attempts to limit urban property accumulation by Blacks. The development of this class was organic, showing considerable historical depth. Although they might, at times, have benefited from aspects of the Bantustan strategy which took effect in the early sixties, they cannot be described as straightforward 'beneficiaries' who were created by the apartheid state (see Chapter 2). The chapter has also argued, based on oral evidence, that the second generation was made up of mostly of graduate teachers. Land and agriculture provided them, as well as other low-income 'semi-professionals' (clerks, nurses, etc.), an important material base to overcome reliance on historically low salaries. In addition to this category, the second generation included the professional category of lawyers and doctors as well as some entrepreneurs. These too practiced agriculture albeit rarely in a commercial sense.

The chapter has also shown the gendered nature of this middle class. In particular, the role of women was central in the organisation, control and marketing of household agricultural production. Having the same qualifications from the same missionary institutions as the men, married women teachers were discrimi-

³³ Interviews with Thandeka Yako, Mthatha, 23/07/2010, and Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 20/07/2010. For Mbuli and Stofile, see *Daily Dispatch* (1998: 18).

nated against and had no secure career prospects in teaching once they got married. They turned their skills to the reproduction of their class and community, and were the *de-facto* managers of the agricultural activities of this class. Their influence was not limited to the home but extended to the neighbourhood where their constant presence fostered a strong culture of learning and appropriate behaviour. Thus, the historic role of women in keeping communities together can be seen.

The next chapter will show how this community begins to fall apart, in part due to developments set in motion by the introduction of self government in 1963 which become visible by 1976 when the Transkei gains its so-called 'independence'. However, I will argue that land continues to play a role in the definition of this class.

The third generation – from agriculture to residential land conversion, 1976-2010

Introduction

This chapter looks at the middle class in Ncambedlana in a period characterised by the decline of agricultural production. As discussed in the two previous chapters, agriculture, whether for subsistence or commercial purposes, had played a crucial role in the reproduction of the first and second generations of this middle class. It provided a saving on food as most of what was consumed came from own production. Agriculture also provided extra income through sales of surplus on the local market. Agriculture thus accounted for both food security and accumulation of profits, which were often utilised for the education of children. Yet, a visit to the Ncambedlana neighbourhood today, shows little evidence of agricultural activity. Once productive lands now lie fallow or are taken over by buildings. A question that begs to be answered therefore is: does land continue to define this middle class?

This chapter will argue that while agriculture has declined in Ncambedlana, land continues to play a role in the definition of this Black middle class. The chapter will show that conversion of land from agriculture to residential usage has instead taken place. The changing land uses are traced to the third generation of this class. The third generation are descendents of the second generation, born in the 1950s and 1960s.

Political changes such as the acceptance of nominal ‘independence’ by the Transkei Bantustan regime in 1976, and the democratic transition in 1994 will be shown as some of the key developments that have shaped the relationship of this class to land. The chapter traces agricultural decline during the Transkei ‘independence’ period and looks at the de-agrarianisation of this middle class in the

democratic era. As such, the discussion provides a counter-point to the in-between era discussed in the previous chapter.

The chapter consists of four sections. The first section examines the drive for urbanisation and the bureaucratisation of the middle class during the Matanzimaled Transkei ‘independence’ era and argues that these are some of the factors that led to the decline of agriculture within this class (see also Southall 1982: 176ff.). The second section considers ecological and capital factors, and argues that these played their part in the decline of agriculture within this class. The third section looks at the transformation of this middle class along educational and occupational lines. It argues that the generational shift from the second to the third generation also involved transformations along gender lines and new opportunities for land ownership and mobility beyond the boundaries of Ncambedlana. These new opportunities were a consequence of the 1976 and 1994 political changes.

The last section looks at land use changes in the democratic era, that is, the conversion from agriculture to residential uses of land. The section shows that the former Bantustan towns have not been unaffected by the pressures of globalisation. The de-agrarianisation of this class is shown to have taken place particularly post-1994. However, land ownership continues to be critical in defining the identity of this middle class.

The decline of agriculture, 1976-1994

The Transkei’s ‘independence’ period is commonly associated with the decline of agriculture in Ncambedlana and the Transkei in general . In South Africa broadly, a number of studies have painted a picture of a steady decline of agriculture from the 1950s onwards (Wilson 2011; Makgetla 2010; Mather & Adelzadeh 1998). This decline is reflected in agriculture’s share of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) which shrunk from 17 percent in 1950 to about 3 percent in 2009 (Makgetla 2010). In the reserves or Bantustans, agricultural decline was made worse by the so-called ‘betterment schemes’ of the apartheid government which resettled people away from their productive lands as well as introducing measures aimed at limiting the number of their livestock (De Wet 2011; Ntsebeza 2002; McAllister 1989; Hendricks 1989). In the Transkei, in particular, agricultural productivity had been affected by a host of problems including poor quality land, labour shortages due to urban migration, poor infrastructure and lack of marketing boards as well as an education system that was geared towards equipping people primarily for urban white-collar professions (Hebinck *et al.* 2011; Porter & Phillips-Howard 1997; Molteno 1977).

Within Mthatha the decline of agriculture in areas such as Ncambedlana can be attributed to the agricultural policies pursued by the Matanzima regime after

Transkei's nominal 'independence' in 1976.¹ The Matanzima regime favoured a policy of large scale commercial farming over household agricultural production or family farms (Porter & Phillips-Howard 1997). In the rural areas, households were removed from large tracts of rich arable land to make way for large-scale commercial farming which was overseen by the Transkei Agricultural Corporation (TRACOR; see also Gibbs 2010; Ntsebeza 2006).

With regard to the urban environment, the regime favoured a policy of rapid urbanisation through housing development schemes on most of the available open land in the Mthatha municipality (Siyongwana 1990). This had implications for Ncamedlana's landed middle class. As discussed in the previous chapter, agriculture had been at the forefront of the land use practices of the second generation. Importantly, they had grazed their cattle on the Mthatha commonage which included dipping facilities. This was lost as a result of the development of the suburbs of Hillcrest, Northcrest and Hillcrest Extension, in the early 1970s, 1981 and 1987 respectively (see Siyongwana 1990). Map 5.1 shows the suburbs of Hillcrest and Northcrest built on the Mthatha commonage where the Ncamedlana middle class grazed their cattle.

In the view of most respondents, this marked the beginning of agricultural decline within the Ncamedlana neighbourhood. Loyiso Mpumlwana explains:

As I said earlier, to summarise, they built Northcrest, they took our grazing land because our cattle grazed there, there was a dip down there and that dip was discontinued in favour of the development (...) cattle, the dip and so on were no longer there. You see, Northcrest, that was a big commonage and then on the other commonage they built Hillcrest Extension. The whole place, where we used to graze our cattle, was built up. That made keeping livestock difficult.²

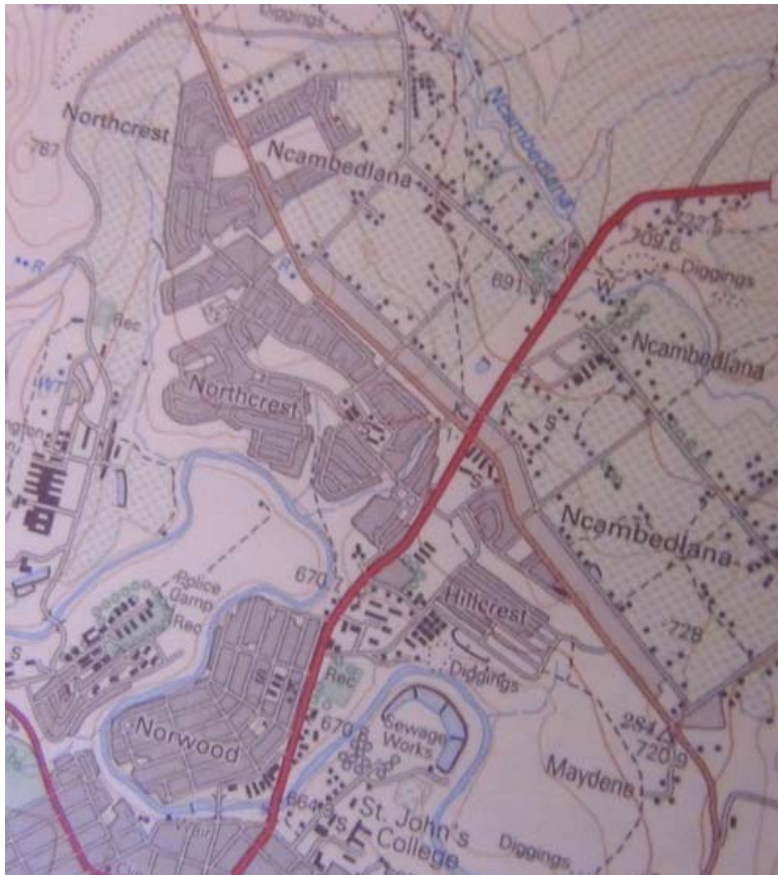
Cattle played a central role in ploughing for most members of the second generation. The development of housing on commonage land and the injunction to remove livestock from the municipality, thus reduced the ability to farm. This was followed by increasing the rates for the Ncamedlana farms to equal town rates.³ However, for some time, Ncamedlana middle class farmers would take their livestock to the communal areas in their home villages. This allowed them to continue keeping livestock even when urban grazing land became inaccessible.

¹ Chief K.D. Matanzima was the President of the Republic of Transkei from 1976-1986.

² Interview with Loyiso Mpumlwana, Mthatha 26/7/2010.

³ Interviews with Mrs. Sakwe, Mthatha, 13/07/2010; Nomonde Galada, Mthata, 29/07/2010 and Loyiso Mpumlwana, Mthatha, 27/07/2010.

Map 5.1 Location of Ncambedlana, Hillcrest and Northcrest (1999)



Source: Chief Directorate: Surveys and mapping, Mowbray, Cape Town.

Taken together, these measures display the regime's approach to agriculture in the urban areas, especially when contrasted with the vast agricultural support rolled out for commercial farming in the countryside (Gibbs 2010; Stultz 1980). In his home region of Western Tembuland especially, Chief K.D. Matanzima, the President of the Republic of Transkei, is alleged to have assisted farmers with state tractors, agricultural officers and other facilities. This skewed manner of support in the rural areas, allegedly drove *amaMpondo* Chief Ntsikayezwe Sigcau to complain bitterly in the Transkei Legislative Assembly (TLA): 'We see farmers on the northern side (in KD Matanzima's region) developing well (...) but the implements are not well distributed (...) There is no fair economic distribution here' (cited in Gibbs 2010: 145).

The patronage system also extended to a tiny minority of Ncambedlana's landowners who benefitted from the Matanzima regime. These households would from time to time have access to state tractors for ploughing, especially between planting seasons, to prepare the soil before planting. Known as *ukugelesha*, this

practice involves tilling the soil to remove weeds. It also helped the soil retain moisture, especially under the dry conditions of the 1980s.⁴

In what appears as a somewhat sinister and premeditated drive to undermine agriculture, especially in Ncambedlana, other discourses suggest that the Matanzimas hobbled agriculture with the above measures, motivated by their anger for failing in their land grab attempts on some of the farms. One member of the third generation, Vuyisa Qhinga, recalls how Chief George Matanzima, then Prime Minister of the so-called Republic of Transkei and brother of the president, exploited long standing problems with water access in an attempt to take over some of the farms in Ncambedlana:

As we continued farming, we had a problem of facilities, like we did not have water. And then, whenever we approached the municipality to ask for facilities, the stumbling block was the Matanzimas because they wanted to take over these farms. They wanted to take them over, at one stage George Matanzima approached my father to introduce boreholes, pretending to help, but the older generation got wise and wanted no part in that.⁵

It is not clear what the details around George Matanzima's boreholes were but according to the same account, 'upon investigation' by the owners, it was discovered that his intentions were to take over the farms once they had water for irrigation. The above discourse suggests that once the Matanzimas could not have some involvement in the Ncambedlana farms, they pursued a course which made agriculture difficult for members of the second generation.

Given that numerous allegations of corruption dogged the Matanzima brothers throughout their political careers (see Ntsebeza, *forthc.*), the alleged land grab by George Matanzima is not unlikely. For example, the Matanzima brothers stood accused of having their 'sticky fingers' in every major business deal in the Transkei, including hotels as well as land holdings. In one such claim, K.D. Matanzima and his brother George are alleged to have benefitted inappropriately from land deals, such the purchase of five farms for a third of their actual value (Stultz 1980; see also Southall 1982; Streek & Wicksteed 1981). The farms were originally purchased by the Bantu Trust and then resold to the Matanzima's at the hugely discounted price. Other deals included hotels for which they paid significantly less than what they had cost the trust (*Ibid.*). It was also widely rumoured that the Matanzima regime had rewarded loyalists with farms and other businesses that had been vacated by whites after their withdrawal from the Transkei after the 1976 'independence' (Ntsebeza 2006).

The decline of agriculture within the second generation can therefore be explained in part as the result of a developmental strategy that discouraged urban

⁴ Interview with Sakwe, Mthatha, 13/07/2010.

⁵ Interview with Vuyisa Qhinga, Mthatha, 18/07/2010.

agriculture. As Loyiso Mpumlwana puts it, this kind of ‘development’ thinking eventually killed agriculture in Ncambedlana:

They say it is development but I don’t believe it is. I don’t think it’s development because development makes a person better but when you remove the people’s source of food I don’t think that can be called development. It has killed the development of farming in the area.

The Transkei government’s agricultural policies raise the question of whether large scale commercial farming or family plots constitute an efficient model of agriculture (see also Gibbs 2010; Porter & Phillips-Howard 1997). Evidence from Ncambedlana suggests that the small holdings of this middle class played an important role in providing food security for these families as well as the community of Mthatha at large. Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli narrates:

Way back there was a market, Umtata fresh produce market, where Munitata (a municipal office building) is now. That’s where the locals used to bring their fresh produce. My uncle used to take carrots there. He was a specialist in carrots. People would take eggs there. Look there was no way that Mthatha could import vegetables, no. Then it started now. During this era, during this era (‘independence’ era), white commercial farmers would bring (their produce) as it is still happening now. Instead of relying on Black commercial farmers, it became the white commercial farmers who took over and produced now. It started during the Matanzima era. Matanzima would say, ‘I will build houses for you, I will do this for you’ and he hand to find the land and the justification of (...) that there should not be livestock in town anyway (...) it killed farming! As a result, now we had to import our vegetables.⁶

A policy which favoured large scale commercial farming did not help the local small-holders, such as the middle-class farmers of Ncambedlana, who often could not compete against the better resourced white competitors from outside the region (see also D’Haese & Van Huylbroeck 2005).

Another related factor in understanding the decline of agriculture within the Ncambedlana Black middle class is the occupational transformation of this middle class during the ‘independence’ era. The exodus of whites after Transkeian ‘independence’ in 1976 freed up a number of administrative posts which became available to members of the second and, later, the third generation. This had started with Self-government in 1963 but gained momentum with ‘independence’. This added to the upward mobility of the Black middle class as it meant they could now ascend to senior posts in the bureaucracy. As discussed in Chapter 2, Southall (1977) has referred to the Transkei middle class as *beneficiaries* of Transkei’s independence. However, as already shown, the origins of the second generation were independent of these developments. But as will be shown below, they and the third generation were well placed to exploit the opportunities which opened up during the ‘independence’ period.

The improved employment status was accompanied by residential mobility in keeping with one’s position in the bureaucracy. As discussed in the previous

⁶ Interview with Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

chapter, during the Bantustan period residence in the town had been for whites only. The white exodus post-independence also meant that property in the hitherto 'whites only' residential areas became available for Black occupation. As a result, many residents of Ncambedlana are said to have moved out of the area to the previously white residential areas in the Hill and Central areas, and to the newly developed up-market suburbs earmarked for the Bantustan elite, such as Southernwood, Fortgale and later South Ridge Park. The Transkeian middle class was enticed with bargain deals to bid for these newly available properties as formerly white-owned houses were transferred to the 'new' Transkei government in terms of Proclamation R1975 of 1976. These properties were then resold or leased to Blacks at discounted prices, mostly to those with close ties with the Matanzima regime (Siyongwana 2005; Southall 1982: 180). The fact that these residential areas were better serviced in terms of infrastructure also contributed to their attraction. They had tarred roads, well-lit streets, better sanitation as well as piped water inside the houses.

As opportunities to buy the previously white-owned properties within the town and surrounding areas opened up, some of Ncambedlana's residents also took the chance to own property elsewhere, other than Ncambedlana. Apart from the patronage, which was rife at the height of the Matanzima regime (Gibbs 2010; Ntsebeza 2006; Josana 1989; Southall 1982, 1977), it is possible that members of the Ncambedlana Black middle class were in a position to afford the usually discounted asking prices on account of their salaried occupations and existing land assets. Thus, their status as 'beneficiaries' could also be down to their relative affluence combined with the opening up of new properties due to the exodus of whites, rather than solely political connection (as suggested by Southall 1982, 1977).

Some members of this class climbed the rungs of the bureaucracy, others abandoned their salaried occupations, especially teaching, and farming altogether to pursue commercial ventures. Aunt Laura Mphalwa remembers the time of the 1970s and 1980s as follows:

Others took TDC [Transkei Development Cooperation] shops and left teaching. They took over the TDC shops and went to run these, especially after 1976 when the Transkei government took over. There were more opportunities for people to open up businesses. So, as time went on most of the people left Ncambedlana and took up posts that were occupied by whites before. They went and took up those shops full time.⁷

Thus, the exodus of whites from the Transkei after 1976 did not only free up residential properties and administrative posts but business opportunities as well. Legislation such as the Acquisition of Immovable Property Control Amendment Act 21 of 1977 and the Acquisition of Immovable Property Control Act 8 of

⁷ Interview with Aunt Laura Mphalwa, Mthatha, 21/07/2010.

1980 placed restrictions on property ownership by anyone other than *bona fide* Transkei citizens (Siyongwana 2005). In terms of the above legislations, a number of trading stores, especially in the rural towns, became available and were taken over by the TDC. These were then leased to Transkei citizens. The aim of the TDC and its forerunner, the XDC was to develop Black business in the Transkei and Ciskei Bantustans (Stultz 1980; Southall 1982; see also Chapter 2 for a detailed discussion). J. Maqhubela, a former director of the Transkei Finance Department, refers to this Transkei era empowerment as the “early beginnings of BEE”.⁸

In sum, the development strategy implemented by the Matanzima regime contributed to the decline of small-scale agriculture which directly affected the Ncambedlana middle class. Members of this class began to re-orient themselves towards high salaried senior employment as well as business ventures. The productive combination of salary and farming which was a characteristic of the second generation disappeared. Importantly, as will be discussed below, the development politics of the Matanzima regime laid the foundation for the eventual large scale conversion of agricultural land to residential uses that characterise the land use practices of the third generation of the Ncambedlana middle class.

Ecological, technological and cultural factors

Besides the political factors discussed above, ecological, technological and cultural factors played their part in the decline of agriculture and the resultant conversion of land to residential use. One constant factor cited as contributing to the decline of agriculture, is the change in the pattern of rainfall especially in the 1980s. It has been argued that South Africa faced a drought in these years and this negatively affected agricultural output (Wilson & Ramphela 1989; Porter & Phillips-Howard 1997). In the Transkei region the situation was much worse as most households did not have access to the dams and sophisticated irrigation systems of most commercial farmers. Ncambedlana was no exception as most of its Black middle class farmers were dependant on rainfall patterns for irrigation. As the 1980s drought set in, the Ncambedlana middle class began to struggle with agricultural production. The following narrative from a member of the third generation, ‘Poni’ Raziya, explains how ‘climate change’ has affected life and agriculture in Ncambedlana:

One other thing I see, I don’t know what happened to the water. That’s another thing because water is running out. There used to be a lot of water. What I saw as I grew up is that it’s dry (...) you find people say, ‘there is drought now’. I think water became scarce. That’s what you get from people they say, ‘It became drier, and the rains are not like before. It’s drought! It is difficult to practice agriculture’ (...) the climate has really changed! If you look at the

⁸ Interview with J. Maqubela, Mthatha, 19/07/2010.

river, on the way to Tsolo, the river in Ncambedlana, below the Peter's; there used to be a lot of water there, but today there is none. It is dry now! So, I agree with what the government is saying that water will run out. Even the water sources are drying up. It's happening now (...) there is proof because when we grew up, these places had water, we used to swim there. I think one needs irrigation equipment to survive and not only rely on rainfall. I don't think one can survive [on rainfall].⁹

The issue of climate change began to be taken seriously by the end of the 1980s (Toulmin 2009). However, there is still no consensus among researchers on the causes of climate change and, as Giddens (2008: 5) puts it, there is not yet a 'developed analysis of the political changes we have to make if the aspirations we have to limit climate change are to become real'. Current projections of global warming suggest that Africa will face serious water challenges which will affect agriculture and livestock production as a result of declining rainfall. This will be particularly severe in the Southern African regions (Toulmin 2009).

To many of the Ncambedlana Black middle class, water shortages due to unsteady rainfall patterns were a reality that affected agricultural production and contributed to its decline in the 1980s. A lack of technology, such as irrigation systems and dams, also made agriculture under the drought conditions difficult. The farming activities of this class were small-scale, self-sustaining endeavours, and did not reach a high level of technological and financial investment. As one member puts it, water problems discouraged many from agriculture.

The main thing that discouraged people from agriculture is the drought. On top of that, what became a problem for us was lack of equipment because we never had chances to get things such as equipment.¹⁰

Although many families took a surplus to the market, their scale of agriculture cannot be compared to the full large-scale commercial operations of white commercial farmers. For example, white commercial farmers had a host of subsidies and loans available to them (Mather & Adelzadeh 1998). As soil quality deteriorated, this put a further strain on agricultural productivity for the Ncambedlana farmers. For example, the Mpahlwa family had planned to go into farming full-time after retiring from their entrepreneurial activities. They bought one of the Ncambedlana farms in the 1980s but found out that the soil was in a bad state. Aunt Laura Mpahlwa explains.

Some of us who bought farms tried to make some development to use these farms. We came here thinking we would do some farming but we called the agricultural officers to test the soil and found out that this soil was not good for farming.¹¹

⁹ Interview with Poni Raziya, Mthatha, 31/07/2010.

¹⁰ Interview with Vuyisa Qhinga, Mthatha, 18/07/2010.

¹¹ Interview with Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 21/07/2010.

Once soil degradation set in, there was no possibility for the recuperation of agriculture. It is likely that limited financial services in terms of investments, loans or subsidies played a part in the eventual abandonment of agriculture by the Ncambedlana middle class.

The approach of Ncambedlana residents to agriculture needs to be understood in its proper context. As shown in the preceding chapters, in most cases agriculture was not their sole occupation. These were people who had other sources of income besides agriculture. Land and farming provided an additional livelihood, but also addressed social and cultural expectations among the Ncambedlana middle class. That is, someone's status in society was measured not only based on his or her education, but also in terms of land and livestock. There was an implicit expectation that one should always produce one's own food and buy as few items as possible. These were to be limited to those foodstuffs which one could not produce on one's own land, for example tea, sugar and salt.¹² Vuyisa Mbangatha proudly remembers his childhood:

We produced for own consumption. Father never went to the shop, he only went for sugar and coffee. Even the maize bread was made here, there is nothing we didn't do here, there was a grinding stone that we used, even for samp we had a grinding stone, that's how we grew up here. We grew up in that manner, working.

It must also be borne in mind that up until about the 1950s agricultural training was provided in missionary institutions such as Lovedale, where most of the first and second generations were schooled. This training was important as it equipped people with fundamental farming skills. At the same time, however, it was of such a basic nature that one was not able to compete with white agriculture. The rationale behind the industrial and agricultural training offered at missionary institutions was that Blacks should be trained so as to develop their 'rural economies' and be kept out of the towns and competition with whites (Rich 1987). This focus on the local context would also keep them away from agitating for political reform at the national level. Thus, the approach of the second generation to land can be described as symbolic and cultural, even spiritual, rather than purely economic. The third generation, as will be discussed below, had a different attitude. Within this generation, land was viewed mainly as an economic resource.

Decline or prosperity? Generational shift and mobility in the democratic era

As already noted above, the decline of agriculture coincided with a generational shift from the second to the third generation. In the 1980s and 1990s, members of

¹² Interview with Vuyisa Mbangatha, Mthatha, 12/01/2010.

the second generation no longer had the desire/inclination towards the hard work involved in agriculture as a result of their advanced age. Importantly, their children, who had supplied a fair amount of the labour in the past, were either away in tertiary institutions, had own occupations or simply did not care for agriculture.

A contributing factor to the differing attitudes and interests with respect to land and agriculture is that the second and third generations were products of completely different educational systems. As noted above, both the first and second generations of the Ncamedlana middle class were recipients of missionary education. In mission schools, working the land was an integral part of the education philosophy. The missionaries reasoned that ploughing the land was important not only for the students' sustenance but for their 'health'. Above all, Lovedale graduates, for example were trained in agricultural skills so that, 'they might be afterwards able to instruct their countrymen in the art of cultivating their own soil' (Shepherd 1940: 90). The first two generations of the Ncamedlana middle class had internalised these lessons and transmitted them to the next generation.

For the third generation, however, education had separated industrial and agricultural skills training from the academic syllabus (Christie & Collins 1984). These were now to be taught at special vocational schools. The effect of this separation was that agriculture became associated with those who were not academically inclined or competent, and it thus became stigmatised. Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli, a member of the third generation, reflects as follows:

Take for instance an example that I said when we grew up we had no passion for farming as children, all of us! We hated farming. We hated agriculture. Agriculture then was despised. Remember agriculture was a thing for people who have failed in life. If academically you are not proceeding, then they say, 'Try agriculture'. So it has got that stigma. That stigma I will never be a farmer because it's for people who are not learned. And then we all decided that we are not following that line. This is what has happened.¹³

Thus, the third generation did not attach the same meaning to agriculture as did their predecessors. They came to see agriculture not only as a non-prestigious occupation, but also did not enjoy the hard work that stood in the way of leisure with peers. They found themselves as unwilling participants in a life that was appreciated more by their parents than themselves. Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli continues: 'We grew up as children trained in physical work because these were farm-land places (...) children from school, they come home they have their lunch and then they go into the garden'. On completion of their education, members of the third generation wanted to move away from the 'farm life' of their parents. Opportunities in the Bantustan bureaucracy had enticed some members of the third generation away from agriculture. As discussed above, under the Matanzima re-

¹³ Interview with Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

gime especially, the bureaucratic middle class became the ‘elites’ of Transkei society (Ntsebeza 2006; Peires 1992; Josana 1989; Southall 1982). In time, farming was seen as less prestigious compared to white collar occupations and the migration from agriculture that started during the ‘independence’ era, continued in the democratic period. Unlike their parents who had turned to agriculture to supplement their salaries, the third generation rented out their houses to obtain additional finances. Again Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli explains:

From 1973 onwards, when we started working, you found out now you are employed in white collar jobs. When we came back from university we bought our houses in town. Family by family, what happened was that the children left [Ncambedlana] and some went for the greener pastures of Joburg, leaving their houses *to be let, to be rented out*. (My emphasis)

In addition, we see occupational transformation in the third generation. While the bulk of the second generation can be classified in the ‘semi-professional’ category, the third generation consisted of a higher number in the professional. Sembie Danana, a member of the third generation, explains:

Quite a huge number went ahead with tertiary education. The bulk being what you would call your Fort Hare graduates and others went to Natal for medicine. A number of them went into nursing. Very few of them went into teaching. That was during our generation. Because the issue was at least you want to have a seriously good base. I mean a number of guys, you know, the likes of Andile and Bra Lu went into law, and they are good lawyers wherever they are; others such as Mbulelo Mthoba and Zandile went into medicine. Eh well, I went into business.¹⁴

Thus, a transformation of this middle class had taken place over time: From a class which largely combined occupation and farming, such as the first and second generations, to a class that became highly distinguished educationally, and worked mainly in prestigious professional positions. The increased professional mobility of the third generation allowed them to find well-paying occupations in major urban centres of South Africa, especially as new opportunities opened up in the democratic era. Legislative measures such as Employment Equity and BEE are believed to have contributed significantly to the racial transformation of the middle class (see discussion in Chapter 1). McDonald (2006: 64) has characterised the 1994 transition as marking the ‘official’ end of ‘racial’ capitalism and the beginning of what one might call ‘democratic capitalism’.

These new opportunities also meant an end to the discrimination against the women of this class. Changes were visible already during self-governance and ‘independence’ as women became more visible in the private and public sectors. These opportunities became available to the second generation from the mid-1960s onwards. The example of Aunt Laura Mpahlwa’s successful business career, as already mentioned in the previous chapter, is one such example. From selling female accessories from the boot of her car in the 1960s, she and her hus-

¹⁴ Interview with Sembie Danana, Mthatha 18/07/2010.

band Max, who at that time was working for Shell, left their jobs and went full time into business. Aunt Laura narrates:

I was a nurse and left nursing in 1973 and went into business. First my husband left his job to run the business. I had opened Aunt Laura's Fashion Boutique in 1973 and left it with some people to run and went back to nursing. Then my husband said, 'No Nono [endearment term], you can't leave a business to be run by others. I will leave Shell and go there'. And I tried to say 'No dearie, you get paid more than me' but he said I'm leaving, 'I'm going to develop the business. Shell has taught me how to market a business'. So he ran the business alone and in time he said 'the business is growing leave the hospital'. So, I left the hospital and we ran the business together for 20 years. It was a marvellous success to the extent that we won a prize, eh, he was business man of the year in 1975 and was given a trip abroad to go and study more about business. Then once he was out there, we had applied for a service station as well, and the owner said. 'If you don't take it now I will give it to another person'. So by the time he came back from his trip, he found me running a service station. I could not pay the money, the cash the owner wanted. I went to the first bank, they said 'No, you have to get your husband's signature to get money from us'. Then I went to the next bank, I explained the situation, then the guy said 'What are you going to do if we give you the money?' I said 'I am going to bank with you' and he said, 'You got it!' So, he borrowed me the money to pay those people. And uMthembu [the husband's clan name] came back, the boutique was doing well, and I was also running the service station, so, he had to go and settle where he came from [the boutique], and we ran the two businesses successfully and developed other small businesses such as an exhaust centre, a hair salon and a drapery shop.

Another businesswoman from the second generation, Mrs. M.M.M. Raziya, was the only woman in the Umtata City Council in the 1980s (Umtata 1982). Women also became visible in politics, Stella Sigcawu was appointed Prime Minister of the Transkei in 1987 (Ntsebeza forthc.). Gender equality was entrenched in the democratic period by the Bill of Rights of The Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) which promotes the rights of all citizens. Thus, the advancement of women has continued without any barriers to professional occupations based on, for example, their marital status, as happened with the earlier generations of married women teachers who were discussed in the previous chapter.

The decline in agriculture can also be understood in these terms: Women's professional mobility meant their withdrawal from household agricultural production as well as from their supportive role in the local community. Thus, the opportunities that had opened for members of especially the third generation, including women, changed the character of the neighbourhood. Out-migration to other cities was a serious problem as it affected community cohesion negatively and lowered the social capital of those that remained (see for example Beatty *et al.* 2009).

In Ncambedlana, residents argue, these changes led to the decline of the neighbourhood in general, and accepted norms of appropriate behaviour in particular. Older generations lament the absence of close ties and interaction that used to characterise life in bygone times. One long time resident expresses the

lack of social cohesion in these terms: ‘Now I could just see a tent pitched up next door and would not even know what’s going on. That is how it is now’.¹⁵

The pitching of a tent in the neighbourhood is associated with ceremony, this could either suggest a death has occurred or a more joyful occasion like a wedding, for example, is about to take place hence the need for extra seating for the funeral or wedding party. Being in the dark with regard to which of these is meant by the *pitched* tent would mark a radical departure from the strong community bonds discussed in the previous chapter.

The fracturing of community bonds is understood to have gotten worse in the democratic era when new residents moved into the neighbourhood. The new arrivals are blamed for not upholding the ‘standard’ of the place in terms of the general up-keep of the homes, established social norms and so on. N. Galada, a member of the second generation, laments:

There were no people who got drunk and sold dagga here, and drank alcohol and so on, but now there are. They are selling dagga and everything. At night, the dogs bark non-stop and follow them all the way to the shacks. There never used to be shacks here, it’s a new thing (...) It’s full of cars at night, hooting cars with loud music, cars being chopped up [chop shops]¹⁶ and so on. Such things did not happen here in Ncambedlana, it was clean.¹⁷

The renting out of homes, in particular, is understood to have contributed to the decline of ‘homestead gardens’ as people simply had no ‘pride’ in the rented house, and focused only on paying their rent for their ‘small room’ at the end of the month.¹⁸ In addition, squatters have taken over unused agricultural land to build shacks.

Thus, in the context of out- and in-migrations as well as the withdrawal of women from agricultural work and community engagement, social deterioration of the neighbourhood, in addition to the decline of agriculture, is believed to have set in. Agriculture became less associated with economic, social, cultural or spiritual life as was the case with the second generation. However, as will be shown below land continues to play an important role in the lives of this middle class.

Changes in land use in the democratic era

If the Transkei ‘independence’ era marked the decline of agriculture within Mthatha’s landed middle class, the democratic era can definitely be associated with the de-agrarianisation of this class, that is, the loss of any agricultural activity. One factor that has contributed to de-agrarianisation is internal migration. Whereas the mobility of the second generation during the Transkei ‘independ-

¹⁵ Interview with Nomonde Bam, Mthatha, 19/07/2010.

¹⁶ ‘Chop shops’ are places where stolen goods are disassembled for the sale of parts.

¹⁷ Interview with Nomonde Galada, Mthatha, 29/7/2010.

¹⁸ Interview with Peter ‘Goofy’ Moahloli, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

ence' era was mainly limited to within the Mthatha municipality or Transkei region, the post-1994 migration of the third generation extended throughout the length and breadth of the country and, as already mentioned, meant a significant withdrawal of this generation from agriculture.

Democratic changes in the country saw the repeal of many of the apartheid laws which barred the movement and residency of Black South Africans in the major cities and resulted in increased migration to cities such as Cape Town (Deumert *et al.* 2005). This also meant that people from the surrounding villages, a long-standing source of agricultural labour for the Ncamedlana land-owners, were no longer limited to Mthatha and Ncamedlana for work opportunities. This led to significant labour shortages for those who still continued agricultural production.¹⁹

An additional factor contributing to labour shortages in Ncamedlana is believed to be the introduction of the social pensions since 1994. Fatima Maliwa, a member of the third generation, argues that general welfare provision in the democratic era, including housing, has contributed to the labour shortages in Ncamedlana:

No, they just sit! For instance, even the ones that get pension grants and so on, you find that a person is really dependant on this grant and they won't even go and look for gardening work to get something.²⁰

Some families are alleged to receive as many as four grants, that is, the old age pension, disability grant, foster grant and child grant. Aunt Laura Mpahlwa similarly believes that in a situation where one can receive a total of 'R2000' from state grants, 'the need to work is not there'.²¹ The withdrawal of labour due to social grants has been reported also for other parts of the country (Posel *et al.* 2006).

Although migration to Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg has become widespread in the post-apartheid era, there is still significant in-migration to Mthatha. Mthatha is landlocked on all sides by rural trust land and attracts a number of people in search of better employment opportunities, especially in white-collar professions, and social services (Makgetla 2010; Harrison 2010). This has seen the population increase from a reported 71,986 in 1991 to 91,020 in 2001 (Siyongwana 2005). Latest estimates put population figures at around 150,000 (Harrison 2010).

In-migration to Mthatha has been accompanied by an increasing demand for accommodation. The high demand for housing has enhanced the position of landowners in Mthatha. This position has been strengthened by the historic lack

¹⁹ Interview with Malibongwe Mphako, Mthatha, 13/07/2010.

²⁰ Interview with Fatima Maliwa, Mthatha, 10/07/2010.

²¹ Interview with Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 21/07/2010.

of low-cost housing provision in the town. Housing provision during the Transkei 'independence' era favoured the development of housing for the middle and high income brackets (Siyongwana 2005). The third generation in particular, has exploited the gap in the provision of housing in Mthatha by converting agricultural land to residential usage. Malibongwe Mpako, a member of the third generation, explains:

If you have a piece of land even if it is small, it enables you to build flats for rental, that's what is better now. How we make a living [out of land], people from the villages go to school there and when they pass they come to study at Unitra [University of Transkei]. They pass their teaching courses and law studies and then rent here [Ncambedlana], in town, in places like phase [Ncambedlana Extension] and Northcrest. They buy houses in places like Northcrest and so on. Those who don't yet have money rent flats from us. They travel to places like Tsolo to teach, then come back here in the afternoon. They teach as far as Ngqeleni, then come back to their rooms in the afternoon.²²

In addition to educational and occupational opportunities, beliefs in witchcraft and supernatural powers are credited as another driving factor for in-migration. Malibongwe Mpako's explains that these are often the consequence of jealousy for those who are upwardly mobile. In other words, the city allows people anonymity, individuality and freedom from strict social control.

They want accommodation, they don't want to stay in the countryside because they say, 'I can't go to school in the village, work in the village and stay in the village'. What they say is there is witchcraft in the countryside (...) because when you went to school in the village and people knew you were struggling at home, eating maize porridge and now that you are working you come with cars and offload plastics [grocery bags] they bewitch you and make you a zombie (...) but when people come to stay here no matter how many plastics they offload or whether they park a car, I don't care because I don't know where they come from, I don't know their background, the only thing I want from them is my rent so that I can also eat.

New land use opportunities have arisen as a result of population pressures. Converting land to residential uses is seen as profitable and less risky compared to the capital, ecological and technological problems associated with agriculture. Large scale conversion of agricultural land took place in the early 1990s. A group of about nine Ncambedlana landowners entered into a consortium with real estate developers to build residential housing aimed at the low-middle income bracket. The first three phases of this development, known as Ncambedlana Extension have been completed (see Photo 5.1).

Phase one was developed on the Matebese farm, phase two on the Mphako farm and phase three on the Qhinga farm. When construction on phase four was to begin, it was stalled because of infrastructural difficulties. It is alleged that the Mthatha municipality could not support the development due to inadequate sew-

²² Interview with Malibongwe Mphako, Mthatha, 13/07/2010.

Photo 5.1 Ncambedlana extension, Phase 1

Source: Author's photo, July 2010.

erage infrastructure in the town. The remaining five farms remain inactive as they have already been sub-divided and are tied to the residential development.²³

Those opposed to this kind of development and critical of the sale of land, cite amongst other things the sentimental attachment to land for their refusal to be part of the residential development consortium. Thus, Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli, explains

At our home we refused. We refused for ours to be converted to the phase [Ncambedlana Extension]. We said never because we (...) deep down we knew how attached our parents were to this land and how they got it. Remember it was family land, the Mnyani family and when they sold it, immediately this guy wanted to sell it back and he quickly notified a relative to come and occupy it because of the attachment. He wanted to keep it to the family.²⁴ (See Chapter 3 for the history of the Moahloli/Mnyani land ownership)

For others, however, their opposition arose strictly from a business point of view. They chose to develop the land themselves by constructing residential units. Poni Raziya outlines his view:

²³ Interviews with Malibongwe Mphako, Mthatha, 13/07/2010; Vuyisa Qhinga, Mthatha, 18/07/10 and Aunt Laura Mpahlwa, Mthatha, 21/07/2010.

²⁴ Interview with Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

In Ncambedlana there are three [residential units] that belong to my mother. From those alone we get about R45,000 to R50,000 per month (...) She lives on those, they generate income (...) on the space, I said, used to be a workshop for buses, we are planning to build residential flats. We are planning that for the whole space. Yes, because there is no land, there is a shortage of land now in Mthatha. Some clever people came and robbed people on those farms of the Mphakos, saying they are going to build there and they took that space. We won't go for that. We will just do it on our own. No, we have got plans.²⁵

The Mthatha municipality is locked in a land claim dispute which has brought to a halt further land developments in the CBD (Harrison 2010). Converting land in areas such as Ncambedlana offers one of the few opportunities for the town's further development in the meantime. While residential developments are certainly different in terms of earning potential, even those with limited land holdings are deriving some income from residential flats. Malibongwe Mpako explains that everyone is now involved, it has become 'a way of life', just as agriculture was a 'way of life' in the past:

This has become a way of making a living because even here at the Tetyanas and the Zibis, it is these flats. Yes, even with the Jaftas and the Sakwes you saw the mud flats there, they are for rent. This is a way of life now. There's no agriculture, people rent out flats. One room here costs R450, then they buy electricity for R100 which makes it R550. Here at the garage, it costs R500, with R100 for electricity it becomes R600. There are 9 of them [flats/rooms]. Even this house [a small hut], the tenth one, I rent it out for R400. It's R300 for the room and then R100 for electricity, so count, R450 for eight [rooms/flats] and then one for R500 and then one for R400. Even now if I had the money I would put up more flats here in the garden because I have land. But I don't have the means, I don't have the money.

As can be seen from the above examples, independent land owners stand to benefit as nothing hinders them from developing their land for residential purposes. However, what we see is a differentiation according to land use: Some engage with large-scale development projects such as the consortium; others who have financial resources and are able to develop their land themselves. There are also those who have minimal resources and rent out individual rooms. And finally, some have neither developed their land nor are they engaged in agricultural production. Many of those plots have been taken over by squatters.

However, a small minority of the third generation is still committed to pursuing agriculture. They have not developed their land for residential use as the others have done but have opted instead to use it for pastoral agriculture. In other words, they use the land for livestock production. Keeping cattle and sheep fulfills an economic function as well as socio-cultural purposes. Livestock are seen as a good investment as they are highly in demand for a variety of ceremonial activities such as weddings, funerals as well as for other cultural functions such as *lobola* (bride wealth) and one's own sustenance (see Ntshona & Turner 2002). Livestock are often sold for cash which is then used, for example, to contribute

²⁵ Interview with. Poni Raziya, Mthatha, 31/07/2010.

towards the payment of university fees of children.²⁶ Livestock are seen as a more reliable investment under the ecological conditions that have discouraged many from cultivating the land (see also Cousins 1997).

Another factor which works in favour of livestock over cultivation agriculture is that the local market still allows for the participation of individual producers. The penetration of supermarkets such as *Shoprite*, *Pick N' Pay*, *Spar* and *Woolworths*, while increasing the variety and lowering the price of food, has also undermined local growers. The procurement systems of the above supermarkets favour large commercial farmers who are often organised in 'outgrower schemes' of 'preferred suppliers' and adhere to stringent food quality and safety standards. Smallholders on the other hand struggle with these as well as the volumes of supply required by the supermarkets (D'Haese & Van Huylbroeck 2005).

However, some members of the Ncambedlana middle class still harbour ambitions for cultivation agriculture. For example, the Ncambedlana Farmers' Association was formed in the late 1990s and discussions with the municipality for the provision of services such as water and electricity as well as lower of rates for the farms are ongoing.²⁷ The example of Sembie Danana, a Johannesburg-based company executive and member of the third generation is a case in point. He is in the process of building a 'palatial home' on his Ncambedlana small-holding where he plans to start organic farming. Originally, Sembie Danana had abandoned farming for the 'bright lights' of Johannesburg shortly after the democratic transformation in 1994. Now he is planning to return.²⁸

Another member of the third generation, Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli is presently managing director of the Umtata Agricultural Development Services (UADS), a commercial venture between the Ncise community,²⁹ who own fifty percent and five individual investors, including Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli. The UADS utilises the use of hydroponics, a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, in water, without soil, as well as open land to produce about thirty thousand cabbages on their 59 hectare plot at a time. They plan to increase production to about a hundred thousand cabbages and have also started growing other vegetables such as spinach and onions. Thus, they aim to break the stranglehold white commercial farmers from outside the region have on the local food market.³⁰ The land is communal and not individually owned, and this partnership demonstrates innovative ways in which communal land could be used. Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli also plans to revive his own family's small-holding in Ncambedlana. He figures that the lessons and experiences gained from the UADS venture will stand him in

²⁶ Interview with Dean Nzamela, Mthatha, 01/08/2010.

²⁷ Interview with Loyiso Mpumlwana, Mthatha, 26/7/2010.

²⁸ Interview with Sembie Danana, Mthatha, 18/07/2010.

²⁹ This is communal land next to the Mthatha airport.

³⁰ Interview with Mr. Peter "Goofy" Moahloli, Mthatha, 18/07/2010.

good stead. Technological improvements such as the use of hydroponics, in particular, will help against the ecological pitfalls that hindered the agricultural practices of the second generation.

The above discussion of the land use practices of the Ncambedlana middle class show a shift in the meaning and use of land for this class, especially for the third generation. The continued importance of land in this case study constitutes a critique of the view held by some scholars that land lost its meaning due to de-agrarianisation of the countryside in the 1950s (Seekings & Natrass 2006). However, in this and previous chapters, not only has it been demonstrated that the combination of land and occupations continued for a second generation after the 1950s, but also for a 'third generation'. Through the twentieth and early twenty-first century, land was used not only for subsistence, but for commercial production and returns.

The continuity of land ownership as a defining feature of this group was not limited to agriculture, but included and continues to include non-agricultural uses of land. It is precisely this historical continuity which is essential to class formation, that is, the emergence of a shared identity-based on material conditions. This argument is in line with Newman (1993: 156), who suggests that class is a question of 'family trajectory', a 'shared identity' that encompasses the whole family: 'Only when each member has achieved what the lineage defines as an appropriate economic or occupational standing can its members feel a sense of closure on the question of class'. This would suggest that for the middle class families described here, replication of land *ownership* across generations is central: It is the possession of land, not what one does with it, which distinguishes one from those middle-class individuals who relied solely on white-collar professions. Land ownership provides 'distinction' in the sense of Bourdieu (1984) while being at the same time an important form of capital. The study of the role of land within the Ncambedlana Black middle class engages the debate, in particular between Bernstein (2007) and Moyo (2007), on the meaning of land and the agrarian question in South Africa. It shows land as an important multi-use asset for the creation of surplus value and not only as a short term survival strategy to 'absorb' the rural unemployed as Bernstein suggests.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that political developments such as the Transkei 'independence' era and the democratic transition have played an influential role in transforming the Ncambedlana middle class. This included transformation of gender roles as more opportunities became available to women, as well as upward mobility into the more senior white-collar professions of the new regime, and openings for commercial ventures. The period of Transkei 'independence'

also marked the decline of agriculture within this class. This is attributed to the regime's preference for large-scale agriculture over family farms. Importantly these policies did not see the urban environment as a place for agriculture. This was demonstrated, for example, by the development of the Mthatha commonage into the residential suburbs of North Crest and Hillcrest Extension respectively. Thus, a developmental strategy that favoured urbanisation over agriculture within the Mthatha municipality undermined the ability of the Ncambedlana middle class to farm successfully. Climate and ecological factors such as the changes in the pattern of rainfall and the drought of the 1980s, capital and financial constraints as well as the advancing age of the second generation also contributed to the decline of agriculture within this class. In addition, school curricula had changed and no longer included agriculture as a subject as had been the case in the mission schools. Those born in the 1950s and 1960s generally viewed agriculture as a non-prestigious occupation and showed little inclination in following in the footsteps of their parents.

The democratic period marks the full generational shift from the second to the third generation of this class. The third generation shows the transformation of the Ncambedlana middle class from its mainly 'semi-professional' origins to the professional categories. It also saw even greater emancipation for the women of this class. This together with occupational and geographical mobility had a negative effect on the community cohesion and neighbourhood status in Ncambedlana. The insufficient supply of agricultural labour, possibly due to improved government welfare policies, also contributed to the de-agrarianisation of the Ncambedlana middle class. As with the second generation in the 1970s and early 1980s, greater capital and financial resources required for farming on account of climatic and ecological conditions have made agriculture difficult for the third generation. However a small minority is still committed to agriculture, especially livestock production. Unlike with agriculture, the local market still allows for individual livestock producers.

On the other hand, new land use opportunities as a result of population pressures in Mthatha arose. Mthatha's population growth is driven by the phenomenon of rural-urban migration to the former Bantustan towns in order to access opportunities and services. This has resulted in a high demand for accommodation within the municipality. The high demand for accommodation lies behind the conversion from agricultural to residential land usages by the third generation of the Ncambedlana middle class. This generation has exploited the historical gap in the provision of low cost housing in Mthatha. Thus, the democratic period has coincided with the large-scale de-agrarianisation of the Ncambedlana middle class, reflected by the conversion from mostly agricultural land uses to mostly residential land uses: crop production has been replaced by rent production.

Summary and conclusions

This book examined the role of land in Mthatha's Black middle class during the segregation, apartheid and post-apartheid eras. The Mthatha middle class is a particular type of middle class that developed at the beginning of the twentieth century from a combination of education/occupation and landownership (Redding 1993). An in-depth case study of the Ncambedlana middle class was undertaken and life histories were collected from descendants of this group. In addition, archival research was conducted in Mthatha and Cape Town. The study answers the following central question: what happened to the Bantustan Black middle class that combined occupation and landownership in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras? Moreover, this work contributes to our understanding of the historical background which led to the formation of this group in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This book has argued that the role of land in the definition of the Black middle class needs to be acknowledged, especially, in the Bantustans where Blacks could own land. It suggested that in order to understand the question of the middle class, one must view the development of this class from a historical perspective. Thus, the book grappled with the concepts of middle class formation and grounded the centrality of land ownership in the development and reproduction of this class. It brought out the contextual and conceptual issues that have arisen historically pertaining to ownership, dispossession, and de-agrarianisation and how these factors influenced the trajectories of this middle class. The study also considered the meaning of land and uses of land in the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

Chapter 2 argued that the historical origins of the Black middle class were traceable to the colonial era. It demonstrated how contact with the British colonial empire and its political as well as cultural institutions led to far-reaching social changes in indigenous African societies. The chapter showed the role of missionary institution in promoting capitalism, social differentiation and a culture of

consumption. The introduction of new technologies, such as the mechanical plough, stores that sold clothing and agricultural implements were meant to tie traditional societies firmly to the British colonial economy. By 1848, the Cape colonial government had issued title deeds to about 70,000 acres of land to mission stations. This meant that missionaries now had the power to grant land access and favour those who were willing to convert. Early converts invested profits from agriculture not only in livestock and crops, but also in education. As a result, the descendants of the first generation of Christian peasants became equipped with marketable skills that could be exchanged in the emerging capitalist labour market. These allowed them to access economic resources that surpassed those gained from unskilled occupations. Thus, a Black middle class based on educational skills, and located mainly in clerical, teaching, priesthood and language interpreting occupations, emerged in the mid-nineteenth century. Their salaries allowed them to accumulate cash resources which they used to buy land when the first land market opened in British Kaffraria in the 1850s. Even though this middle class was small in number, the holding of land under freehold title broke with traditional forms of land tenure and allowed middle class formation on the basis of private land ownership. The combination of the wars of dispossession in the late nineteenth century and the legislative measures adopted at the turn of the twentieth century, such as the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913, are believed to have resulted in widespread African proletarianisation.

Consequently, the development of the Black middle class is believed to have followed an occupational trajectory, largely due to urban migration as a result of growing industrialisation in the 1940s to 1960s. In the 1960s and 1970s, scholars favouring an ethnographic approach, focused on the urban environment in the republic. They defined the Black middle class mainly according to status, that is, the prestige and honour that was afforded them. This class was presented as differentiated from the majority of the urban township community along educational lines, norms of appropriate behaviour and consumption patterns, modelling themselves to a fair degree after the white middle class. Importantly, land does not feature in most scholarly accounts of the middle class during this period.

With the economic boom of the 1960s, the Black middle class is believed to have grown in size, especially in the service sector, due to declining job reservation and the growth of Black urban social services. Thus, in the period between the 1970s and 1994, the Black middle class became highly concentrated in the categories of routine white-collar and 'semi-professional' occupations. Because of better incomes, the Black middle class began to separate themselves even in the townships as middle class residential sections developed. Thus, scholars such as Crankshaw (1997) and Seekings & Nattrass (2006) favoured the contingency

of education in enabling class mobility and defined the Black middle class according to occupation and income. However, Brandel-Syrrier's (1971) *Reeftown* study had demonstrated already in the early 1970s that it was not enough to look at incomes and occupations only to understand the urban Black middle class in its complexity. Her study showed that looking at this class solely from an urban vantage point, misses the importance of urban/rural linkages: Even in the republic there was an urban middle class who had land, albeit not in the same area, and derived a living from it.

In the Bantustans where Blacks could own land, scholars also continued to define the middle class according to occupation and income only. In the Transkei Bantustan, four distinct groups within the middle class were identified as *beneficiaries* of the apartheid strategy of separate development (Southall 1982). In other words, this class is presented as largely created by the state and thus likely to oppose the democratic transformation as its privileged existence was closely tied to that of the apartheid state.

Scholars have continued to define the Black middle class in the democratic era according to the income/occupation thesis. Just, like the Bantustan middle class before it, it is argued that this 'new' Black middle class is a product of changed social and political conditions, supported by state-led labour market interventions, e.g. Affirmative Action (AA). Importantly, this 'new' Black middle class does not generally own property.

Although most Blacks had lost their access to land through the Glen Grey Act of 1894 and the Natives Land Act of 1913, Chapter 3 of this thesis argued that the landed Black middle class which had emerged at the mission stations in the mid-nineteenth century, defined by the combination of occupation and landownership, was not entirely destroyed by these legislative measures but had reinvented themselves in the reserves. This was demonstrated by the example of the first generation of the Mthatha middle class which, as Redding argued, had developed at the turn of the twentieth century. Importantly, this middle class combined occupation and landownership after the above legislative measures are widely believed to have pushed many Africans into landlessness and proletarianisation. Redding had argued that descendants of the destroyed Black peasantry, who had pursued an education, became the middle class of the small reserve towns where they held white collar occupations. The first generation of Mthatha's Black middle class emerged in 1908, when land was auctioned to Blacks in Ncambedlana. It was consolidated in the following decades up to 1950.

This work provided two important contributions to Redding's original study. It showed, through the life story of Elisha Mda, that the struggle for land and the adoption of education was part of a broader anti-colonial resistance. It also followed from the need to make meaning of changed conditions of colonial domina-

tion. Importantly, his case illustrated the relationship between education/occupation and landownership in the development of the Black middle class in general, and the Mthatha middle class in particular. His grandson Mda Mda explains the rationale behind investing in land and highlights the role of land in enabling education.

The chapter argued that the Umtata Water Scheme of 1906 was central to the development of Black landownership in Mthatha in 1908. It showed that this development was part of a bigger story and drew attention to the fact that as some educated and affluent Blacks were able to purchase land, others were displaced because of exactly this opportunity. The chapter also discussed the contrasting economic and political pursuits of two well known figures of the first generation – Elisha Mda and T.M. Makiwane – and showed that political and economic power did not always coincide in one individual.

Chapter 4 showed that the middle class that combined occupation with land use continued after 1950, in a period characterised by the rise of apartheid and the Bantustan strategy. The book argued that a second generation of this middle class – composed mainly of graduate teachers, professionals, such as lawyers and doctors, as well as entrepreneurs in the transport sector – developed in Ncambedlana in the 1950s and 1960s, despite the apartheid government attempts to limit its accumulation potential. Importantly, land ownership, just as in the case of the first generation, protected members of this class from a downward spiral into destitution even when they could no longer practice their occupations as highlighted by the case of J.J. Nte. The chapter showed that it was, especially, the ‘semi-professional’ category of the second generation that engaged in a mixed commercial/subsistence model of agriculture, and argued that the reason for this was because of the low salaries within this group. Thus, just like with the first generation, land and agriculture provided the second generation with an important material base that overcame reliance on salaries. The professional category of lawyers and doctors as well as the entrepreneurs, also practiced agriculture but mainly for own consumption. Importantly, the agricultural practices of the second generation showed that the commercial/subsistence farming combination characteristic of many of Africa’s food producers didn’t disappear with the destruction of the nineteenth century Black peasantry, and farming remained important in enabling education of the next generation. In the words of Loyiso Mpumlwana: ‘We got our education on the basis of commercial farming’ (see Chapter 4).

The entrepreneurs also used land for purposes other than agriculture, such as service workshops and parking garages as well as offices for their transport business. The chapter also showed the gendered nature of this middle class. It argued that the role of women was central in the organisation, control and marketing of

household agricultural production. These women, who in most cases had qualified as teachers, saw their teaching career prospects limited once they married due to the discrimination against employing married women teachers. They turned their skills to the reproduction of their class and community. In addition to household labour, the second generation exploited various forms of labour – including co-operative labour groups as well as hired labour – to produce a surplus to take to the market. The women were the *de-facto* managers of the agricultural activities of this class.

In addition, the chapter suggested that Ncamedlana's development into a residential neighbourhood with a distinct middle class identity coincided with the period of the second generation. This was partly a result of social networks of recruitment among the teacher group. These networks, stretching back to university days, included recruitment to jobs in the local high schools as well as to buying land in Ncamedlana. Thus, Ncamedlana evolved into a middle class community: Unlike the first generation who used the neighbourhood mainly for farming, the second generation moved in with their families. In the words of Mamazana Finca: 'When the teachers came, they came, built houses and stayed' (Chapter 4).

The women of the second generation also played a critical role in community cohesion. Their influence was not limited to the home but extended to the neighbourhood where their constant presence fostered a strong culture of learning and appropriate behaviour within Ncamedlana.

However, as discussed in Chapter 5, during the period of Transkei 'independence' agriculture within this group gradually went into decline. The decline in agriculture during this period was part of a broader decline that affected agriculture in the whole country. The 1976 political changes transformed this middle class along bureaucratic and commercial lines. This meant that they moved away from agriculture as opportunities opened up in the civil service and commercial sector, due to the withdrawal of whites and the Africanisation policies of the Matanzima regime. The study argued that the long-standing foothold in education and property ownership allowed them to be well placed to exploit these new opportunities. In other words, they benefitted from the regime but were not created by it. Another factor that discouraged agriculture within this group were the urbanisation policies of the regime. These saw every available land in town developed for housing. This urbanisation drive included the development of the Mthatha commonage, on which both generations of this middle class had grazed their livestock. The housing developments of the suburbs of Northcrest and Hillcrest Extension in the 1980s had an adverse effect on agriculture within the Ncamedlana middle class. In the view of most respondents, this marked the beginning of agricultural decline in the Ncamedlana neighbourhood. Again, Loy-

iso Mpumlwana explains: 'They built Northcrest, they took our grazing land (...) That made keeping livestock difficult' (Chapter 5).

The transformation of the Mthatha commonage into suburbia was followed by increasing the rates for the Ncamedlana farms to equal town rates. Other factors that led to a decline of agriculture within this middle class were ecological, such as the 1980s drought and deterioration of the soil.

The generational shift from the second to the third generation involved a change in land use practices as well as a transformation along occupational lines and gender roles. Importantly, the two generations were the products of different educational systems. Agricultural skills had been part of the educational syllabus of the missionary trained second generation. However, with the centralisation of education under the apartheid government in the 1950s, these skills were now to be taught in special schools. The third generation came to associate agriculture with underachievement and low status. In the words of Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli: 'Agriculture was a thing for people who have failed in life. If academically you are not proceeding, then they say 'Try agriculture'' (Chapter 5).

The occupationally mobile third generation favoured a life in 'white collar' professions rather than the hard work of agriculture. Importantly, women of the third generation were not confined to the home like their mothers and were now able to follow a professional career. And more generally, many members of the third generation were university educated and thus able to move into the professional sector, whereas their parents had been 'semi-professionals'.

The increased professional mobility of the third generation allowed them to find well-paying occupations in major urban centres of South Africa, especially as new opportunities opened up in the democratic era. Thus, in contrast to the second generation who had been tied to the Bantustan, migration to the urban centres of East London, Cape Town, Johannesburg and others, further removed the third generation from agriculture. These developments, combined with ecological challenges as well as a growing scarcity of cheap agricultural labour due to the comprehensive social pensions introduced by the democratic government, worked together in making agriculture an unattractive commercial venture.

However, although we see gradual de-agrarianisation from 1976 onwards – a development that accelerated post-1994 – land continues to play an important role in the livelihoods of this class. What has happened is the conversion from agriculture to real estate and residential usages of land, a development motivated by the accelerated population growth of Mthatha in the 1990s.

The history of housing in Mthatha has been characterised by a lack of provision of low-cost accommodation, while middle and high income brackets are well served. This skewed residential planning has driven up the price of urban land and real estate in Mthatha. Ncamedlana land-owners of the third generation

have exploited the gap in the provision of housing in Mthatha. Three types of developments were discussed in Chapter 5:

- (a) A group of Ncamedlana landowners entered into a consortium with real estate developers to develop residential housing aimed at the low-middle income bracket.
- (b) Other Ncamedlana landowners have focused on the low-income bracket and funded investments individually. They have built flats and accommodation units that can earn as much as R45, 000 per month.
- (c) Even those with limited land holdings and financial resources rent out rent out individual rooms and flats. As Malibongwe Mpako explained: Everyone is now involved, it has become ‘a way of life’, just as agriculture was a ‘way of life’ in the past. (Chapter 5)

All these groups have found the conversion from agriculture to residential usages to be more profitable as well as less labour and capital intensive than agriculture. In addition, there are those who have neither developed their land nor are they engaged in agricultural production. Many of them have seen their plots taken over by squatters.

Throughout this book an important weaknesses of contemporary sociology has been addressed, namely, the absence of land in the conceptualisation of class. The case of the Ncamedlana middle class clearly shows the role of land in middle class livelihoods. This is missing from most studies of this kind in South Africa and elsewhere since the middle class is commonly defined in terms of occupation/income only. It showed the historical continuities of a class whose origins stretch back all the way to the nineteenth century. However, while land continues, agriculture within this class appears to have discontinued. In the present time, crop production has been replaced by rent production (although some residents are planning to return to agriculture, especially organic farming). Land is useful to people not only because one can farm it (agriculture), but also because one can obtain rental income from it.

This work also provides a critical rejoinder to the view expressed by, for example, the Centre for Development Enterprise (CDE). The CDE suggests that land redistribution should focus on housing rather than agriculture. The case of Ncamedlana landowners has highlighted many factors that are linked to the decline of agriculture within this group. These factors cannot be simply generalised as a preference for urban wage employment and lack of interest in agriculture as suggested by the CDE (see also CDE 2005). In addition, the study provides critical inputs to the South African government’s objective of land redistribution to develop a Black commercial farming class as envisaged by the Land Redistribution for Agricultural Development (LRAD) programme (Hall 2007, 2010). As

shown by the case of Ncambedlana, without access to capital, technology and markets, it is doubtful that these programmes can have the desired results.

The present study was limited by time factors. This meant that not enough archival work could be done. It would have also been worthwhile to conduct further interviews, for example, with members of the Ncambedlana middle class who have relocated to the metropolitan areas of the republic. This means that there is significant scope for further work, and before concluding I would, therefore, like to outline three areas for research. The first two are historical and look at histories of dispossession and resistance. The third area turns its gaze to the present and emphasises the importance of understanding the meaning of land in today's world of mobility, globalisation, consumption and democratic opportunity.

- (1) An important area for further research would be an examination of what happened to the original *amaMpondo* residents who were removed from Ncambedlana in 1908. Where did they move to? How did they feel about moving and leaving their ancestral lands? Did they return to Ncambedlana as agricultural labourers and were thus exploited by the Black middle class? How do their descendants narrate the history of the water scheme and the rise of Ncambedlana as a middle class neighbourhood? Thus in line with the discussion in the introduction, oral history methodologies could be used to give voice to their histories, memories and grievances.
- (2) The example of Cameron Ngudle in Chapter 3 has shown that villagers resisted infringements on their livelihoods. I believe that further study of the history of villagers of Kambi who were affected by the building of the Mthatha dam, would be important. Here a combination of archival work and oral history would be an appropriate methodology to follow. The focus should be on describing and understanding forms of resistance to dispossession and land grab. Too often we see the dispossessed as victims. This would be a chance to highlight their agency – even if doomed to failure in the end – and the ways in which they made life difficult for the colonial empire.
- (3) And finally, it would be important to turn our attention to the present. Here research needs to address a wide range of highly topical questions: What role does land play in middle-class livelihoods of the twenty-first century? Who in the current middle class owns property and who does not? How should we understand the relationship of the 'old' land-owning and the 'new' property-less middle class? And what trajectories of land use do we find? For example, how did members of the third generation who had moved to the metropolitan centres of the republic, keep their landownership productive? Why are some plots empty and not used? Are they seen

as financial security, only to be activated when necessary? And what lies behind the common practice of those who have left but build 'palatial homes' in their home areas, and dream of returning one day to a farming lifestyle? How can we explain the unwavering 'pull of land' even for those who have found success and affluence in their urban professional careers?

The geographer and philosopher Yi-Fu Tuan (1977: 3-4) introduced the term *topophilia*, the love for place, that is, land. He writes about the human experience of place as follows: 'Place is security (...) It is the old homestead, the old neighbourhood (...) Places are centres of felt value where biological needs, such as those for food, water, rest, and procreation, are satisfied. In his 2009 book, *A Reenchanted World*, James Gibson argued that such close cultural and social connections to land have largely been destroyed in modernity, yet people don't give them up easily. Land is not only home and emotional security, it is also financial security, livelihood and survival when all else fails.

Appendix: List of respondents*

| <i>Name</i> | <i>Age</i> | <i>Occupation</i> | <i>Length of interview</i> | <i>Date of interview</i> |
|-------------------------------|------------|---|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Mr. Mda Mda | 87 | retired attorney | 4 hrs | 09/07/2010 |
| Mrs. M. Raziya | 93 | retired businesswoman | 1.5 hrs | 04/06/2010 |
| Mr. K. Makiwane | 88 | retired clergyman | 1.30 hrs | 05/06/2010 |
| Mrs. L. Mpahlwa | 80 | retired businesswoman | 2 hrs | 21/07/2010 |
| Mrs N. Galada | 81 | retired nurse | 1.30 hrs | 29/07/2010 |
| Mr. J. Maqhubela | 79 | retired top-level manager (public service) | 1.30 hrs | 21/07/2010 |
| Mr. S. Mda | 79 | retired high school principal | 1.30 hr | 12/07/2010 |
| Mrs. Sakwe | 75 | homemaker | 1 hr | 13/07/2010 |
| Mr. M. Makiwane | 70s | attorney | 1.30 hrs | 12/07/2010 |
| Ms. M. Finca | 70s | retired magistrate | 2 hrs | 23/07/2010 |
| Mrs. N. Bam | 60s | businesswoman | 2 hrs | 19/07/10 |
| Ms. M. Guzana | 60s | home-based business | 1 hr | 23/07/2010 |
| Mr. L. Mpumlwana | 60s | lawyer | 2 hrs | 27/07/2010 |
| Mr. Peter 'Goofy' Moahloli | 60s | businessman | 1.30 hrs | 19/07/2010 |
| Mr. P. Raziya | 60 | businessman | 3 hrs | 31/07/2010 |
| Mr. D. Nzamela | 50s | civil servant | 1 hr | 01/08/2010 |
| Mr. Z. Maliwa | 50s | businessmen/farmer | 1.30 hr | 23/07/2010 |
| Ms. F. Maliwa | 50s | lecturer (FET College) | 1.30 hr | 10/07/2010 |
| Dr. Z. Stofile | 50s | medical doctor | 1 hr | 7/07/2010 |
| Ms. T. Yako | 50s | nurse | 1 hr | 20/07/2010 |
| Mr. S. Danana | 50s | businessman | 1.30 hr | 18/07/10 |
| Mr. A. Mda | 50s | lawyer | 2 hrs | 15/07/2010 |
| Mr. L. Stofile | 50s | lawyer | 1.30 hr | 19/07/2010 |
| Mr. V. Mbangatha | 50 | businessman | 2 hrs | 12/07/2010 |
| Mr. D. Qhinga | 48 | sales agent | 1 hr | 18/07/10 |
| Mr. M Mphako | 47 | discharged soldier | 1.30 hrs | 12/07/2010 |
| Mr. N. Ntaba | 40s | businessman | 1 hr | 19/07/2010 |
| Ms. B. Bam | 30s | manager (arts and crafts centre) | 1 hr | 19/07/10 |
| Mr. A. Bam | 20s | not given | 1 hr | 19/07/2010 |

* Respondents are listed according to age group.

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