

SECOND CARNEGIE INQUIRY INTO POVERTY
AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

Migration from the farms to
towns and its implications
for urban adaptation.

by

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MIGRATION FROM THE FARMS TO TOWNS AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR
URBAN ADAPTATION

(C.W. Manona, Rhodes University)

(a) Introduction

The aim of the paper is to examine the process of urban adaptation of large numbers of black workers who have been migrating for many decades from white-owned farms in the Albany and Bathurst districts to Grahamstown. The movement of workers from white-owned farms to the towns in South Africa has not yet received sufficient attention among researchers. Instead, the greater part of migrant studies done locally have concentrated on the migration of people from the 'homeland' areas and for this reason we know little about the large number of people who have been associated with the farms for a number of generations in some cases. In towns the people who formerly lived on the farms have had to cope with many disabilities over and above those experienced by other urban residents. In particular, the fact that few of them have any formal education due to the shortage of schools on the farms means that in town they are less equipped for the for the better paying jobs. Moreover, many of them find much difficulty in finding suitable accommodation after their arrival in town. Nevertheless, realising that people under these circumstances are constrained to make choices within the limitations of their situation, it is significant that they have been able to adapt to the demands of this urban area and have tended to reside here permanently. The fieldwork for the study is currently done part-time in Grahamstown and on a farm at Salem in the Albany district. Sunridge is the pseudonym we have adopted for this farm.

Although many of the people in question are no longer in a position to identify the places where their ancestors lived before taking up employment on the farms, it appears that some are the descendants of the people who sought work among the Eastern Cape farms during and after the frontier Wars of the past century as well as many others who subsequently left places like Ciskei to look for employment on these farms. Even as far back as the 1940s and the 1950s the farms in the study area were rapidly losing labour largely on account of the increasing use of farm machinery as well as the declining profitability of the pineapple industry in this region. During this time the people who were migrating from this farming area were moving mainly to Grahamstown and, to some extent, Port Elizabeth. (Roberts

1958) The Past few years, on the other hand, have witnessed a massive in-migration from the neighbouring farms and this factor has contributed much to the 53,9% increase in Grahamstown's black population during the 1970-1980 decade. (Cf Appendix)

The tendency for Grahamstown to attract many people who leave the farms is partly related to the proximity of this urban area to the places of origin of the people in question. Also, in view of the strict application of influx control regulations in the nearest and larger South African city, Port Elizabeth, it has apparently been easier for workers from the farms and other rural areas locally to settle in this smaller city where, at least up to two or three years ago, these legal requirements were applied less stringently. Above all, case histories indicate that loyalties and emotional attachments to kin have played a prominent role in the choice of this urban area as the main destination for farm migrants. This rural-urban migration has occurred largely in the form of successive moves to town by various kin groups, sometimes over several generations. The overall effect of this chain migration (Price 1969) has been the emergence of kin clusters which commonly support the migration of those relatives who arrive in town later. This measure of kin sponsorship is the main theme of this paper. Also, the socio-economic background of the people we are discussing seems to account for the manner in which many farm migrants had, apparently willy nilly, to adjust their lives to the circumstances they encountered in town. That the people in question consider the townships in which they live as their permanent homes seems to be related to a large extent to their migration experience. As we have already indicated, the majority of farm workers who leave the farms usually move to Grahamstown. While some have managed to gain legal, though difficult, entry into Port Elizabeth, there are others who have chosen one or another of the Ciskei villages as their destination after leaving the farms during the past few years. The family histories recorded also show that a few people left the farms and went to Glenmore, a resettlement camp situated on the western border of Ciskei. Why some have gone either to Ciskei or Glenmore, seems to be connected largely with the tightening of influx control regulations in Grahamstown recently as well as the desire to gain access to land in these places. We must emphasize, however, that our main concern is with the large numbers of people who migrate to Grahamstown.

(b) Some aspects of farm living

Since the main focus of this paper is urban adaptation, only a brief sketch of the living conditions on the farms is given here. These comments refer to farm

incomes, the perception and nature of work done, educational and medical facilities of the farms and the socio-economic background of the people living on the farms at present. Although the farms usually include elderly families who depend almost entirely on old age pensions for their livelihood (e.g. at Sunridge), it seems that most families on the farms try to make ends meet by engaging in wage labour as many of the available members of the family as possible. These wages, which are to a large extent pooled for the mutual benefit of the family, now constitute an important means of making a living on the farms. At the same time, as significant proportion of the total wage paid to farm workers is paid in kind. It is therefore important to bear that fact in mind in evaluating the wages paid on the farms.

Today cash wages on the farms commonly vary in accordance with the type of work done by the employee. For instance, at the end of October 1983 the people employed at Sunridge received the following wages. Some work earned fixed monthly wages, e.g. male workers who are associated with the dairy farming operations on this farm (R40,00) and domestic workers (R27,00). The bulk of the employees on the pineapple fields here received varying amounts which are determined both by the productive capacity of each individual as well as by the level of profits received by the farm owner over a period of several months. After receiving a basic wage for a few months, a bonus is then paid out to the workers concerned. In this sector the basic monthly wage for tractor drivers is R40,00 and for ordinary male workers it ranges between R23,00 and R28,00. Bonus ranges between R20,00 and R30,00. Women, on the other hand, earn a basic wage of R13,50 per month. When bonus is paid out this amount may be augmented by anything between R20,00 and R30,00. The rations which are supplied weekly to families with people who are employed on a permanent basis include mealie meal or mealies, tea, sugar, salt and one litre of milk which is issued daily.

Most workers in this area occupy houses which are provided by the farmers. Usually these are mud huts or square buildings which may either be thatched or are built with corrugated iron roofs. Such houses are often built by the workers themselves with materials which are supplied by the farmers. A few farmers, however, provide at least some of their workers with much better housing. At Sunridge, for instance six of the 18 families living on that farm each occupy (free) four-roomed concrete block houses which are of a much better quality than other houses on this farm. With the exception of those farms which concentrate on stock farming, it seems that at present the hours of work on many farms are long. At Sunridge, for instance, from Mondays to Fridays the workers leave their homes for work at 6.00 am and return home at 6.00 pm. On Saturdays they work from 6.00 am to 1.00 pm.

As a result the workers who are associated with pineapple, chicory or dairy farming often emphasize the arduous nature of the work they do.

On the farms in the area the state provides the following medical services in the form of mobile clinics: tuberculosis care, family planning, child welfare, and the treatment of minor ailments and psychiatric disorders. In addition, the farmers themselves normally pay attention to the health of their workers, e.g. by making special trips to the hospital in Grahamstown when workers urgently require medical treatment and by supplying first-aid treatment. However, the degree to which this obligation is fulfilled varies. Also, the limited educational facilities on the farms is another difficulty relating to farm living. Map 2 which indicates the location of farm schools in the study area, shows that these schools are few and far apart. Consequently, many children walk several hours to and from the schools they attend. It is therefore not surprising that many children lose interest in education and leave school. In other instances parents withdraw their children from school when they cannot afford to pay for school needs or when the children must work so that they also contribute to the incomes of their families.

The fact that farm workers frequently move from one farm to another in search of employment is an important characteristic of this type of employment and seems to be one of the factors that can throw some light on the migration experience of the people we are discussing. On the farms one rarely encounters an adult who lived only on two or three farms during his life. Instead, six to eight moves during a lifetime is a common pattern. In that sense the various reasons given by informants for this inter-farm migration reveal many of the difficulties encountered by farm dwellers in the past and at present. Some of them said that they were forced to change their residence when tractors were introduced on some of the farms in the area:

"I was born in Alexandria during the time of the (1918) epidemic. When I was young, my father had several ox spans which he used for share-cropping. He left Alexandria and came to Salem where he cultivated two fields on a share-cropping basis. But he could not continue to do so (at Salem) because at that time tractors were used for cultivation and ox spans were not needed. He left for Bathurst since he could no longer make a living there."

Similar reasons are those relating to the limitation of stock ownership:

"We left that farm because the farmer died and the next one prevented us from owning stock."

"Some time ago we lived on a farm beyond Grahamstown. We came here (Salem) when we were told to limit our stock. We decided to leave with our stock because at that time we were allowed to keep our stock here."

Some of the families left for other farms after losing their jobs or when workers were retrenched or when the farms in question had no employers:

"The farmer moved to Grahamstown. We lived on that farm for some time after his departure but we decided to leave since no other farmer came to take over the farm."

"The owner of the farm died and his wife had no need for many workers. There were many workers on that farm."

Other informants stated that they decided to go elsewhere since they received poor rations or poor wages, when they had to do strenuous work or when they felt their treatment was bad:

"I worked for Mrs Norwood at Hopley farm and I was satisfied. When Mrs Norwood died, her farm was inherited by her two daughters who sold the farm soon after their mother's death. Then a new farmer took over the farm. We did not like his treatment. He did not live on the farm and based his judgements concerning our work on hear-say. Then we left the farm."

"We left the farm because the farmer did not live on it and we felt we were neglected. The farmer came to the farm only during month ends. The work was not strenuous as we had to look after stock. But we could not get any assistance when one of us was ill. In those cases we had to get hikes to Grahamstown."

"The farm on which we lived was sold. When the farm was taken over by the next owner, life became difficult. He did not treat us well and he paid poor wages. We left."

"We left that farm because we were starving. The farmer did not live on the farm and we had little food."

"Fred used bad language when addressing us. He was fond of insults and did not act promptly when one of us was ill."

"We worked hard at Quintin's farm and we did not receive sufficient

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food. The wages, too, were not good."

Occasionally, quarrels develop between farmers and their workers, especially the younger workers who do not always comply with the requirements of their employers. When it is not possible to resolve such conflicts, the family in question usually has to move elsewhere:

"One of my sons left for the mines without the farmer's permission. When he returned after completing his mine contract, the farmer told him to leave the farm and threatened to arrest him. Although I could continue living on that farm with my children, I felt it was impossible for my son to be separated from us. There would be no home for him. He looked for employment on another farm and we left."

"Our younger brother was assaulted by the farmer during a quarrel. Then we were told to leave."

Sometimes these moves occur within a short period of time:

"On that farm my family stayed for only four days and when my new employer dismissed me I had to look for work again. My arms are weak. I cannot milk properly. The farmer felt I was not fit for my job and dismissed me. I spent about a week looking for work on other farms and we left the farm."

(c) Motive for migration

Farm dwellers who eventually settle in town include those who do so after being evicted from the farms to those who migrate voluntarily. In response to the question "Why did you leave the farms and come to town" many of the older people who now live in town stated that farm living became less attractive to them when they could no longer engage in share-cropping (iblas) on the farms. For many this system was undoubtedly a positive feature of farm living in the past. Under this system, which was essentially farming on the half, the farmer provided the land and the seed. Cattle and labour were supplied by the other party and produce was then shared. Also, share-croppers had access to grazing land on these farms:

"Wages on the farms were bad. But we could still make a good living when share-cropping and the rearing of stock was allowed there."

"People led a good life on the farms in the past. We did not struggle at

all in that time and we were allowed to rear as many cattle as we could. My father used to sell one of his beasts when he needed money. That is how he made a living."

Further, in the past some of the people who came to town returned to the farms when they could find opportunities for share-cropping. For instance, the father of Johnson (aged about 70 years) left the farm on which he lived at Alexandria in 1938 because he could not find land which he could cultivate. He then hired his cattle to a farmer there and came to Grahamstown to look for work. After residing in Grahamstown for six years, he managed to arrange share-cropping facilities with a farmer at Southwell and left town with his family. He apparently did not fully appreciate urban living: "Here you eat from your pocket." He lived at Southwell until his death in 1964.

It seems that mechanization and land rationalization are other factors which have played an important role in limiting some of the privileges which were enjoyed by farm residents in the past. This, in turn, tended to change the relationship between employers and their employees:

"We came to town when the farmer who employed us told us to limit our stock. He said a family was entitled to rear one beast only - for family rituals. Also, he stopped the cultivation of land, i-akire, i.e. one acre, on the farm. We were not to have gardens either. Before then we cultivated big gardens on the farm and the farmer used to provide his own tractors for the cultivation of the land we used. then he introduced rations which consisted mainly of mealies. Then I felt that was no life and preferred to move to town where I could earn money instead."

Similarly, the limitation of rights relating to ownership of stock has changed the attitude of many farm workers towards their employment on the farms and encourages the move away from the farms. In 1957 almost half the farmers interviewed by Roberts (1958:40) in the area allowed their workers to keep between five and nine head of cattle. By contrast, at present the farmers in the study area either preclude their employees from owning any stock at all or set a limit which can hardly make a difference to the economic standing of the people in question. Where the workers are still entitled to keep their own stock, the limit is usually one beast (e.g. at Sunridge) or two beasts but hardly any more than this.

Other farm residents came to town after losing their jobs on the farms; some

reported that they were sacked from their employment after quarrelling with their employers; others came to town either after the workforce on the farms was retrenched or when the farmer whom they served died or left the farm. Faced with a situation in which they can no longer work, the workers are forced to look for employment either on other farms or in town. Moreover, on many farms a family is evicted if there is no adult male working on that farm for that particular family. Such a problem is commonly encountered by family members after the death or the desertion of either a husband or a son. In other instances a family loses its foothold on a farm if none of the sons is prepared to render his services there. For these reasons many widows and women who were deserted by their husbands often explained their move to town in terms of some major change in their family situation. A response like "After the death of my father, our family left the farm as we could not live there any longer" indicates the importance of male labour on most farms.

Other farm residents, especially the younger ones, leave not because they do not have work on the farms but because they feel that their low wages make it difficult for them to maintain themselves and to acquire the increasing range of material possessions needed at present. Many of the young people who are born on the farms thus leave their homes on their own accord and look for work in the towns where they can earn better wages and possibly lead a better life. One of our informants we interviewed in town explained this in the following manner:

"When I was young I worked on several farms shearing sheep. Then I came to work in town and decided to remain here. I did not like the manner the farmer treated us. I still remember that sometimes I had to roam in the forest looking for cattle until it was dark. I felt in town life would be better. Here there are fixed working hours."

A widow we interviewed in Grahamstown said she came to town because her adult sons disliked farm work, left and never returned:

"My husband died on a farm at Caliesbridge in 1975 and I left that farm soon thereafter. At that time my sons had already left the farm. They left because they did not want to work on that farm. They felt farm work was not good for them because everything is expensive these days . . . I came to Grahamstown. . . If any one of them had cared to return to the farm after the death of their father, I would still be living on that farm."

Similarly, the desire for education is the motivation for some of the younger

people who move to the towns. At Sunridge, for instance, there is a growing number of children who leave their homes after completing standard four at Salem to further their education in Grahamstown. Consequently, the local schools include a significant proportion of pupils whose parents are on the farms.

However much problematic urban residence may be, there is no doubt that for the vast majority of the immigrants city life is vastly more attractive than farm living. To this effect some emphasized the greater measure of independence they now enjoy in town:

"I am better off here. If I were to lose my job, I would return to my house. On the farms you lose both your job and your accommodation"

"You came and found me here at home because today is a public holiday. On the farms employers do not observe public holidays. There you work even on Sundays."

"I rent these rooms. If I were to lose my job, I would return home and go out on the following day and look for work."

Others felt that town provided better means of making a living than the farms:

"On the farms there are no medical doctors. We do not regret that we came here."

"Here I can work and maintain myself. I got jobs in town. On the farms life is hard."

The attitudes reflected above seem to indicate that most farm migrants left, and continue to leave, the farms in order to pursue a new life elsewhere. It is important to bear this in mind because, as Dahya (1974) has shown in the case of the Pakistani who emigrate to Britain, the immigrant's behaviour in his new environment is influenced to a large extent by his motive for migration. As farm migrants try to adapt to urban life, they may find it necessary to maintain links with their rural homes. However, it is hardly possible for them to perceive the farms as their permanent homes to which they can retire in old age. For instance, the workers can neither invest their earnings on land which they can never own nor can married men feel free to leave their wives behind when they have opted for urban jobs. In this sense farm migrants vary markedly from the 'homeland' oscillating migrants who sometimes manage to build their homesteads in the country and retire there in old age or on account of illness. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that

farm dwellers tend to emigrate permanently from the farms..

(d) Some features of this urban area

It appears that blacks were associated with Grahamstown soon after the founding of this town in 1812. For instance in 1847 there were about 400 black occupied houses and a black population of approximately 1 700 here. What is also relevant to what we are discussing is that in 1856, 318 title deeds to erven situated in Fingo Village (Cf Map 1) were issued to some of the residents in reward for their assistance to the colonists during the frontier wars. In 1860 this black settlement was extended by the creation of leasehold plots in Old Municipal Location and, in 1870, by the creation of the same type of plots at Tanti. New Town (a site and service scheme) was initiated in the 1930s and between 1957 and 1962 1 000 houses were built at Joza. Since that time black housing in Grahamstown received very little attention from the state and the result has been the overcrowding of the existing dwellings and a fast growth in the number of backyard houses. In a large number of cases a residential site provides accommodation to more than ten families.

One of the features which distinguishes Grahamstown from most other urban areas of comparable size in South Africa is the absence of industrial development found in towns of this size. On this account, this community has more acute unemployment and poverty problems than most other comparable urban centres. In 1969 over 30% of the economically active black population was not engaged in formal employment. (Charton 1970) In a survey of Fingo Village residents conducted in 1971 it was stated that 28% of the adult males were not in full-time employment. (Roux and Leger 1971) At present the unemployment rate has probably increased with the present economic recession in the country. Also, this population has grown at a phenomenal rate during the past three decades; it has risen from 11 814 in 1951 to 40 101 in 1980. (Cf Graph in the Appendix) Much of this is the result of the migration of people from the neighbouring farms to this urban area. Therefore, it is not surprising that this fast growth of population in an area which offers few avenues of employment should result in a serious problem of unemployment. Another consequence of an over-supply of labour to this economically depressed area is low wages.

e) Interdependence of urban and rural sectors

The close connection between the rural and urban sectors is another important

feature of this migration situation. As farm migrants try to adjust to this urban area, they almost invariably maintain strong links with their relatives on the farms. Farm dwellers, on the other hand, commonly maintain communication with their urban kin. Apart from the relative closeness of the migrants' places of origin to Grahamstown, the strength of these rural-urban links is an indication of the interdependence of the two sectors. This relationship is evident in the frequent visits between town and farm kinsmen which should be regarded as important in the dissemination of information about opportunities in the urban areas. The exchange of goods and services is another important aspect of this relationship. For instance, when farm dwellers visit their relatives in town, they often bring whatever produce they can get where they live (e.g. vegetables and fruit) and people in town usually reciprocate with contributions of money or other goods not easily obtainable on the farms. Moreover, children move a good deal between the townships and the farms and are sometimes reared on the farms until they are of school age before they are sent back to their parents in town. At the same time, the fact that educational facilities in town are better than on the farms largely accounts for the increasing number of farm-born children who join their relatives in town to further their education. This is made possible by the fact that farm dwellers often have urban relatives who can give such assistance when the need arises. In a few cases the children in question continue their education in town and manage to attain professional qualifications, e.g. teaching and nursing.

Similarly, there are various ways in which urban dwellers are dependent on the support of relatives on the farms. Many working mothers find it more convenient to leave their children with relatives on the farms while in other instances the parents living in town chose to send some of their children to the farms in an attempt to ameliorate the severe shortage of accommodation in town. Frequently urban children spend their school holidays with relatives on the farms. Besides, the traditional norm of corporate responsibility is evident in the occasions which often bring urban and rural kinsmen together, e.g. funerals, boys' initiation ceremonies and homestead rituals. The point we need to note here is that this urban-rural reciprocity occurs in a situation where the people who settle in the towns need to keep one foot in the country while they gradually seek to gain a foothold in town.

The interdependence between the city and the farms is apparent, also, in the return migration that occurs here. While the vast majority of the people who come to town manage to establish themselves here, some return to the farms after working in town for some time. Such cases include people who cannot find suitable employment in town or those who return to the farms on account of ill-health. In other

cases this return migration reflects the needs or the expectations of family members. For instance, some of the young women who come to town at an early age work here for either a short or a long period and go back to the farms after marrying. Similarly, young men sometimes work in town and go back to the farms when such a need arises, e.g. after the death of a father who represented the family on the farm in question. In one sense these decisions indicate the perceived need to establish a fit between farm and urban opportunities; in another they reflect the alignment of relatives who must co-operate for their mutual benefit. It is thus not surprising to find that a substantial proportion of the older people who come and settle in town commonly have previous experience of urban employment as well as some understanding of urban attitudes and practices. They thus do not move into an entirely strange environment when they arrive here. Also, in such cases it is difficult to separate the data in terms of "migration" and subsequent "urban adaptation".

f) The route to the city and urban adaptation

Both in the past and at present urban relatives have facilitated the urban migration of farm dwellers largely by providing accommodation to those relatives who leave the farms and come to town. To this effect the farm dwellers who decide to move to town do so only when they are sure to find first lodgings through their relatives already in town. The family and individual histories recorded indicate that virtually all the young people who come to town on their own seek first lodgings with relatives, usually close relatives. On his arrival in town the young migrant is thus heavily dependent on the assistance of his urban relatives. This arrangement not only provides a solution to the problem of accommodation but also places the migrant in a familiar environment among people who can give support and guidance. Urban residents normally act as guardians over the young migrants they receive. We were told that in the past some of these urban relatives ensured that the migrants in question supported their families on the farms. At present, however, it is not always easy for the older generation to enforce these obligations. This is not surprising since today there are many young people who come to town and lodge together. Sometimes in a particular family the eldest or one of the older children leaves a farm and, on account of the success of his urban career, makes it easier for one or more of his siblings to follow him particularly when there is some accommodation which they can share. Also, adults who first attempt to make a living on the farms and still move to town during their working lives or in old age commonly live with relatives for at least some time after their arrival in town. A few individuals, however, do not gain their entry to town exactly in that manner.

The few individuals who may come and rent their own rooms belong to some of the families which first settle on the outskirts of the city and subsequently make means to find their own accommodation in these townships. In the past this also applied to people who come to town with their former farm employers and were provided with living quarters in town.

The move to town by a fairly large group of relatives is usually undertaken when separate accommodation for the people concerned has already been arranged by the kin in town beforehand. Since the number of new arrivals may be too large for the available accommodation, further assistance may be solicited from other relatives. Case One cited below refers to a family group of four adults and four children who were evicted from a farm in the Albany district in 1978 and subsequently came to their relatives here. The adults in this group included an elderly widow, her married son and his wife and an adult grandson. Since the eight family members had access to one room only, several adjustments had to be made; the two men left this family and joined the family of a close relative and the single room was then shared by the women and the children. This is one of the ways in which people who come to town under difficult circumstances are assisted by those already established in town.

A somewhat different situation is presented by the arrival in town of old people who are unable to work and maintain themselves on the farms. Although there are farms where old people are retained even when they can no longer be in full-time employment, many of the retired farm workers must leave the farms in old age, especially when their sons no longer work there. In general children and other close relatives living in town are the people on whom the aged rely in such circumstances. What seems remarkable here is that many people should acknowledge these kinship obligations and try to provide their relatives with accommodation and maintenance in town. It would be wrong to give the impression that this happens in every case. Occasionally one comes across instances of sons who have absconded as well as those who live elsewhere and hardly have contact with their relatives. But that relatives in town commonly accept the responsibility of caring for their aged relatives is an indication of the importance of kinship ties in this situation. Whereas there are a few cases in which elderly parents come to town reluctantly, there are many who welcome the opportunity of moving to town where they can be close to their kinsmen.

The chain migration occurring here assumes special significance in that it contri-

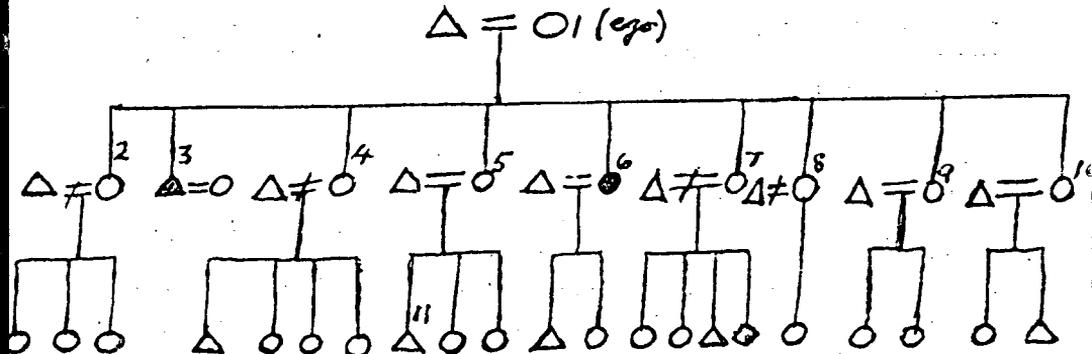
butes much to the stabilization of later migrants. This is most evident in those cases where former farm dwellers purchased Freehold residential plots or acquired leasehold sites after their arrival here. Although the residents in these townships could no longer purchase Freehold land after the mid-1960s, in the past some of the people from the farms managed to come to town with some wealth (largely in the form of stock) and bought their residential land here. A brief investigation of some of the oldest residential sites in this black urban area, i.e. the 318 Freehold sites mentioned above, shows that some of the early settlers from the farms bought Freehold land after their arrival here. Over the years others have been able to gain access to leasehold plots as well as municipal housing. Although the vast majority of ex-farm dwellers have remained landless and without suitable accommodation since their arrival here, many have been able to share the land or the dwellings owned or leased by their relatives.

After living with relatives initially, new arrivals in town often find it necessary to search for their own lodgings in order to ease overcrowding. Many people in this situation prefer renting rooms owned by their relatives and in other instances they erect their own dwellings on land belonging to their relatives. Although some of the people who have a fairly long association with this urban area rent accommodation from non-relatives at present, there are many cases where such accommodation serves as a base for several farm migrants who come to town at different times. With regard to this section of the urban population this reflects a tendency for relatives to share accommodation or to live close to one another whenever possible. For instance, it is not unusual to find several related families lodging in separate rooms or dwellings on the same premises. While dependence on the support of relatives may decrease in importance as the migrant established himself in town, it is of primary importance for people who come to town with hardly much that can help them start a new career here. At this stage it seems necessary to examine particular cases in which some of the observations made above are illustrated.

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Case number 1 : Nomvo Zantsi

Genealogy



Key

1. Nomvo
2. Nopatasi
3. Griffiths
4. Nontombi
5. Mhakazi
6. Nobantu
7. Nokwayiyo
8. Noleti
9. Bonisile
10. Welekazi
11. Moyisile

This case revolves around Nomvo (aged about 72) who came from the farms and settled in Grahamstown in 1978. Nomvo was born on a farm at Riebeek East and later resided on several farms in that area. She did not attend school in her childhood. After her marriage locally, she left her home and lived with her husband on another farm nearby. She worked for a number of farms in that area and eventually settled with her family on a farm at Caliesbridge. They spent the greater part of their married life on this farm: nine of their ten children were born on this farm.

In this family the process of migrating to town began slowly in the early 1950s and accelerated later in the late 1960s. The first member of the family to leave was Nomvo's first child, Nopatasi, who left home in about 1950 to look for work in Grahamstown. On her arrival here she was young and unmarried. At first she lodged with her uncle (u-ompi) in the location and later found accommodation on the premises of her employer in town. After living there for many years, she married and resided with her husband in a municipal house at the Joza township. The second member of Nomvo's family to leave was her sixth child, Nobantu, whose husband had left the farm earlier and worked for the municipal abattoir in Grahamstown. Since living quarters were available for the employees at this abattoir, Nobantu came to Grahamstown and lived with her husband at this abattoir. After residing there for several years, they rented a municipal house at the Joza township.

Before 1968 Nomvo's family managed to reside on one farm for a fairly long time. Thereafter, this family experienced a number of drastic changes concerning their living there. In 1968, on account of the death of the owner of the farm on which they lived, Nomvo and her family moved to a farm known as Thornpark on the outskirts of Grahamstown. Shortly after their arrival there Nomvo's eighth child, Noleti, commuted daily (on foot) to work. On other occasions she lodged with her elder sister, Nopatasi, at the Joza township. Afterwards she decided to live in town and rented two rooms in these townships.

In 1973 two other members of this family, Ntombintombi and Bonisile, left Thornpark at different times for employment in Grahamstown. Ntombintombi was previously married. Her husband left Thornpark for work in Grahamstown and did not support his family. Ntombintombi then returned with her children to her home at Thornpark and later moved to Grahamstown. On her arrival here she lived with her sister, Nopatasi. By this time Nopatasi had separated with her husband and lived at Tanti. The two sisters shared two backyard rooms for some time and afterwards Ntombintombi rented her own room on the same residential site. Bonisile,

on the other hand, found work in Grahamstown and commuted to work from Thornpark everyday. However, in 1975 Nomvo's husband died and, since this family could not live at Thornpark without at least one adult male working there, it became necessary for Bonisile to leave his job in Grahamstown and work at Thornpark.

Also, in 1975 Nomvo's fifth child, Mhakazi, moved to town as well. She was previously married and lived at Thornpark. When her husband was dismissed from the farm, he came to Grahamstown and found employment under the S.A. Railways. Thereafter he fetched his wife and their three children. His family lived for a few weeks with a friend and later found their own accommodation here. During the same year Welekazi, the tenth child of Nomvo, also left Thornpark to live in Grahamstown. She, too, had married and settled at Thornpark. Shortly before her move to town her husband had left his family on this farm and worked in Grahamstown. Since farmers do not normally allow wives to stay on the farms when their husbands have opted for urban jobs, Welekazi had to leave Thornpark since her husband no longer worked there. On her arrival in Grahamstown Welekazi and her husband joined Welekazi's sister, Noleti. Later they rented their own room on the same premises.

While the majority of the children of Nomvo were gradually settling in Grahamstown, Nomvo's family at Thornpark was becoming insecure. The owner of the farm on which they lived died in 1977 and the next owner committed suicide there in 1978 after employing this family for a period of about a year. The workers were without employment for some time. The next owner of this farm was apparently extremely unpopular among the workers who complained about the poor wages and the inadequate rations they received. Also, problems connected with the loss of stock on this farm caused dissatisfaction among the workers. In these circumstances Bonisile quarrelled with his employer and was dismissed from his job in 1978. This meant that Nomvo and her family had to leave as well.

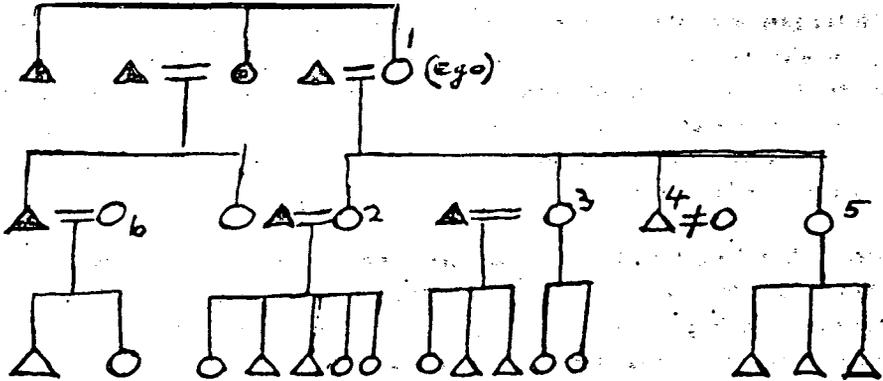
After his dismissal, Bonisile left the farm on the same day for Grahamstown and discussed the matter with his sister, Nontombi. They agreed on the removal of Nomvo's family to Grahamstown and Nontombi managed to find a room which the family could rent. This room was situated on the same plot where Nontombi lived. On the following day Bonisile returned to Thornpark and subsequently hired a lorry which transported the family and its possessions to Grahamstown. They destroyed the three roomed house they occupied on this farm and the building materials they brought to town included corrugated iron, door frames and windows. The family

group which came to town included four adults (Nomvo, Bonisile, the wife of Bonisile and the eldest son of Mhakazi) and four children (three children of Nokwayiyo and Bonisile's daughter). Nomvo's daughter, Nokwayiyo, found employment on another farm nearby and remained behind.

Since the eight family members had access to one room only, several adjustments had to be made. The young men (Bonisile and Moyisile) joined the family of a relative, the sister of Nomvo's husband. Additional furniture and other goods which required more space were stored at the home of the relative mentioned above. Nomvo's family rented this room for five months before moving into their present residence—a relatively spacious four-roomed house which is built on the premises of one of the churches here. Nomvo's daughter, Nontombi, obtained permission from a local priest for the family to build their house there. Bonisile and Moyisile also moved to this house when the other members of this family began to occupy it. They still live there at present. In 1981 this family was joined by Nokwayiyo who remained behind when her family moved to town. All the members of this family have assisted each other in various ways in the process of their migration to town.

The case of Nohhelu Dayile

Genealogy



Key :

1. Nohhelu
2. Nohle
3. Nonisi
4. Kedin
5. Nokuse
6. Nowezile

Nobhelu (aged about 72) is a pensioner occupying a relatively spacious and well-furnished six-roomed house with six additional backyard rooms in Grahamstown. She was born on a farm at Salem where she attended school for one and a half years. Being forced to leave school on account of the 1918 epidemic, she lived and worked with her parents on the farms at Salem. After her marriage she left for Martindale to live with her husband's family. After the birth of her third child, Nobhelu returned to her natal home at Salem because her husband had deserted her. In 1941 she took her children to her married sister, Khanyelwa, who lived at Martindale and went to Grahamstown to look for work. On her arrival here, she resided with Filpoti, her mother's brother.

After working for a hotel here for three years, Nobhelu left with her employer in 1944 for Cape Town where she worked as a domestic until her retirement in 1981. Throughout the long period of her employment in Cape Town, she was in close contact with her relatives at Martindale: she used to visit her sister and her own children during Christmas holidays. At this time the home at Martindale was the focus of family cohesion since the parents of the two sisters had died. But in the early 1950s this situation began to change because Nobhelu had managed to build a four-roomed house in Grahamstown. Her application for a leasehold plot at Tanti (Cf Map 1) was granted in 1950 and the building of her house was completed in 1952. It was Filpoti, Nobhelu's mother's brother, who supervised the building of this house during Nobhelu's absence and the selection of the first tenants (non-relatives) who occupied it for a short time after its completion.

Late in 1952 the first occupants of Nobhelu's house were asked to look for other accommodation since this house was to be occupied by Nobhelu's elder daughter, Nohle, who moved into this house with her husband and their two children. Nohle previously lived at Martindale and came to look for work in Grahamstown. On her arrival she lived for some time with her mother's brother, Filpoti, and later rented a single room where she lived with her family. With the completion of her mother's house, more spacious accommodation became available for her family. A year later Nohle was joined by her brother, Kedin, who previously worked on the mines. Kedin has been working in Grahamstown since that time. He was married for only a brief period and presently lives alone in one of the backyard rooms which have been built on this site. At present he is employed as a driver by a furniture cartage firm locally. In 1956 the second daughter of Nobhelu, Nosisi, left Martindale with her two children and also joined this urban household. Her arrival resulted from the death of her husband on the farms. The next relative to arrive and live on these premises was the youngest daughter of Nobhelu, Nokuse, who was born in Cape

town and was brought to Grahamstown in 1961 when she was still young. Nohle reared her during her childhood. It can thus be seen that by 1961 all the children of Nobhelu had moved to Grahamstown and were occupying the house their mother had built.

Another change in the alignment of Nobhelu's relatives occurred in 1967. At that time Nohle and her husband had occupied their mother's house for 11 years during which time they had three more children. This family left this house in 1967 when it became possible for them to rent a municipal house at Joza township. At present Nohle occupies the same house with her children. Her husband died a few years ago. Subsequently, a series of other kinsmen who left the farms to settle in Grahamstown joined Nobhelu's family. One of these relatives was Lizzie Adam, a younger sister of Nobhelu's mother. On her arrival she was very old and destitute: her husband and all her children had died. She continued to live with this family up to her death a few years ago. In 1973 Thingaza, a younger sister of Nobhelu's mother, arrived here in more or less the same condition as Lizzie Adam. We were told that she found life on the farms extremely hard in that she had to move from one farm to another in old age. When she arrived in Grahamstown she first lived with Nobhelu's children and later she occupied one of the backyard rooms on this site. She lived there with her granddaughter and five grandchildren. Her granddaughter found employment locally and they all moved to another residence after residing on this site for a number of years.

In 1975 the daughter-in-law of the sister of Nobhelu, Nowezile, was evicted from the farm on which she lived and came to town with two of her children. After living with Nobhelu's family for some time, she occupied one of the backyard rooms on this site and presently lives there with her children. Since her arrival here, Nowezile has not been in full-time employment. She does domestic duties for Nobhelu's household and looks after the children of the working members of this family. Nowezile shared her room for several years with her sister, Nosiseko, who lived on the farms before. The sister left this residence in 1983 because after marrying she chose to live elsewhere with her husband.

Nobhelu herself finally joined this wide circle of kinsmen in 1981 after her departure from Cape Town on retirement. But during the same year her daughter, Nosisi, left her mother's household and rented her own room nearby where she lived with her two young children. Nosisi's departure resulted mainly from problems involving children who live in this household. However, after residing on her own for about

two years, Nosisi returned to her home. This time it was the arrival from the mines of her adult son which made it necessary for Nosisi to return to her mother's household. It became difficult for her and her adult son to share a single room.

From the cases cited above it may be observed that migration from the farms to town involves a series of events in the lives of individuals and families. Through a succession of spatial relocations, settlers in the city sponsor their kinsmen and thereby ease the adjustment of those who join them in town later. That the people in question have wide ranging kinship links locally has further implications for the manner in which they adapt locally. The absence of the restrictive and incapsulating "homeboy" groups eliminates the moral pressures which are commonly exercised by a wide circle of people who happen to originate from the same home area. Instead, kin sponsorship in town offers the migrant in question a large measure of choice in his adjustment to urban life.

Generally, it is recognised that joining clubs or voluntary associations is one of the ways of becoming integrated into urban life. Upon his arrival in town the farm migrant commonly begins at once to participate in the social activities taking place in town. As a result one finds people who previously lived on the farms taking an active part in a wide variety of institutions in which the specific needs of this community are articulated. These institutions range from those associated with the informal means of making a living in a community where formal employment opportunities are scarce to religious and recreational associations which articulate the aspirations of this community. That there is hardly any possibility of finding former farm dwellers contraposed against the urbanites proper, epitomised the somewhat egalitarian nature of this community in which the large inflow of people who lived in the rural areas before has actually led to the ruralization of the city itself. In this sense, the people who come to town are not necessarily assimilated to the sub-culture and the institutional ways of their host group but find in town many opportunities through which they can contribute their share to, and sometimes compete with, what they find in town.

Moreover, that the influence of urbanization and modernization is extensive on the farms at present has relevance for the manner in which the lives of farm migrants

change in town. Although vast differences occur between the farms and the towns regarding conditions of work and residence, the cultural (and social) gap between the rural and urban areas is closing rapidly. A major aspect of this change is apparent in the farm dwellers' dependence on cash for acquiring a fast increasing range of consumer goods. Much of this results from the close contact between the farms and the towns.

g) Conclusion

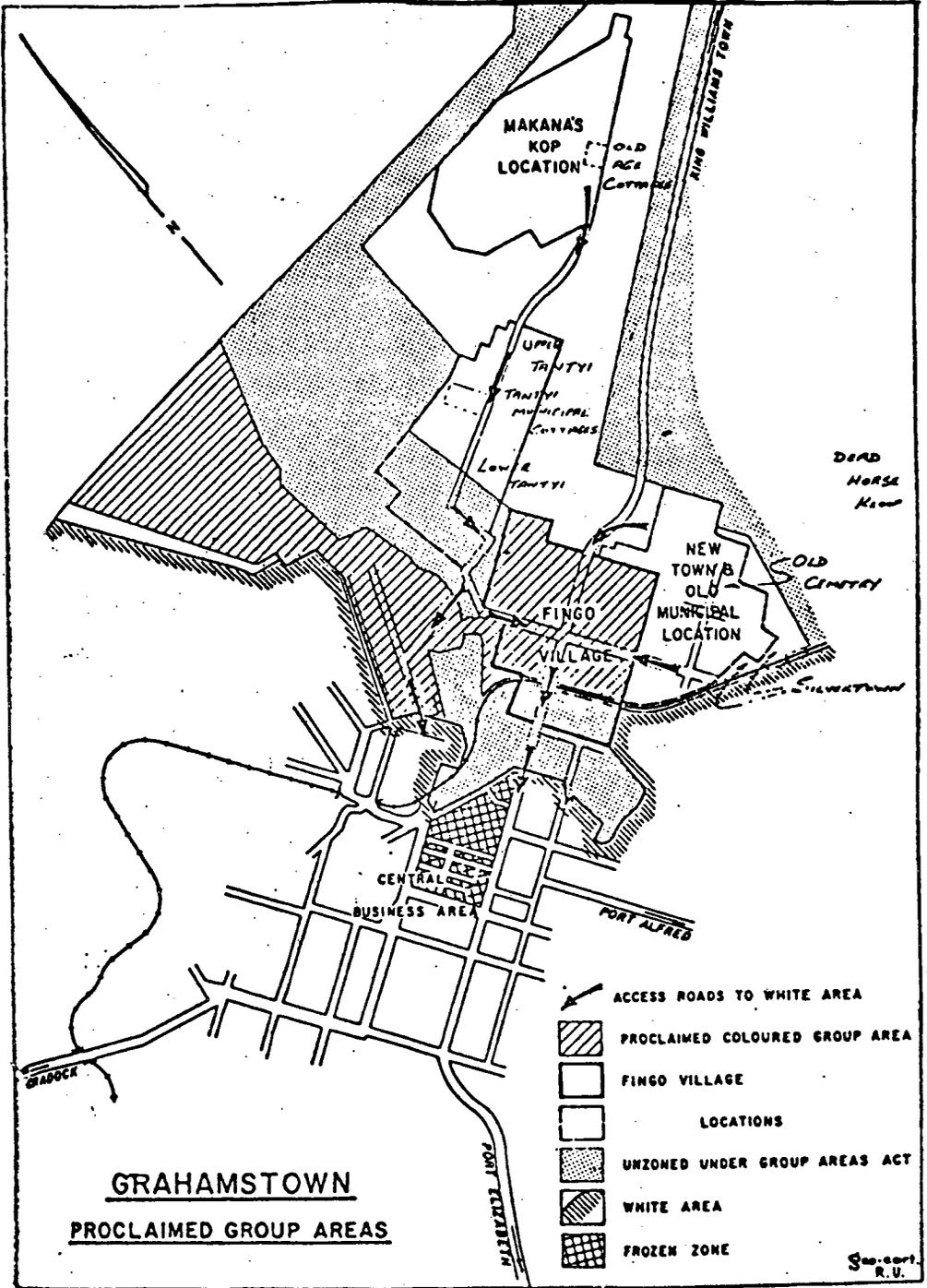
The migration of people from the farms to town is developing under circumstances that are very different from those affecting people who migrate from the 'home-land' areas to the urban areas. The main reason why their migration pattern contrasts sharply with the latter-in that they frequently emigrate permanently from the farms-is undoubtedly connected with their situation as landless people. As people who could never possess any land on white-owned farms, over the years they hardly had an alternative but to settle permanently in the urban areas once they lost their foothold on the farms. While recognising that more recently the strict application of influx control regulations in Grahamstown and the creation of a new political set up in Ciskei are factors that have an influence on the pattern they follow in migrating from the farms, the move to town- to Grahamstown in particular- is still a dominant trend among them. Further, farm migrants find city life attractive largely on account of the freedom it provides and the possibilities of personal advance it opens up. Like rural immigrants in cities all over the world, they prefer urban problems to the more adverse conditions which are associated with farm living. In these circumstances it is relatively easy for them to adjust to urban life and to identify themselves with this urban area.

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Map 1



Grahamstown : Population

SEMI-LOGARITHMIC SCALE

