

**Gender, generation and the experiences of farm dwellers resettled in the Ciskei Bantustan, South Africa, ca 1960–1976**

EVANS, Laura <<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2471-7439>>

Available from Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<http://shura.shu.ac.uk/9859/>

---

This document is the author deposited version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

**Published version**

EVANS, Laura (2013). Gender, generation and the experiences of farm dwellers resettled in the Ciskei Bantustan, South Africa, ca 1960–1976. *Journal Of Agrarian Change*, 13 (2), 213-233.

---

**Copyright and re-use policy**

See <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/information.html>

**Gender, Generation and the Experiences of Farm Dwellers Resettled in the  
Ciskei Bantustan, South Africa, c. 1960- 1976**

**LAURA EVANS**

Institute for Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape. PLAAS, UWC, Private Bag X17, Bellville, 7535 South Africa. [laura.k.evans@gmail.com](mailto:laura.k.evans@gmail.com). The author would like to acknowledge anonymous reviewers at the Journal of Agrarian Change, whose advice helped significantly to refine the arguments of this paper.

## Gender, Generation and the Experiences of Farm Dwellers Resettled in the Ciskei Bantustan, South Africa, c. 1960- 1976

*This paper examines the experiences of farm dwellers resettled in rural townships in the Ciskei Bantustan during the decades of the 1960s and 1970s. Drawing on the oral testimonies of elderly residents of Sada and Ilinge townships, the paper shows how gendered and generational inequalities within households were crucial factors shaping individuals' experiences of resettlement from the farms. The paper engages with an older literature that regarded the abolition of labour tenancy and linked resettlement programmes as the final stage of farm tenants' proletarianization. It highlights the problems of this linear narrative, and argues that men and women experienced and understood this process in radically different ways. Male labour migration and the remnants of farm paternalism meant that while resettlement cemented the status of migrant men, for women and non-migrant men this process was characterised by contradiction: on the one hand escape from the spatial hegemonies of farm paternalism and, on the other, heightened economic exposure.*

KEYWORDS: Apartheid, Homelands, Relocation, Gender, Ciskei.

This paper explores the experiences of farm dwellers who resettled into the Ciskei Bantustan during the 1960s and 1970s, at the height of the apartheid period (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Building on the work of scholars who have examined processes of relocation into South Africa's Bantustans, it focuses on the significance of gender and generation in shaping farm dwellers differentiated resettlement experiences. In so doing, it offers new insights to further elucidate this complex process, which affected well over a million people during the period under discussion (SPP 1983a, 6). The political economy of labour in the Eastern Cape, and across the southern African region, had major ramifications for social relations between landowners and tenant families, as it did for gendered and generational relations within farm households. These changing power dynamics proved crucial in shaping the process of resettlement from the farms. In tracing the experiences and motivations of farm dwellers who resettled in the Ciskei, the paper engages with literatures that have connected the abolition of labour tenancy under apartheid with longstanding processes of proletarianization in southern Africa (Morris 1977). In exploring more closely the connections between resettlement and proletarianization and in showing how gendered and generational inequalities shaped the meanings and character of these processes, the paper addresses and develops debates that have been long neglected.

Research on resettlement in the Bantustans between 1960 and 1980 has shown how, for many farm dwellers, it was the 'dull compulsion' of material pressures that pushed them from the farms and not simply the physical coercions of the apartheid state. Colin Murray, hearing the stories of resettled farm workers from the Orange Free State living in Thaba 'Nchu, found that rather than being directly coerced to move, or dumped by government trucks as were those from urban areas, these people told stories about finding 'a place to live' to escape insecurity on the farms (Murray 1992, 215; Murray 1983, 287- 311; SPP 1983c,

---

<sup>1</sup> A scattered area of labour reserves on the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony, the Ciskei was granted 'self-governing' status in 1972.

145- 81). John Sharp found that among the people from Free State farms interviewed by his team, 'very few had been forcibly removed to the Qwaqwa Bantustan by 'GG' truck;<sup>2</sup> most indeed had themselves paid very large sums of money... to private carriers for transport to the Bantustan; and many indicated that they had not been directly evicted from the farms at short notice'. '[M]any [of those] interviewed pointed to certain advantages to life in the closer settlements compared to that on the farms' (Sharp 1982, 14, 18). Deborah James and Peter Delius found that among labour tenants from the Transvaal who were resettled in the Lebowa Bantustan, there were many who cited their relief at finding refuge away from the farms (James 1999, 147- 52; Delius 1996, 143). Similar conclusions have been reached for the Eastern Cape. Despite the harsh living conditions in the Ciskei resettlement areas, Cosmas Desmond observed in 1969 that in the resettlement township of Dimbaza there were 'some people, who have come from white farms, who prefer it...' (Desmond 1971, 96, 85). Former farm dwellers in Sada, another of the Ciskei's resettlement areas, told the Surplus People Project (SPP) in 1980: 'We are no longer threatened with evictions by farmers'; 'We are entitled to our own house here in Sada more than being kicked up and down by a white farmer'; 'Here I can depend on my own, not on a person who will force me to do what I don't want' (SPP 1983a, 212- 3).

Scholars have highlighted the gendered aspects of these experiences. In particular, John Sharp and Andrew Spiegel's account of gender relations in Qwaqwa and Matatiele (former Transkei) casts significant light on the experiences of farm women who relocated from the Free State to Qwaqwa and the impacts this process had on gender relations in this Bantustan (Sharp and Spiegel 1990). Deborah James (1985, 1988) and Isak Niehaus (1994) have examined the impact of resettlement on changing household forms. Other studies have shown sensitivity to gender in depicting Bantustan resettlement areas (James 1999, 143- 62; van Onselen 1996; Schirmer 1994, 1995; Moore, 1994). Nevertheless, the gendered dimensions of resettlement remain little understood. Given the scale and heavy social impacts of these processes, there remains significant scope for further analyses of their localized and differentiated meanings. Furthermore, attention to gender, generation and cycles of household reproduction, held in tension with an analysis of agrarian change, help to further explicate the 'voluntarism' identified in the testimonies of farm dwellers' outlined above.

Marxist analysts have located the National Party government's drive to abolish labour tenancy and to resettle evicted labour tenants in the Bantustans as the final stage in a century-long process of state-assisted proletarianization (Morris 1977, 54-5; 1979, 282). Detailed studies of Bantustan resettlement, however insightful, have not fully engaged this thesis with an analysis of gender. This paper addresses the 'proletarianization' thesis with reference to three key issues: geographically uneven labour relations; the disjuncture between economic explanations of proletarianization and the perspectives of farm workers and the uneven 'class' impacts of resettlement within households. Locating the experiences of farm dwellers resettled in the Ciskei Bantustan the study shows how, by the 1960s, labour in the Eastern Cape was already largely proletarianized. In this context, resettlement only rarely involved major losses of land and cattle. The paper highlights how a linear explanation of 'resettlement as proletarianization' obscures the often contradictory perspectives of farm dwellers and the highly differentiated nature of this group. Farm workers did not always see their 'proletarianization' as a marker of declining opportunity, nor did they necessarily oppose it. As O'Laughlin has argued in relation to responses to forced labour in colonial Mozambique, local responses cannot be read off from a narrative of class struggle:

---

<sup>2</sup> Government Garage trucks, with the number plate 'GG', were used to transport evictees and became notorious symbols of the apartheid government's removal programmes.

Mozambicans' struggles to protect their livelihoods often resulted in contradictory outcomes, including 'deeper involvement in capitalist relations of production' (O'Laughlin 2002, 515-6). The central argument of the paper relates to the ways that gendered and generational inequalities shaped individuals' experiences of resettlement. The opportunity that resettlement allowed for young men to consolidate their status as senior household heads and to establish autonomous homes as part of their strategies of return labour migration is brought to light in the following discussion. Conversely, while young men may have found in resettlement a way to improve their earning capacity and social status, for women and young men who never established themselves as migrants resettlement offered respite from the spatial hegemonies of farm paternalism, coupled with greater economic exposure stemming from the loss of farm rations. The deepest impacts of 'resettlement as proletarianization' were, therefore, experienced by women and non-migrant men.

This paper draws on research undertaken as part of a wider project to examine the social history of resettlement in the Ciskei during the years 1960-76 (Evans 2010). It employs testimonies from in-depth oral history interviews undertaken with people now in late adulthood and old age who were themselves resettled in two townships in the northern Ciskei, Sada and Ilinge.<sup>3</sup> With the assistance of interpreters, thirty five people from thirty three different farm households were interviewed in Sada and Ilinge in 2008 and 2009.<sup>4</sup> Eleven men and twenty four women from the farms were interviewed: an imbalanced sample that while not strictly representative of those resettled in the townships, does indeed reflect the historical gender imbalance in these areas and the fact that many more women (at whom influx control and anti-squatting measures were primarily targeted) were resettled in the townships than men (Evans 2010, 86-7; Streek 1966, 31). The majority of those interviewed in Sada and Ilinge, at least fifteen years since most studies of resettlement were undertaken, had come to the resettlement areas in young adulthood (aged 18- 35). These people had been either still living in their own parental households or that of their spouse on the farms. Some had recently departed and moved to set up their own marital homes on other farms before moving to the resettlement areas. Most of their parents, who also moved to the resettlement townships in the 1960s and 1970s, have now passed away: had it been possible to interview more members of this older generation, a more decisive analysis of the different experiences of resettlement across generations might have been enabled. Nevertheless, the present study suggests that there were indeed some major generational differences in the ways people understood their resettlement, distinctions that were particularly apparent between elderly males and younger migrants.<sup>5</sup>

## AGRARIAN CHANGE, LABOUR CONTROLS AND THE ASSAULT ON TENANCY

The capitalization and intensification of South African agriculture in the first half of the twentieth century and the impacts of these processes upon the status of African farm labour have been widely documented by historians (Keegan 1986; Beinart, Delius and Trapido

---

<sup>3</sup> The Glen Grey area, where Ilinge is located, fell under jurisdiction of Ciskei for the period under discussion in this paper. In 1976 this area was ceded to the 'independent' Transkei homeland (Cobbett and Nakedi 1977).

<sup>4</sup> This sample comprises a portion of a larger set of 103 interviews conducted with people resettled in Sada and Ilinge, a group which included people who had been forcibly removed from urban areas to the townships and former political prisoners who were banished to the resettlement areas, alongside people resettled from farms in the region.

<sup>5</sup> The 'generational' observations contained in this article may have been less apparent to researchers who undertook fieldwork during the 1980s, when these people were largely absent from the resettlement areas on migrant contracts. Although it does not employ it, this case study exposes the power of the 'dispersed intensive' interview method employed by Colin Murray in his study of farm labour in the Free State (Murray 1995, 2002).

1986; Bradford 1987; van Onselen 1996; Jeeves and Crush 1997a). Increasing farm size, the shift in commercial farmers' preference towards 'efficient' full time wage labour, the mechanization of production and the shedding of farm labour all characterized this trend (Jeeves and Crush 1997b, 21, 28). For farm labourers these shifts were manifest in diminishing access to land, a shift to cash wages, diminishing real wages and the declining possibility of negotiating with employers over the terms of labour. This agrarian revolution 'from above', combined with tightening labour controls and land laws that were as coercive as they were racist, pushed sharecroppers into forms of rent and labour tenancy (Keegan 1986; van Onselen 1996).

Labour tenancy, ubiquitous as a form of farm labour in South Africa during the first half of the twentieth century, commonly involved the provision of some land to the (male) head of household for grazing and cultivation in return for the labour of one or more household members on the farmer's land. A system of tenancy whereby land rent was paid through 3- or 6-month periods of labour service, usually undertaken by the household head or a son, was prevalent in Natal and parts of the Transvaal (McClendon 2002, 48- 62). In the stock farming areas of the Karoo and Eastern Cape, tenancy had more commonly taken the form of full-time male labour and the seasonal labour of household members (often unpaid), in return for the minimal provision of land. Alongside rations, cash comprised a major component of farm wages (Morris 1976, 294; Beinart and Delius, 36- 37; Bouch 1997, 104; Hunter, 1937, 389- 93). Although pockets of tenancy persisted in this region, by the 1960s farm labour was widely proletarian in character.<sup>6</sup>

From the beginning of the twentieth century, and increasingly so after the Second World War, tenants and sharecroppers were drawn to South Africa's mines and urban areas, where they settled with varying levels of permanency, in order to supplement rural incomes and to escape the increasingly difficult circumstances on farms (Bonner 1995). In the face of increasing pressure placed on the labour of tenants, and their declining position in negotiations with white farmers (who after 1948 benefited from the unequivocal support of the state), desertion was arguably 'the most effective weapon at [farm] workers' disposal...' (Jeeves and Crush 1997b, 27). Desertion also offered a strategy for women and young men to escape rural patriarchy (Bozzoli 1983; Bonner 1990). Facing competition for labour with industry after the Second World War, 'organized agriculture' demanded better, more 'efficient', supplies of labour for their farms. Throughout the 1950s, South African Agricultural Union (SAAU) pushed for the demise of the compromises formed between under-capitalized white farmers and African tenants, for the removal of squatters who comprised an inaccessible labour force and for the reformulation of labour controls that would ensure ready supplies of cheap labour through the control of 'efflux' from the countryside and 'influx' to the cities (Morris 1977). New measures for monitoring and removing farm tenants took heed of the gender blindness of previous legislation. Now encompassing the 'dependants' of tenants, from the mid-1950s anti-squatting legislation was levelled explicitly at women, children and the elderly, who, most often as the families of absent migrants, were deemed 'surplus' to the needs of the economy in the white areas (Mager 1999, 38). The 1964 Bantu Laws Amendment Act, one of the key interventions to

---

<sup>6</sup> In the districts of Cathcart and Stutterheim, pockets of rent tenants, alongside a small number of African land owners in the Bacela region, continued to farm until the state cracked down on these so-called 'squatters' during the 1940s (Mager 1999, 33). In districts of the north-eastern Cape, bordering the Transkei, tenancy and unregistered 'squatting' continued to constitute an important source of farm labour for less-capitalized farmers into the 1960s (Sharp and Spiegel 1990, 541- 2; Ciskei Archives, Boxes 76-81, File N1/24/4).

tighten influx control in the following decade, provided the legislative framework endorsing the SAAU's agenda to abolish labour tenancy (Morris 1979, 280-1).<sup>7</sup>

The removal of farm tenants to resettlement areas in the Bantustans constituted the most significant form of relocation in the apartheid period: the SPP concluded that between 1960 and 1982, well over a million people had been evicted from white farms (SPP 1983a, 6). Between 1960 and 1970, an estimated 340,000 registered labour tenants, and 656,000 unregistered tenants (those labelled 'squatters' before the term came to encompass all tenants) were evicted from farms across South Africa. A further 400,000 labour tenants were expelled between 1971 and 1974 (Morris 1977, 54; 1979, 282). The eviction and resettlement of labour tenants was therefore far advanced by the middle of the seventies: by 1976, Morris has argued, tenancy had effectively been abolished and wage labour 'stabilized' (Morris 1977, 282). The group of farm dwellers affected by this programme, and their experiences of this process were, as this paper will show, far from coherent (Bradford 1988, 70- 1).

From April 1963 the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (BAD) in the Eastern Cape launched a major campaign for the removal of unregistered labour tenants – so-called 'squatters' - from farms across the Border, Midlands and Karoo. Between April 1963 and August 1966 at least 1400 households (well over 7000 individuals) were evicted from farming districts across these regions, with a further 460 families marked for removal in the following months.<sup>8</sup> Many of these people ended up in resettlement areas in the Ciskei, including Sada and Ilinge. While these policies suited the demands of many successful capitalist farmers who required labour,<sup>9</sup> fell in line with the NP government's Bantustan policy, and involved the forcible removal of thousands of tenants residing on farms in the Eastern Cape, the implementation of Chapter Four of the 1936 Land Acts also opened up opportunities for heavily-exploited farm workers to escape the farms.

By early 1965, building programmes had been planned for the Ciskei resettlement areas: approximately 2000 houses a year were to be built across six rural townships in the Ciskei, the majority of which were to be erected at Sada, Dimbaza and Ilinge.<sup>10</sup> In less than fifteen years, the populations of these townships mushroomed, from just a few huts on the veld to settlements the size of small towns, albeit without their own economic base. Throughout the 1960s, these settlements grew rapidly as a result of urban and rural removal campaigns as the state removed 'squatters' from designated 'white' areas. After 1970, however, the dynamic of settlement shifted: housing and residential sites in these areas came to be highly sought by farm workers seeking to leave the farms.<sup>11</sup> Prolonged drought and the

---

<sup>7</sup> The SAAU actively pursued legislation which would abolish labour tenancy, despite opposition by farmers in Natal and the Northern Transvaal who relied on tenant labour (Morris 1979, 280-1).

<sup>8</sup> These districts in the Border, Midlands and Karoo regions included King William's Town, Stutterheim, Cathcart, Fort Beaufort, Stockenstrom, Cradock, Somerset East, Bedford, Kirkwood, Albany, Alexandria, Bathurst, East London, Komga, Peddie, Venterstad, Albert, Molteno, Steynsburg, Aliwal North, and Elliot (Ciskei Archives, Box 79, File N1/24/4, 1959- 1966).

<sup>9</sup> Adult men were to be registered at the local labour bureau by the Inspector of Squatters, now answerable to the BAD, and many of those removed were 'diverted' to other farmers in the region who needed labour, including citrus farmers in the region (Ciskei Archives, Box 79, File N1/24/4, 1959- 1966).

<sup>10</sup> Chief Bantu Commissioner (King William's Town) to Secretary for Bantu Administration and Development (Pretoria), 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 1965 (Ciskei Archives, Box 172, File N2/12/2 Part 4 1964).

<sup>11</sup> In evidence of the long waiting lists for housing in the resettlement townships, A. S. Shipman, Administrative Officer for Dimbaza in 1971, told the *Rand Daily Mail*: 'If I had another two Dimbazas I could fill them up. If I erected 500 wooden houses they'd be snatched up...' ('Towns Without a Future', *Rand Daily Mail*, 28<sup>th</sup> August 1971).

falling demand for labour in stock farming areas also precipitated this movement of people from the farms.<sup>12</sup>

Established in 1963, Sada was the earliest of the rural townships built in the Ciskei. While population estimates are uniformly problematic, they do at least give an impression of the great speed at which such townships expanded. By October 1966, there were at least 2,700 people living at Sada, the majority of whom were women, children and elderly people (Streek 1966, 31).<sup>13</sup> From 1967 a rapid building programme was commenced in the township, as at Dimbaza and Ilinge. Large numbers of two-roomed concrete houses were erected along with some larger four-roomed dwellings built to house professionals. This building programme coincided with a massive influx of people removed from towns in the Western Cape: between December 1968 and March 1971 the population of Sada doubled from 7,000 to 14,000 and by March of 1972 there were more than 2,400 houses in Sada, each housing an average of six or seven people (SPP 1983b, 216, 219). The years of the mid-1970s saw a further influx of people from farms in the region (SPP 1983b, 216). The SPP estimated Sada's population in 1980 at a maximum of 40,000.<sup>14</sup>

## GENDER, GENERATION AND RESETTLEMENT IN THE CISKEI

A small minority of those interviewed in Sada and Ilinge who had come from the farms in the 1960s and 1970s had lost either land or significant livestock holdings as a result of resettlement. The autonomous spaces that rent and labour tenants in the Border had been able to find in previous decades had now been closed down by processes of capitalization bolstered by state labour controls (Mager 1999, 33). Most farm tenants in the stock-farming areas of the Eastern Cape were, by the early 1960s, extremely poorly paid for their extensive labour. They received little payment in the form of land to run cattle or to plant subsistence crops and were paid primarily in cash and basic rations that included little or no meat.<sup>15</sup> Resettled tenants and farm workers in Sada and Ilinge described the low wages, poor rations, long hours, insecurity and the lack of educational opportunities on the farms.

Of the twenty-one households for whom information was collected about possession of livestock and land on the farms before coming to the resettlement areas, thirteen said that they had had no land for cultivation on the farms and that they had kept no livestock at all.<sup>16</sup> Many cited farmers' restrictions as the reason for their lack of livestock. Eight out of these twenty-one households said they had owned some larger livestock prior to leaving the farms:

---

<sup>12</sup> 'Labour camps for migrant families plea', *Evening Post*, 18<sup>th</sup> June 1968; 'Family lives on roadside', *Daily Dispatch*, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1970.

<sup>13</sup> Of all the resettlement sites that the SPP surveyed in 1980, Sada's population had the highest proportion of people over the age of 64, twice as many as the national average, and the proportion of residents over the age of 44 was far higher than averages for anywhere else in the Ciskei (SPP 1983b, 218).

<sup>14</sup> This figure includes the self-build area known as *eMadakeni* (SPP 1983b, 216). The expansion of Sada's population after the middle of the 1970s must be viewed within the context of the massive population removals of 1976-7 from Herschel and Glen Grey that were the result of a referendum in the run up to Transkei independence, as well as the growing significance of the Sada/ Whittlesea area as an area of economic activity and urban settlement (Wotshela 2004, 317- 37; 2001, 153- 70).

<sup>15</sup> Other research supports this picture. One researcher found that by 1976 only two fifths of the farm workers she interviewed in the Karoo had any grazing land. Kooy (1977, 105- 8) estimated that the availability of grazing to farm workers in this area was so minimal that it constituted only roughly six percent of farm wages. In Albany, Antrobus (1984, 247) found that despite rising cash wages, the declining proportion of wages paid in kind and the rising cost of food meant that labourers were on average much 'worse off' in 1977 than they had been twenty years earlier.

<sup>16</sup> Two of these thirteen households had owned a few chickens and goats which they had sold before moving. This evidence suggests that cattle holdings among these farm families were unusual.



seven of these eight households managed to find ways of retaining the investment, by leaving the cattle with relatives or other contacts in neighbouring reserves while settling in the townships, or, to prevent the loss of investment by sudden eviction, by selling their few cattle and other small livestock prior to moving to the townships, where no grazing was available and where livestock were not permitted. However, most of these livestock holdings were small, comprising only a few head of sheep or cattle. Only two described larger holdings: one person described how her household had lost nine cows following eviction from a farm;<sup>17</sup> the family of another person had managed to retain more than twenty head of cattle by keeping the herd with family in the northern Ciskei.<sup>18</sup> These two stories appear as rather unusual when set against the wider body of oral evidence.

The economic and bureaucratic ‘squeeze’ on tenant households, and the increasingly strained material conditions that it produced, precipitated a range of gendered and generational social changes across the South African countryside. In these altered conditions, African patriarchs held few resources with which to underpin their influence and to bolster demands from their sons (Beinart 1982, 94- 103; Mager 1999, 80- 7; Keegan 1986, 132- 40; McClendon, 2002; Carton 2000; van Onselen, 1996). The assault on tenancy in the Border, for example, challenged senior male power as ‘unruly youths bucked their elders’ discipline’ by leaving the farms and migrating to the urban areas (Mager 1999, 41).<sup>19</sup> These changes had major implications for the way that Bantustan resettlement played out. In the Free State, the decline of agrarian opportunities for farm-dwelling households, had, by the early 1970s, undermined the influence of senior males to the extent that resettlement was considered by ‘virtually all’ men interviewed in Qwaqwa to have been a move that bettered their circumstances. By contrast, most of the women consulted in their study felt that resettlement in Qwaqwa had been ‘an unmitigated disaster’, resulting in the loss of an independent cash income that they had earned on the farms (Sharp and Spiegel 1990, 537). Sharp and Spiegel’s gendered analysis of resettlement finds some symmetry in Sada and Ilinge: conflicts between young migrants and senior men appear to have been crucial in shaping the decisions of young men to move to the resettlement areas in the Ciskei and women, as in Qwaqwa, experienced much hardship in their relocation. However, the present study finds some different interpretations, which may be accounted for by geographical variation, by the timing of research and by analytical emphases. To this extent, the following discussion builds upon and further develops the observations of Sharp and Spiegel.

A minority of men who were interviewed in Sada and Ilinge had been senior household heads at the time of their relocation, experiencing through resettlement a decline in status connected to the loss of cattle investments. These elderly men had once been able to accumulate considerable investments in livestock on the farms, a livelihood strategy which continued to hold importance. Some tried in the new townships, against all odds, to increase their limited investments in cattle. They did this primarily through migrant earnings and looked towards a time when they would have ample fertile land rather than the poor grazing that surrounded the large townships of Sada and Ilinge. Their disempowerment was compounded by the fact that while some men were able to seek work in better paying industrial employment, the passes of older generations of men from the farms restricted them to farm work. J. C. had moved from the farms at Steynsburg to Ilinge with his wife and children in 1972 to escape low wages and insecurity on the farms. He had sold his livestock upon leaving the farm but aspired to build up a small herd once again. He was ‘a stock man’ at heart, he said, but the absence of grazing land in Ilinge and the problem of finding land

---

<sup>17</sup> Elsie Nobuntu September (Ilinge, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008).

<sup>18</sup> E. S. (Ilinge, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Schirmer (1995, 519- 21) has made a similar argument for the eastern Transvaal.

close by had blighted his attempts.<sup>20</sup> The experiences of these men, of senior status at the time of their relocation, may be compared with van Onselen's story of Kas Maine (van Onselen 1996). At one time established with influence over extended families and having assets of livestock and some land, a loss of power and sense of betrayal pervades such narratives of resettlement.<sup>21</sup>

Women also experienced loss as a result of the diminished wealth and status of these patriarchs. Elsie September came to Ilinge in 1969 with her parents: her family were tenants evicted from a farm at Cathcart where they had been living with a level of autonomy by then highly unusual. They had been compelled to stay by the roadside until the government forced them to go to Ilinge. The family 'lost everything', September said. Her father had owned nine cows on the farm but these were confiscated when they were taken to Ilinge where the family arrived with only one pig.<sup>22</sup>

These experiences of resettlement, and the value attached to rural resources that they reveal, appear unusual when set against the testimonies of most other resettled farm dwellers interviewed in Sada and Ilinge. The economic circumstances that confronted young men and women growing up on the farms in the 1950s, entering young adulthood in the 1960s and 1970s, were rather different to those into which their parents had been raised. Agrarian opportunities for tenants had all but disappeared, the benefits of in-kind payments (grazing and cultivation rights) eroded by the shift to cash wages (Antrobus 1984, 247). By the middle of the twentieth century, new generations of young people born on the farms were centring their adult lives in the urban and industrial areas, taking low paying migrant contracts as a preferable alternative to farm work (Mager 1999, 26, 29). They built livelihood strategies with 'one foot in the countryside and the other in the city' (van Onselen 1996, 482). While many never returned to the farms or came back only periodically, other male migrants, prevented from settling at their place of work by draconian influx controls, had wives, children and family members living on farms in the regions of their birth. Although in the first half of the twentieth century labour migrancy had most often been a short term strategy for young men to earn cash for *lobola*, by the 1970s male labour migrants with farm-dwelling families were departing for much longer periods and on a more permanent basis (Van der Vliet and Bromberger 1977, 124, 126, 128; Hunter 1937, 390).<sup>23</sup> In the Eastern Cape as in the Free State, migrant remittances constituted an increasingly significant proportion of household income (Sharp and Spiegel 1990, 533- 537). The families of migrants who remained on the farms were obliged to perform poorly paid farm work in exchange for basic rations and a place to reside. Given the difficulty of moving to other farms, the shortage of residential sites (let alone fields) in the reserves and the draconian influx controls pursued in town, households had few alternatives but to remain on farms.

Most households interviewed in Sada or Ilinge had been evicted from farms and came straight to the resettlement areas. Some had moved from farm to farm before searching for accommodation in the new townships. They were promised housing, schools, work and a range of facilities in the resettlement townships by government officials and farmers who wanted to expedite departure from the farms (Evans 2010, 117). Faced with eviction, and in the absence of other viable options, farm dwellers had few choices but to cooperate with the process of organized resettlement. Yet few of those interviewed saw any reason to have remained on the farms. Many of the farm families who arrived after 1970 had heard through

---

<sup>20</sup> J. C. (Ilinge, 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009).

<sup>21</sup> See also Mager's story of Gabi Mguye (1999, 35- 7).

<sup>22</sup> Elsie September. Owing apparently few obligations of work to a white landowner, it would seem that September's family were some of the few remaining rent tenants in the Cathcart district who had escaped earlier onslaughts against squatters.

<sup>23</sup> *Lobola* (isiXhosa), trans. bridewealth.

information networks about the availability of housing in the new resettlement townships and of the new schools that had been built. They were able to plan their move to the resettlement areas and in so doing to benefit from kinship networks already present in the townships. Some were able to make better returns by planning the sale of any livestock they had. Those able to plan their departure in this way were better able to negotiate the upheavals that had wrought such suffering on those who had been removed to the resettlement townships from farms and urban areas during the mid-to-late 1960s, as the resettlement areas were being established (Sharp 1987, 137- 8; Evans 2010, 101- 33).

Local networks among farm workers were crucial in shaping decisions to seek housing in the new townships and often helped to aid the move.<sup>24</sup> Many people from the farms came to join family members who were already living in Sada or Ilinge.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, some even identified this as a crucial factor in their decision to move. Just as established information networks allowed farm workers to obtain ‘market intelligence’ about the conditions of farm labour in the vicinity, it was through these associations that information travelled about conditions and available housing in the resettlement townships (Mather 1997, 70- 74).<sup>26</sup> The high demand for housing meant that family connections were often called upon to secure a base while waiting for a house. Joyce Halom was looking for a place to stay when she came to Sada in the late 1960s to join her parents, who were from the farms in Cathcart. She and her husband managed to stay with other family members, her husband’s brother and his family, while they waited for a house of their own.<sup>27</sup> Kleinbooi Ndamase came to join family in Sada who were from the farms in Steynsburg and Nozamile Nguxe came with her husband to Sada where they met other relatives, including her mother, who had their own houses in the township.<sup>28</sup> Many others told similar stories.<sup>29</sup>

Finding secure tenure in the resettlement townships was a major draw for farm tenants escaping threats of eviction. Many resettled families had moved around, from farm to farm, for long periods of time in search of secure tenure. Following eviction, some people stayed on the roadside before moving to another farm, some became new and precarious residents on the periphery of small towns and others lived as subtenants in parts of the rural reserves. Attaining a secure and autonomous base for the family to reside was a central concern for many of these people.<sup>30</sup> Elsie September, a member of a household of tenants evicted from a farm in the Cathcart district, cited the new sense of security that resulted from gaining a plot

---

<sup>24</sup> As Sharp has argued for Qwaqwa, ‘a few [farm dwellers] had been able to plan their move carefully... they had sold their livestock and harvests to best advantage, and one or more of them had actually come to Qwaqwa ahead of the final move in order to reconnoitre the labour market and find a job without haste. The household members who followed had used their experiences, their contacts, and their income as stepping stones to better employment themselves, and they had stayed together in large domestic groups because (as they said) it was to their material advantage to do so’ (Sharp 1987, 137- 8). The reconstitution of familial networks was an important way of establishing networks of reciprocity - and thus economic security - in the townships (Sharp 1994, 77).

<sup>25</sup> In her report on Sada, Priscilla Hall wrote that ‘Related families tend to foregather in the camp- what Professor Irving... describes as a kraal system starting up in the Bantu Development plan’ (Hall, 1969, pp. 7- 8).

<sup>26</sup> Nomsimboti Jama (Sada, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009); December John Kibi (Ilinge, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008); Minijonke Harry Ndolela (Ilinge, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Nomalizo Joyce Halom (Sada, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Nozamile Nguxe (Sada, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>29</sup> Klaas Ngesana Dastile (Sada, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009); Elizabeth Noxake Gomomo (Sada, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009); E. G. (Sada, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Monica Wilson (1977, 192) suggested some of the positive outcomes that resettlement offered to farm workers. ‘The chief advantage to the worker’ Wilson argued, ‘is greater independence. During his time off he is free of his employer, just as a factory worker is. If he changes his job, he does not necessarily lose his house. He is likely to be nearer a school, shop, clinic, church than on a farm, and may even have some facilities for recreation. His widow has more security, provided she can pay her rent; she is not necessarily required to give up her house. And wives generally enjoy the company in villages...’.

in Ilinge. She described how on the farms ‘...we used to stay in someone’s place, but here we stay in our own place, because the government provided houses.’<sup>31</sup> E. K. also described the relief of finding a secure base in Sada after struggling with tenure insecurity on the farms. Following eviction in 1965 she had moved from a farm in the Cradock district to the Steynsburg location with her parents and siblings.<sup>32</sup> The family moved to Sada soon after. She said:

...my father would be fired by the owner of the farm, you would go and stay on the road, where we would build our own houses. We even used our blankets to build houses... We moved [to Sada] by ourselves, we were not forced. But the others were removed to Sada, so we decided to come along with those people... Life in Sada was better because in those other places we were living, we didn’t have our own place. We were just siding [as tenants on other people’s land]. So it’s better here because we have our own house.<sup>33</sup>

Education was a central consideration for parents and young people escaping the farms. In spite of the low standards at poorly funded Bantu Education schools, many considered that a move to the townships would bring opportunities for better schooling and thus secure children greater chances in the urban labour market (Sharp 1982, 20; Sharp 1994, 78- 9, 86; van Onselen 1996, 474; Hunter 1937, 400- 1; Bouch 1997, 105; Mayer and Mayer 1971, 48; James, 1999, 144- 5). Women, it would seem, attached particular importance to education (Schirmer 1995, 521). Escaping obligations of child labour on the farms and the long walks to the few available farm schools (that offered only primary education) opened possibilities for a better future for farm dwellers’ children and more favourable chances for their families’ future economic security. Nothameni Kridyani moved with her parents and young children to Ilinge at the beginning of the 1970s. The family had for many years lived on farms in the Cathcart district until they left the farms for the location at Cathcart. The family then moved to Queenstown to stay with relatives. Finding themselves a burden to relatives there, Kridyani’s family moved to stay with other relatives in Ilinge. While the search for housing that ended with her move to Ilinge was driven by necessity, she was explicit that bettering her children’s education was one of the primary motivations for her move from the farms to the town location and eventually to Ilinge:

...there were no schools on the farms. If you wanted your children to go to school one would have to send them to the nearest town. We also didn’t go to school and that affected our future, but for those who wanted their children to go to school to be educated... sent them to Cathcart and Queenstown. As we grew up we realized that it will be best if we moved from the farms to the township in Cathcart. Things got better, even the poverty we had while living on the farms.<sup>34</sup>

She said of her move to Ilinge, where secondary education became available in the early 1970s: ‘Things are really better, I can see a huge difference. My children went to school. Two of my children have finished Grade Twelve...’<sup>35</sup> A number of others interviewed, particularly those who arrived in the resettlement areas after 1970 by which time the school

---

<sup>31</sup> Elsie September.

<sup>32</sup> The term ‘location’ refers to designated black residential areas (or townships) that developed in the twentieth century on the peripheries of South African towns. The term ‘township’ is more often used in the South African context to refer to apartheid-era planning, the precedent for which was in the colonial policy of ‘native locations’ (Native Location Act, 1879).

<sup>33</sup> E. K. (Sada, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009). Others who ‘sided’ in rural reserve areas before coming to Sada or Ilinge included Nothabile Mqontsi (Ilinge, 21<sup>st</sup> July 2009) and Nothawuse Dyosi (Ilinge, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008). J. C., a man resettled from a farm at Steynsburg, also described how moving to Ilinge meant an end to the uncertainty of tenure on the farms. ‘We were worried when we were living on the farms because we were always waiting to be evicted from the farm, until we decided to come to this place.’

<sup>34</sup> Nothameni Kridyani (Ilinge, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Nothameni Kridyani.

building programme was well underway, reported that educational opportunities for their children had informed their decision to leave the farms for the townships.<sup>36</sup>

While a set of attitudes towards resettlement may be associated with this generation of farm dwellers who came of age in the 1960s and 1970s - a world-view centred on urban life, or an 'orientation towards modernity' to use the words of Deborah James - resettlement was driven by concerns and precipitated outcomes that were profoundly gendered (James 1999, 156). Resettlement, and the extent to which younger people found in this process a way to improve their lot, marked the eroded status of senior male power in African farm society and the rising relative status of young male migrants upon whose earning capacity households were now heavily dependent.

Some young men, having long been migrant wage earners leaving their families on the farms, sought to access contracts via the labour bureaux that were close to the resettlement townships where their families could reside without having to fulfil the condition of farm residence by working for the farmer (Niehaus 1989 164; Sharp 1982, 14; Sharp 1994, 76). Minijonke Ndolela, who had moved from a farm at Cathcart to Ilinge in 1976, described how he had left the farms, where the pay was very low, after hearing about Ilinge and the possibility of finding a better job.<sup>37</sup> With the attack on tenant farms that had hitherto provided places of residence for the families of male migrants, the resettlement areas offered an alternative for those escaping hard and poorly paid labour on the farms. As Klaas Dastile described, securing a residential plot in Sada marked a crucial step towards greater personal independence and spatial autonomy and facilitated his household's migrant earning strategies:

It was better to stay here [in Sada] because there's a difference between the life you live on the farms and in the location. It's difficult on the farms... There are rules... If the owner doesn't want the child here, he will say no, you are not allowed to enter this place... if our kids come for a holiday [returning migrants], he would just ask them to go and work on the farm, and he wouldn't pay them. He will tell them, "it's not a location, go and work!"<sup>38</sup>

For those men able to find secure industrial employment and to increase their wage-earning capacity by moving to the resettlement areas, this decision marked a rise in their social status. Nomgedle Maxhayi arrived in Ilinge with his wife and young children in the mid-1970s after he was evicted from a farm near Dordrecht when the farm changed hands. On the farm he had been paid a low salary in cash, supplemented by dry monthly rations of six cups of mielies and six cups of mielie-meal for the family.<sup>39</sup> They would be provided with a small amount of meat at Christmas when the workers were given a sheep to slaughter and share. After moving to Ilinge, Maxhayi worked for a period on a neighbouring farm. He was later

---

<sup>36</sup> These included both men and women. December Kibi; Minijonke Ndolela; Elizabeth Noxake Gomomo (Sada, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009); Ivy Yengeni (Ilinge, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009); Elda Tyeni (Ilinge, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2009); J. K. (Sada, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009). To provide two detailed examples: (1) E. S. moved to Ilinge from a farm at Sterkstroom in 1975, to join her mother's sister in Ilinge in order that she could attend school. She left her parents working on the farm. Her parents were, she said, 'like slaves', working from dawn until after nightfall for very low wages. That was 'not my life', she said, alluding to her different aspirations. Her parents later joined her at Ilinge. Her mother had owned twenty head of cattle which she kept with her brother (E. S.'s uncle) at Hewu (in the northern Ciskei). Her mother used this considerable investment to put the children through school in Ilinge, selling the livestock as she required the money. (2) Elizabeth Gomomo came to Sada with her husband from a farm in the Free State, in order to escape the deepening exploitation they faced working on the maize fields. In Sada she joined her parents, who had moved from the farms at Tarkastad to Sada. Although Gomomo and her family suffered when they came to Sada - people around them were 'dying because of the poverty' - she said that her desire to educate her children was of crucial importance in informing the family's move to Sada.

<sup>37</sup> Minijonke Ndolela.

<sup>38</sup> Klaas Dastile. See also Mayer and Mayer 1971, 168-9; Ciskei Archives, Box 173, File N2/12/2 Part 1 (c).

<sup>39</sup> Mielies, meaning corn (on the husk); mielie-meal, meaning corn meal.

able to secure a better income working for the Divisional Council. Having secured this job as an outcome of moving from the farms, Maxhayi saw his relocation as a positive move through which his status as a male breadwinner had been affirmed: 'my life changed', he said, 'with the salary I could afford to look after my family'.<sup>40</sup> December Kibi, who had moved from the farms as a young adult and was working in Johannesburg, described how he brought his family to Ilinge in 1973 from a farm in the region in order to escape the hardships of farm life. As the primary wage earner supporting elderly relatives and young children on a farm, his desire to move the family to Ilinge was based on an outlook and livelihood strategy that was located in the urban areas where he had lived most of his adult life. The decision to leave the farms, and thus for his father to retire, was one that marked his now senior position in the household:

I took my parents from that farm, from that apartheid. I wanted them to be free... When I went to Jamestown... they told me that all [the] people had been removed to Ilinge... I asked in Queenstown about Ilinge... then I looked around Ilinge and I saw that it's a good place for them to stay... they found it better, because they were working from 3 o'clock in the morning, going to work [on the farm], and here [in Ilinge] they were just sitting. I was working for them. I wanted for the young ones to attend schools, because [on the] farms there were no schools...<sup>41</sup>

This analysis must be understood in the context of the 'internalization' of migrant labour during the 1970s. From 1960 there was a marked fall in the number of foreign migrant workers formally registered in South Africa.<sup>42</sup> The government's policy to 'internalise' labour recruitment from within the borders of the Republic and its homelands was propelled by the geopolitics of decolonisation and by the need of capital (particularly the mining sector) and the state to guarantee supplies of cheap labour. In the immediate aftermath of independence, Tanzania (1962) and Zambia (1966) curtailed their supply of migrant labour to South Africa. However, it was in the following decade that the question of foreign labour came to a head. The 1974 recruitment crisis, precipitated by Hastings Banda's withdrawal of Malawian labour and the uncertain future of Mozambican labour following the Portuguese military coup compelled employers to fill the vacuum left by the loss of Malawian and Mozambican recruits by sourcing labour from the South African homelands (de Vlotter, 696). The 'new labour frontiers' were to be found by exploiting more intensely the longstanding labour reserves of the immediate region (Yudelman and Jeeves, 101-2). Recruitment from South Africa's Bantustans increased dramatically in the years 1960- 1980, with a particularly rapid shift during the mid-1970s.<sup>43</sup>

While internalization had severe impacts on the livelihoods of Malawian and other migrants from neighbouring countries, this policy appears, conversely, to have improved the prospects of new migrants from the homelands as the testimonies contained in this paper indicate.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, the impacts of 'internalization' were not only spatially uneven but highly gendered. The decline in the number of foreign migrant workers to South Africa was characterised by a particularly sharp drop in the number of foreign female migrants (de

---

<sup>40</sup> Nomgedle Maxhayi (Ilinge, 10<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>41</sup> December Kibi.

<sup>42</sup> Census data reveals that between 1960 and 1980 there was a major decline in the number of foreign black migrants to South Africa: the number of registered foreign workers fell by 26 percent between 1975 and 1983. This shift was particularly stark in the mining sector: in the decade 1973-1983 the South African Chamber of Mines reduced its use of foreign migrant labours by half (de Vletter, 671, 674).

<sup>43</sup> The Chamber of Mines increased its proportion of Bantustan recruits from 20 percent to 60 percent 'in just a few years' and the majority of novice employees were now being recruited from the homelands (de Vletter, 670, 679).

<sup>44</sup> For an account of the impacts of mine retrenchment in Malawi, see Chirwa (1994).

Vlotter, 671). Thus while ‘internalization’ and increased homeland recruitment may have improved the status of young migrant males from the Bantustans, for women workers across the region this shift diminished opportunities to earn migrant livelihoods in South Africa, having, no doubt, serious impacts upon their social positions at home.

Young men who moved to Sada and Ilinge from the farms and who spent much of their adult life away on contract, as the above accounts show, tended to understand their resettlement from the farms as a positive move that improved their social and economic standing. James has argued, and the account above further bolsters her argument, that this entrenchment of migrant labour amongst farm dwelling societies in South Africa was accompanied by a distinct shift in the gender subjectivities of young African men in the South African countryside (James 2001, 99- 101). Long established values that associated leaving home and labour migration with rituals of manhood had, by the 1960s, taken on great significance. In the course of this shift of generational aspirations, migration came to constitute a central role in the construction of masculine identities, James argues: ‘[m]en who were not undergoing such journeys were judged to be both inappropriately located and lacking in masculinity’ (James 2001, 99). Locally-available work, including farm and agricultural work, came to be seen as an ‘unmasculine form of labour’: as women’s work that was inappropriate for the occupation of men (James 2001, 104).

If leaving the farm and getting a house in the Ciskei resettlement townships constituted a decisive turn towards a future livelihood based on migrant labour, this was also associated with attaining adult masculine status, both within the family by assuming care for dependent parents and in wider society as a mature, migrant male. Those people who took local farm work, and men who were recruited as migrants to the farms in the Western Cape generally did so as a last resort: this work was both poorly paid and accorded low status. For example, Siphon Futshana, whose family had moved from the farms to Sada, had been working with his father and brothers on migrant contracts in Pretoria. He was injured in an accident at work, and returned home to Sada. Thereafter, unable to secure migrant contracts due to his injury, he undertook local casual farm work. He saw this employment history as a demotion.<sup>45</sup> Residents in Sada and Ilinge concurred that farm work in the Western Cape was entered into by the poorest inhabitants of the township.<sup>46</sup> Those who were forced to sell their labour locally in the agricultural sector were predominantly women, or men who were unable to obtain migrant contracts and who had therefore ‘failed’ to constitute their masculine status through urban wage-earning (James 1999, 99-105). Although the limits of the evidence prevent a deeper analysis of this issue, it may be ventured that failing to secure migrant contracts in turn curtailed the abilities of young men to establish conjugal households within Sada and Ilinge and thereby to establish domains of reciprocity. This situation likely reproduced their economic and social vulnerability. Sharp has elsewhere argued that it was these young men, who were unable to establish domestic roots in the Bantustans, and not those with established homes, who became permanent migrants in urban and industrial areas during the 1980s (Sharp 1987, 145; Sharp 1994, 88).

In their absence on long contracts migrant men were able to escape some of the greatest privations that had characterized life upon arrival in the resettlement areas. Equally, migrants who had taken contracts prior to their households’ resettlement were not ordinarily subject to regimes of work and control on white-owned farms. The testimonies of women and young men, who had lived and worked on the farms prior to leaving for the resettlement townships and who remained there when family members took migrant contracts contrast

---

<sup>45</sup> Siphon Futshana (Sada, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>46</sup> Vuyelwa Maboza and Mandisa Maboza (Sada, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009); M. M. (Ilinge, 26<sup>th</sup> September 2008).

greatly with the stories of young men who, through resettlement, consolidated their social status as independent migrant household heads.

Scholars have highlighted some of the gendered dimensions of resettlement. Sharp and Spiegel have shown how, in the course of resettlement from farms, women lost wage incomes and suffered a loss of financial autonomy (Sharp and Spiegel 1990, 535- 7). This paper lends support to their argument that farm women's resettlement in Bantustan areas precipitated their increased dependence on male migrants' remittances, further extended the power of men over women in the townships and effected greater conflicts within households and between genders (Sharp and Spiegel 1990, 537). It also reveals some further dimensions. While the loss of wage income was a negative outcome of resettlement for women from Eastern Cape farms, it was by no means the most prominent issue discussed by interviewees in Sada and Ilinge. The spatial constitution of power regimes on farms and the change represented by moving to resettlement townships, emerges as a key issue in this study of Ciskei resettlement. Debates on paternalism have been largely unrepresented in the literature on Bantustan resettlement. Nevertheless, an understanding of this declining institution of farm labour and the gendered and generational social relations through which this set of compromises was historically constituted and spatially embedded helps to inform an analysis of the differentiated experiences of resettlement in the Ciskei (van Onselen 1993, 133- 7).

Women and young men who had been permanent residents on farms prior to their resettlement in the Ciskei townships faced constant threats of eviction from white landlords. Family members who remained on farms assumed responsibility for labour and for maintaining good relations with the farmer in order to secure their tenure. Women laboured primarily in the houses of farmers and performed additional agricultural tasks, while young men performed agricultural labour, particularly tending to livestock. It is of little surprise, therefore, that the desire to find secure tenure was even more pronounced by women and other non-migrants permanently present on farms. The end of degrading, undervalued and underpaid labour on the farms was, for these people, posed in relation to finding new autonomy in the townships. Despite experiencing deep poverty in Ilinge, Elda Tyeni was relieved to have found better security living with a relative there, where she was no longer required to work to secure her residence. She had been suddenly evicted from a farm with her six children: '...there were also some disadvantages [to life on the farm], like the fact that the farmer would just tell you to leave his farm. I didn't like that a bit. But in the townships nobody cared, nobody would tell you what to do...' <sup>47</sup> NoWest Kandiza described her move as a new source of autonomy: 'I wanted to come to Ilinge. It was difficult on the farm. I think it was better in Ilinge... It was better because you can make your own plot to grow spinach [in Ilinge], you own your own land, no one to tell you do this and do that.' <sup>48</sup>

Sipho Futshana, whose father worked as a driver in Pretoria, had lived as a young man with his mother and brothers on a farm at Tarkastad. The sons were obliged to work on the farm, which they resented and over which conflict arose. The family were evicted from the farm during the late 1960s and they moved from place to place in search of somewhere to stay. When Futshana's father returned at the end of one contract in 1969, he took the family to Sada. Futshana described how the family had more autonomy there: 'We were going

---

<sup>47</sup> Elda Tyeni.

<sup>48</sup> NoWest Kandiza (with Ndolo Kandiza, T. Kandiza and S. Planga, Ilinge, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009). Note that Kandiza is referring to a small residential garden plot in the township. Her comment highlights the lack of opportunities to cultivate independently on the farms and the significance of garden plots for diet and women's income. E. K. (Sada, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009), who came from a farm in Cradock with her family, said something similar, as did Evelyn Ganyaza (Sada, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009). Ganyaza said: 'It's better here [in Sada] because this place is your own property, you can do whatever you like. Unlike on the farms, if the owner of the farm wants to kick you out he can kick you out whenever... When you are here, you can see what you can do about your life...'



around, residing at many places. So we decided to come here in Sada so that we can have a proper place to stay. We are okay, even now, it's better... We have control of ourselves, we can do whatever we want. No one is telling you do this and do that.<sup>49</sup> Minijonke Ndolela had worked on a farm in Cathcart with his father before the family moved to Ilinge. He was relieved to escape the demands of the farmer and to find a space where he could reside with greater personal freedom:

We were staying a difficult life there because we were under whites. You are not doing the thing that you want to do, so in order to do something you need to get permission from the owner of the farm. If you are not doing what the owner wants, he's going to fire you. I was working with my father there, so I decided to move and stay here in Ilinge.<sup>50</sup>

Aspects of the endemic violence of paternalism also surely persisted on these farms and shaped farm residents' experiences of resettlement, even if interviewees were not explicit about the use of 'fists, whips and guns' on Eastern Cape farms (Bradford in van Onselen 1996, 130).

For permanent farm residents, resettlement marked an escape from the double-edged regime of farm paternalism. While leaving the farms may have brought a sense of spatial 'liberation' from the tight control of farm life, extrication from the 'softening' aspects of paternalism was accompanied by greater economic exposure and impoverishment. In the Eastern Cape, farm labour was 'imperfectly monetised' and farm rations persisted as one of the last remnants of paternalism (van Onselen 1992, 138.). The loss of these rations was sorely felt by women, who remained in the townships and bore the responsibility of providing food and care for children and other family members. Flora Nunu had been living with her parents and siblings on a farm at Tylden, near Queenstown. In 1964 her father was retrenched and the family had little option but to look for accommodation at Sada. Nunu described how the loss of farm rations heightened the food insecurity faced by the household: 'We stayed, although we were suffering.... We were sick because of the poverty... We weren't eating proper food.... In the farms life was better. Because on the farm you would be given a sack of mielie-meal...'.<sup>51</sup> Elda Tyeni regretted coming to Ilinge, where she struggled to afford basic food for her family. On the farm she had not been allowed to cultivate a garden, yet basic farm rations and other small benefits had been some compensation: 'It was very difficult when I came to Ilinge. Sometimes one would wish to go back to the farms where we had a relatively good life... you know how things are tough in the townships.'<sup>52</sup> The provision of resettlement rations to Elsie September's household had softened the blow of relocation and the loss of farm rations for the month that they lasted. When the resettlement rations were stopped the family's struggle for survival was further intensified: 'We came here [to Ilinge] and were given places to stay. We were given food on a daily basis... then they stopped giving us food. Then we stayed alone and we were struggling, because we had no food...'.<sup>53</sup> While B. B. also said she was glad to have found her own place in Sada rather than living on somebody else's farm in Cathcart, her livelihood on the farm was more stable than in Sada where she struggled to feed her family.<sup>54</sup>

Moving to the townships presented associational opportunities and some limited financial gains for women previously resident on farms. Some women found refuge in the

---

<sup>49</sup> Sipho Futshana.

<sup>50</sup> Minijonke Ndolela.

<sup>51</sup> Flora Nothayitasi Nunu (Sada, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Elda Tyeni.

<sup>53</sup> Elsie September.

<sup>54</sup> B. B. (Sada, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009). Nothabile Mqontsi and Nosebensile Dameni described how the loss of farm rations was a major source of distress, and pointed to the difficulties of finding money to purchase basic foods in the township. Nozamile Nguxe described how food in the township is 'more scarce' than on the farms.

social spaces of new Bantustan townships: having been isolated in farming areas, familial networks and the thriving Zionist churches in the townships presented new social opportunities and sources of support.<sup>55</sup> Some women who, as a result of resettlement, were able to gain employment in the one of the four textile factories established at Sada commented positively about the new income that this brought, despite the long hours and low wages.<sup>56</sup> A number of women went to urban areas to seek work: they adopted a range of strategies to subvert the state's attempts to confine them to the homelands, including the adoption of 'coloured' identities to avoid influx control legislation.<sup>57</sup> Farm women's migratory movements were not only restricted by state influx controls but also by domestic relations and gender inequalities. Gender regimes among people resettled from the farms continued to be governed by subjectivities that constructed men as powerful members of the household. These women were less likely to contravene influx controls and seek work or small trading opportunities in the urban areas than women who had been removed from small towns and urban areas in the Cape.<sup>58</sup> Migrant men wielded significant control over their wives' movements, once they had moved to the new townships, insisting their wives stay at home. As Sharp and Spiegel have argued, these demands were given weight by women's reliance on cash remittances from migrant husbands and family members.<sup>59</sup> In reflection of changing gender subjectivities, younger generations of women from the farms were more likely to venture a livelihood in the city, seeking domestic work or organising periodic trading ventures to buy and sell clothes and other items in urban areas. These were activities with very small profit margins and with high investment risk.<sup>60</sup> The presence of another reliable wage in the household, the availability of care for children and shifting attitudes towards women's wage-earning and domestic roles were all factors that shaped the migrant movements of resettled farm women.

Contemporary research on farm labour in the Western Cape offers a comparison to help comprehend these experiences of resettlement in the Ciskei. Andries du Toit (2004) has indicated how the commodification of labour and the decline of paternalism in the Western Cape, as farmers reposition themselves in the face of increasing pressures from the global market, has resulted in greater insecurities and deepened exploitation for the majority of farm workers. The replacement of farm paternalism by casual and off-farm wage labour has involved, Du Toit argues,

the exchange of the authoritarian racial hierarchies and ambiguous protection of the paternalist "contract" for a formally free but even more uncertain existence as landless seasonal workers. They [farm workers] are out from under the control of a white master and for some workers that is indeed a significant degree of liberation. But for those with few

---

<sup>55</sup> P. D. (Sada, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009). See Evans 2010, 140- 1.

<sup>56</sup> Nomsimboti Jama; Joyce Halom. Citing the work of Niehaus (1994), Rachel Slater has highlighted the importance of local factory employment in Qwaqwa during the 1980s (Slater, 2001, 84).

<sup>57</sup> Miriam Kahla (Sada, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2009); Evelyn Ganyaza; Joyce Mali and Caswell Stoto Mali (Ilinge, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008); C. M. (Ilinge, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2009); Nobendiba Scholastica Lucas (Ilinge, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2008).

<sup>58</sup> This observation about the different gender regimes between urban and farm dwelling families may be to an extent be aligned with Mayer's (1980, 35) observation of the difference between 'Red' and 'School' cultural values in the 1950s. He argued that the 'conservatism' of Red women, and the nature of gendered 'ideologies' amongst 'Red' Xhosa migrants meant that 'Red' women were less likely to follow husbands to town than 'School' women. School women, argued Mayer, 'did not feel "married to the *umzi*" or into a lineage as Red women did.'

<sup>59</sup> Ivy Yengeni. Sharp and Spiegel (1990, 530- 1) have detailed how men in Qwaqwa also tried to exert control over their wives earnings strategies, particularly shebeening. Schirmer (1995, 522) has described the gendered regimes of control among families who moved from the farms and the attempts of husbands to control their wives.

<sup>60</sup> Nontsokolo Qimqoshe (Ilinge, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008); Nolikhayi Tom (Ilinge, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2008).

resources, this shift may well not mean the end of subjection to exploitative and sometimes even violent patron-client relations (du Toit 2004, 27).

In Sada and Ilinge, experiences of new-found personal freedoms away from the farms were coupled with experiences of greater economic insecurity, stemming from the labour commodification that resettlement facilitated. For the women and men resettled in Sada and Ilinge who were unable to obtain better-paying migrant contracts, personal freedoms were accompanied by unemployment, a battle for mere survival and periodic employment on wages that barely enabled sustenance. For women the battle for survival in the resettlement areas was compounded by responsibilities for the care and nourishment of children and for domestic labour: chores that were made even more gruelling by lack of water and low and unreliable incomes.<sup>61</sup> For a few women, whose husbands were able to secure relatively well-paying contracts in the urban areas and who could rely on remittances, resettlement to the new townships marked a growth in living standards and social status. Yet for those without remittances - single women and the wives of those who did not remit or who never returned - poverty and vulnerability necessitated daily struggles for survival and compelled marginal earning strategies.<sup>62</sup> Most often, therefore, the harshest impacts of full proletarianization fell upon women and non-migrant young men.

## CONCLUSIONS

Although resettlement marked a crucial phase in the commoditization and proletarianization of farm labour in South Africa, this did not mean that farm dwellers necessarily perceived resettlement as a marker of their deepening exploitation. Detailed discussion of farm dwellers' experiences of resettlement in the Ciskei has shown that, to the contrary, a generation of farm dwellers who had become increasingly reliant on migrant labour and who had little or no land found that moving to the resettlement areas offered a range of new opportunities. Already heavily dependent on urban wage labour and having few opportunities on the farms, they sought secure residential tenure, education for their children, and more favourable chances of finding wage employment through the homeland labour bureaux. Young adult men saw resettlement as a way to secure their social status as independent and senior members of society through establishing their own homesteads and improving their wage-earning capacity.

Resettlement into the Ciskei was itself propelled by shifting power relations in farm society.<sup>63</sup> The position of senior male household heads had already been deeply undermined and resettlement in the Ciskei constituted, through its spatial reordering, a decisive moment for a restructuring of gendered power relations that had been underway for many decades. In the absence of other employment in the Ciskei townships, the process of resettlement secured a dominant position for young migrant males who became primary wage earners. But while the reconfiguration of reproduction strategies, centred now on migrant wages, may have cemented the household unit for those earning or receiving migrant wages, it left exposed and impoverished those men who failed to establish themselves through regular mine and industrial migrant labour, as well as those women who did not receive remittances. For non-

---

<sup>61</sup> Joyce Halom; NoBantu Jama (Sada, 17<sup>th</sup> July 2009); N. C. (Ilinge, 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009); Nomsimboti Jama; Thobeka Badi (Sada, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009); Nothabile Mqontsi; Elsie September; Vuyiswa Klaas (Ilinge, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008); Nomishin Ntsizakala (Sada, 24<sup>th</sup> July 2009).

<sup>62</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, brewing and prostitution have allowed women to earn independent incomes in both urban and rural areas (Hellmann, 1934; Bradford 1992).

<sup>63</sup> See also the arguments of Sharp and Spiegel (1990, 537).

migrant and long-term farm residents - mainly women and young men - resettlement meant flight from the double edged sword of farm paternalism: escape from insecure tenure, from daily exploitation and from the spatial hegemonies of the white farms, coupled with deepening economic insecurity stemming from the loss of farm rations and a further weakening of their position in the household through their reliance on male remittances in the resettlement area. It was women and young men, hitherto resident on the farms, who experienced the worst effects of full proletarianization. In making these arguments, this paper has highlighted the problems of linear analyses of proletarianization, shedding light on the ways that unequal power relations within households - and the uneven experiences that these relations produced across genders and generations - shaped the character of farm tenants' downward mobility.

## REFERENCES

Antrobus, G. G., 1984. 'South African Farm Wages and Working Conditions, with special reference to the Albany district, 1957 to 1977'. Unpublished PhD thesis. Rhodes University.

Beinart, William, 1982. *The Political Economy of Pondoland, 1860-1930*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Beinart, William, Peter Delius and Stanley Trapido eds., 1986. *Putting a Plough to the Ground: accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa, 1850-1930*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Beinart, William and Peter Delius, 1986. 'Introduction'. In *Putting a Plough to the Ground: accumulation and dispossession in rural South Africa* eds. William Beinart, Peter Delius and Stanley Trapido, 1- 55. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Bonner, Philip, 1990. "Desirable or Undesirable Basotho Women?" Liquor, prostitution and the migration of Basotho women to the Rand, 1920- 1945'. In *Women and Gender in Southern Africa to 1945*, ed. Cherry Walker, 221- 50. London: James Currey.

Bonner, Philip, 1995. 'African Urbanisation on the Rand between the 1930s and 1960s: its social character and political consequences'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21 (1): 115- 129.

Bouch, Richard, 1997. 'Eastern Cape Wool Farmers: production and control in Cathcart, 1920- 1940'. In *White Farms, Black Labor: the state and agrarian change in southern Africa, 1910-50*, eds. Alan H. Jeeves and Jonathan Crush, 94- 113. Oxford: James Currey.

Bozzoli, Belinda, 1983. 'Marxism, Feminism and South African Studies'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 9(2): 139- 71.

Bradford, Helen, 1987. *A Taste of Freedom: the ICU in rural South Africa, 1924-1930*. London: Yale University Press.

Bradford, Helen, 1988. 'Reformulating Resettlement: review of *The Surplus People*'. *Social Dynamics*, 14 (1): 67- 74.

Bradford, Helen, 1992. “‘We Women Will Show Them’”: beer protests in the Natal countryside, 1929’. In *Liquor and Labor in Southern Africa*, eds. Jonathan Crush and Charles Ambler, 208- 34. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Carton, Benedict, 2000. *‘Blood from Your Children’: the colonial origins of generational conflict in South Africa*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Chirwa, Wiseman Chijere, 1997. “‘No TEBA...Forget TEBA’”: The Plight of Malawian Ex-migrant Workers to South Africa, 1988-1994’. *International Migration Review*, 31 (3): 628-54.

Cobbett, William and Brian Nakedi, 1988. ‘The Flight of the Herschelites: ethnic nationalism and land dispossession’ in *Popular Struggles in South Africa*, eds. William Cobbett and Roger Cohen, 77- 89. London: James Currey.

Delius, Peter, 1996. *A Lion Amongst the Cattle: reconstruction and resistance in the Northern Transvaal*. Oxford: James Currey.

Desmond, Cosmas, 1971. *The Discarded People: an account of African resettlement in South Africa*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

de Vletter, Fion, 1985. ‘Recent Trends and Prospects of Black Migration to South Africa’. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 23 (4): 667-702.

Du Toit, Andries, 2004. ‘Forgotten by the Highway: globalisation, adverse incorporation and chronic poverty in a commercial farming district of South Africa’. CPRC Working Paper 49/ PLAAS Chronic poverty and development policy series No. 4.

Evans, Laura, 2010. ‘The Makings and Meanings of Homeland Spaces: a social history of resettlement in the Ciskei, South Africa, c.1960- 1976’. Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Sheffield.

Hall, Priscilla, 1969. Unpublished Report on Ilinge and Sada. University of the Witwatersrand, Historical Papers, AE862, File G21.4.

Hellmann, Ellen, 1934. ‘The Importance of Brewing in an Urban Native Slum Yard’, *Bantu Studies*, 8 (1): 39- 60.

Hunter, Monica, 1937. ‘The Bantu on European-Owned Farms’. In *The Bantu-Speaking Tribes of South Africa: an ethnographical survey*, ed. I. Schapera. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London.

James, Deborah, 1985. ‘Family and Household in a Lebowa Village’, *African Studies*, 44 (2): 159- 87.

James, Deborah, 1988. ‘Land Shortage and Inheritance in a Lebowa Village’, *Social Dynamics*, 14 (2): 36- 51.

James, Deborah, 1999. *Songs of the Women Migrants: performance and identity in South Africa* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- James, Deborah, 2001. 'Land for the Landless: conflicting images of rural and urban in South Africa's Land Reform Programme', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 19 (1): 93-109.
- Jeeves, Alan H. and Jonathan Crush eds., 1997a. *White Farms, Black Labor: the state and agrarian change in southern Africa, 1910-1950*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Jeeves, Alan H. and Jonathan Crush, 1997b. 'Introduction'. In *White Farms, Black Labor: the state and agrarian change in southern Africa, 1910-1950*, eds. Alan H. Jeeves and Jonathan Crush, 1- 28. Oxford: James Currey.
- Keegan, Timothy, 1986. *Rural Transformations in Industrializing South Africa: the southern Highveld to 1914*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.
- Kooy, Alide, 1977. 'Farm Labour in the Karoo'. In *Farm Labour in South Africa*, eds. Francis Wilson, Alide Kooy and Delia Hendrie, 103-20. Cape Town: SALDRU.
- Mager, Anne, 1999. *Gender and the Making of a South African Bantustan: a social history of the Ciskei, 1945-1959*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Mather, Charles, 1997. 'Wage Workers and Labor Tenants in Barberton, 1920-1950'. In *White Farms, Black Labor: the state and agrarian change in southern Africa, 1910-1950*, eds. Alan H. Jeeves and Jonathan Crush, 61- 74. Oxford: James Currey.
- Mayer, P. and I. Mayer, 1971, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edn. *Townsmen or Tribesmen: conservatism and the process of urbanization in a South African city*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Mayer, Philip, 1980. 'The Origins and Decline of Two Rural Resistance Ideologies'. In *Black Villagers in an Industrial Society: anthropological perspectives on labour migration in South Africa*, ed. Philip Mayer, 1- 80. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- McClendon, Thomas V., 2002. *Genders and Generations Apart: labor tenants and customary law in segregation-era South Africa, 1920s to 1940s*. Oxford: James Currey.
- Moore, Henrietta, 1994. 'Households and Gender in a South African Bantustan'. *African Studies*, 53 (1): 137- 42.
- Morris, Mike, 1976. 'The Development of Capitalism in South African Agriculture: class struggle in the countryside'. *Economy and Society*, 5(3): 292- 343.
- Morris, Mike, 1977. 'Apartheid, Agriculture and the State: the farm labour question'. SALDRU Working Paper No.8. Cape Town: SALDRU.
- Morris, Mike, 1979. 'The State and the Development of Capitalist Social Relations in the South African Countryside: a process of class struggle'. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Sussex.

- Murray, Colin, 1983. 'Struggle From the Margins: rural slums in the Orange Free State'. In *Struggle for the City: migrant labour, capital and the state in urban Africa*, ed. Frederick Cooper, 287- 311. London: Sage.
- Murray, Colin, 1992. *Black Mountain: land, class and power in the eastern Orange Free State, 1880s to 1980s*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Murray, Colin, 1995. 'Structural Unemployment, Small Towns and Agrarian Change in South Africa'. *African Affairs* 94: 5- 22.
- Murray, Colin, 2002. 'Livelihoods Research: Transcending the boundaries of time and space'. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 28 (3): 489- 509.
- Niehaus, Isak, 1989. 'Relocation into Phuthaditjhaba and Tseki: a comparative ethnography of planned and unplanned removals'. *African Studies*, 48 (2): 157- 81.
- Niehaus, Isak, 1994. 'Disharmonious Spouses and Harmonious Siblings: conceptualising household formation among urban residents in Qwaqwa'. *African Studies*, 53 (1): 115- 35.
- O'Laughlin, Bridget, 2002. 'Proletarianisation, Agency and Changing Rural Livelihoods: forced labour and resistance in colonial Mozambique'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 28 (3): 511-30.
- Schirmer, Stefan, 1994. 'Reactions to the State: the impact of farm labour policies in the mid-eastern Transvaal, 1955- 1960'. *South African Historical Journal*, 30: 61-84.
- Schirmer, Stefan, 1995. 'African Strategies and Ideologies in a White Farming District: Lydenburg, 1930- 1970'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 21 (3): 509- 527.
- Sharp, John, 1982. 'Relocation and the Problem of Survival in Qwaqwa: a report from the field'. *Social Dynamics*, 8 (2): 11- 29.
- Sharp, John, 1987. 'Relocation, Labour Migration, and the Domestic Predicament: Qwaqwa in the 1980s'. In *Migrant Workers and the Social Order*, ed. Jeremy Eades, 130- 47. London: Tavistock.
- Sharp, John, 1994. 'A World Turned Upside Down: households and differentiation in a South African Bantustan in the 1980s'. *African Studies*, 53 (1): 71- 88.
- Slater, Rachel, 2001. 'De-industrialisation, Multiple Livelihoods and Identity: tracking social change in Qwaqwa, South Africa'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 19(1): 81- 92.
- Sharp, John and Andrew Spiegel, 1990. 'Women and Wages: gender and the control of income in farm and Bantustan households'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16 (3): 527- 49.
- Surplus People Project (SPP), 1983a. *Forced Removals in South Africa: The SPP Reports, Volume 1*. Cape Town: SPP.

Surplus People Project, 1983b. *Forced removals in South Africa: The SPP Reports. Volume 2: The Eastern Cape*. Cape Town: SPP.

Surplus People Project, 1983c. *Forced removals in South Africa: The SPP Reports. Volume 3: The Western and Northern Cape and Orange Free State*. Cape Town: SPP.

Streek, Deena, 1966. 'Sada'. *The Black Sash*, 10 (3): 31- 2.

Van der Vliet, E. and N. Bromberger, 1977. 'Farm Labour in the Albany District'. In *Farm Labour in South Africa*, eds. Francis Wilson, Alide Kooy and Delia Hendrie, 120- 30. Cape Town: SALDRU.

van Onselen, Charles, 1992. 'The Social and Economic Underpinning of Paternalism and Violence on the Maize farms of the South-Western Transvaal, 1900- 1950'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 5 (2): 127- 60.

van Onselen, Charles, 1996. *The Seed is Mine: the life of Kas Maine, a South African sharecropper, 1894- 1985*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Wilson, Monica, 1977. 'Villages for Farm Workers?' In *Farm Labour in South Africa*, eds. Francis Wilson, Alide Kooy and Delia Hendrie, 192- 4. Cape Town: SALDRU.

Wotshela, Luvuyo, 2001. 'Homeland Consolidation, Resettlement and Local Politics in the Border and the Ciskei Region of the Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1960 to 1996'. Unpublished DPhil thesis. University of Oxford.

Wotshela, Luvuyo, 2004. 'Territorial Manipulation in Apartheid South Africa: resettlement, tribal politics and the making of the northern Ciskei, 1975-1990'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30 (2): 317- 37.

Yudelman, David and Alan Jeeves, 1986. 'New Labour Frontiers for Old: black migrants to the South African gold mines, 1920-85'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13 (1): 101- 124.



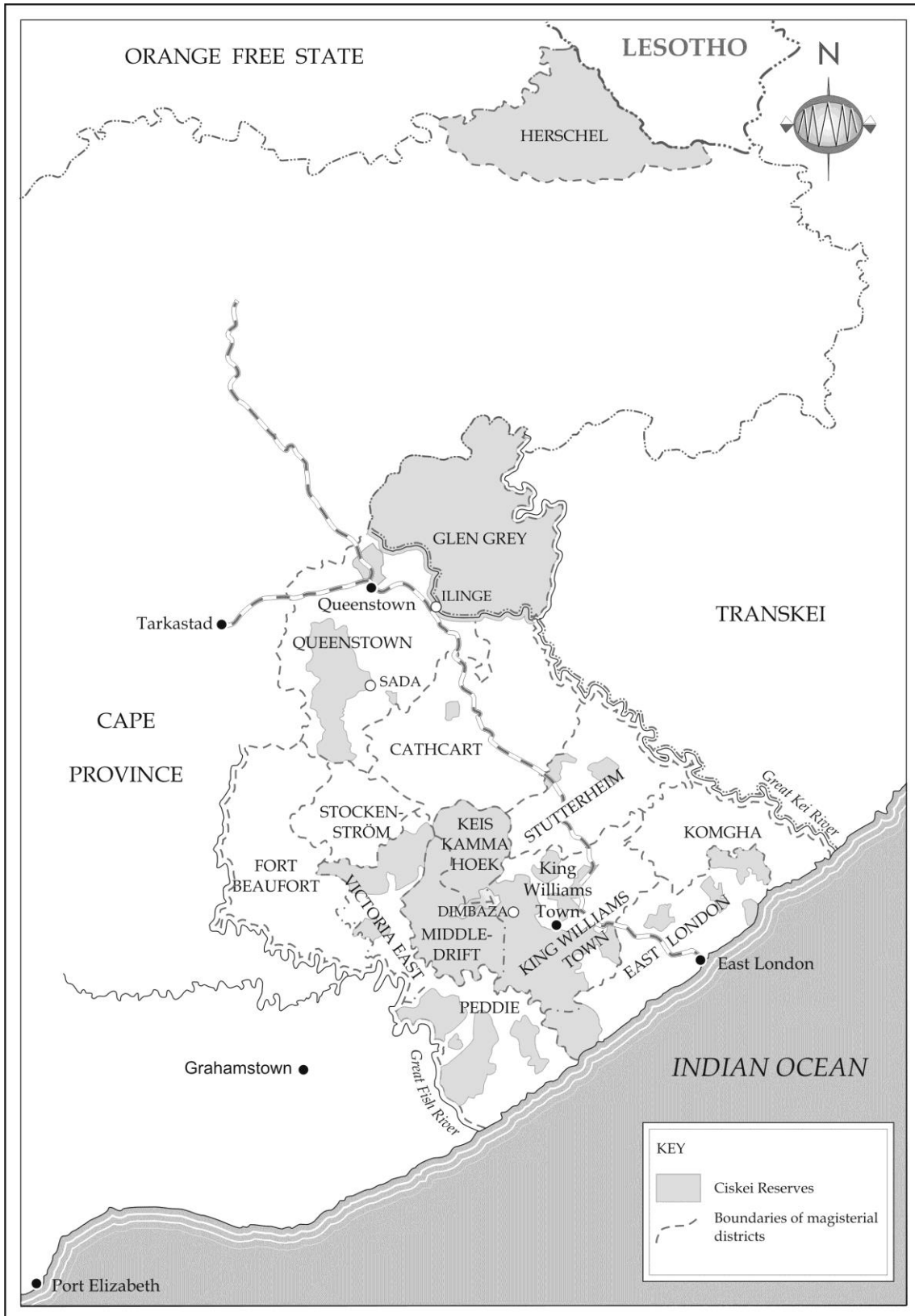


Figure 1 Ciskei reserves, with resettlement areas, c. 1968

©Laura Evans