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SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

**DOES SPACE AND PLACE  
MATTER? PERSPECTIVES FROM  
GIRLS GROWING UP IN A CAPE  
TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD CREATED  
UNDER APARTHEID**

Susan Moses

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Social Surveys Unit

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# How space and place matters? Perspectives from Girls Growing up in a Cape Town Neighbourhood created under Apartheid<sup>1</sup>

## Abstract

*With the advent of democracy in South Africa, space was legally de-racialised and people were no longer legally restricted to certain residential areas based on official racial classifications. Many areas, however, remain segregated along racial lines. This paper looks at how children and young people experience their 'neighbourhoods' and 'communities' in this broader context. It draws on the experiences and perspectives of South African girls living in an area called Ocean View, established under Apartheid for 'coloured' people who were forcibly removed from areas re-zoned 'white' on the South Peninsula of Cape Town. I examine ways in which girls' shape these environments as well as how physical and social features of their environments impact on their everyday lives, well-being and identity. I argue that children and young people in Ocean View lead everyday lives primarily bound within Ocean View and that the social, physical and economic environment within Ocean View means that they do not have access to all the resources they require and face challenges and obstacles which are not always easy to overcome. The kinds of mobility that regularly traverse Ocean View's borders do not foster the interpersonal links necessary for accessing space and resources not bound by class and race. By showing that neighbourhood characteristics often have both positive and negative effects on children's lives, I problematise the conception of 'high risk neighbourhoods' as leading to negative child outcomes, often utilised by neighbourhood studies and policies. I also highlight children's agency in dealing with the negative elements in their lives and suggest that building on these strategies (such as providing opportunities for young people to challenge prevailing stereotypes about Ocean View) may be an appropriate way of addressing some of the challenges faced by young people in the area.*

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<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of a paper presented at the conference Childhoods 2005: Children and Youth in Emerging and Transforming Societies, Oslo, June 29 – July 3 2005.

# Introduction

Individual behaviours that impinge on well-being take place in a range of social arenas, which for children are constrained by various everyday contexts such as the school, family, peer group and neighbourhood (Morrow, 2001a: 29). Currently there is very little literature on how children interact in and influence ‘the neighbourhood’ and shape their community in South Africa. The tendency has been for research on childhoods to focus on the home and school as the contexts of children’s socialisation, yet quantitative data on what children spend their time doing, indicate that non-family networks occupy a significant proportion of children’s time<sup>2</sup>. Following the emergent sociology of childhood outlined by James and Prout (1990), there has been an increasing recognition of children’s agency in both practical and theoretical circles. Moving beyond psychologically based models of childhood as a period of socialisation, it is emphasised that children are actively involved in constructing their social environments and society itself through their interaction with adults and other children (Schildkrout, 2002: 346). This has resulted in increasing interest in neighbourhood and community as a context in which children grow up, and in children’s social relationships as being worthy of study within their own right.

During the Apartheid period, where people could live and the spaces and places they could access were controlled by policies which kept racial groups separate, leading to vast inequalities in the physical and social environments available to children. Drawing from a larger ethnographic study on children and young people’s perspectives of what it is like to grow up in the South Peninsula of Cape Town<sup>3</sup>, this paper looks at girls’ experiences of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘community’ in post-Apartheid Ocean View, and area previously zoned ‘coloured’<sup>4</sup>. It looks at both how the girls shape their neighbourhoods and communities and how features of these environments impact on their well-being.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, the Time Use Survey, analysed for black African children indicates that social and group related activities take up more time than household chores for all but girls age 15-17 years, and in all cases except girls age 10-14 years more time is spent socialising with non-family than with family (with amounts ranging between 60 and 85 minutes per day) (Time Use Survey, 2000 in Bray, 2003: 35).

<sup>3</sup> The project ‘Growing Up in the New South Africa: Perspectives from children and young people in Cape Town’ is being conducted by Rachel Bray, Susan Moses and Imke Gooskens in the Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town.

<sup>4</sup> Under Apartheid the population group ‘Coloured’ referred to people of mixed race formed from a combination of white and black African or Malay Indian people. It is often assumed that through language, culture and politics, ‘coloured’ people identify more with Afrikaans speaking white people than with black Africans (Barbarin and Richter, 2001: 240).

The starting point for this study was to discover children's perceptions of their everyday lives and their environments. This approach is informed by an understanding of child well-being that emphasises a two-way interaction between children and their environments, recognising that environmental features are not the sole determinants of well-being, but that children's perceptions of and interactions with their environments also impact well-being (Bray, 2002: 4). South African development psychologists likewise emphasise the centrality of children's perceptions on the way in which they engage with their developmental settings, asserting that "the way [children] perceive their circumstances will influence the way they respond to their human and physical contexts" (Donald *et al*, 2000: 4). Looking at children and young people's perceptions and experiences of where they live is important as they are often seen as 'the problem' in urban and suburban environments, with their activities seen as impacting negatively on adults' experiences of their environments (Morrow, 2001b: 266). As such, they are often overlooked in the participation process even though they are, like other interest groups, an essential source of information about neighbourhoods (*ibid*).

The majority of the literature which looks at the ways in which neighbourhood impacts on children and adolescents comes from quantitative research carried out in the United States in the fields of sociology, psychology and economics. The analysis tends to be top-down, suggesting that neighbourhoods affect children primarily through their effect on parents (through parental networks, resources and parenting styles) and the involvement of other neighbourhood adults in the supervision, discipline and support of children (through shared norms and collective efficacy) (see Brooks-Gunn *ibid*, 1997). These studies rarely consider the way in which children experience neighbourhood and community directly. Theories proffered, such as social disorganisation theory suggest that neighbourhood structural features (such as high residential mobility, ethnic heterogeneity and concentrated poverty) that inhibit networks of social support and value consensus are associated with poor child outcomes across various domains. They argue that socio-economically disadvantaged neighbourhoods are most likely to be socially disorganised, and therefore children living in these areas are at greater risk of poor outcomes than their counterparts in advantaged neighbourhoods, independent of individual and family factors (*ibid*).

A small body of local and international ethnographic research has looked at children's perspectives of the places where they live (see Swart-Kruger, 2000; Swart-Kruger & Chawla, 2002; Morrow, 2001a, b). There are some striking parallels with these studies and the experiences of Ocean View's children and young people. In a study of four areas in Johannesburg, Jill Kruger and Louise Chawla concluded that children lead "severely constrained lives due to the

indignities and risks that they face in their everyday environments” (Swart-Kruger & Chawla, 2002). They pointed to children feeling insecure in public recreational spaces, often due to adults using the spaces for drinking and drug taking and because of vandalism and litter. Children’s mobility was found to be restricted owing to real and perceived danger on the streets, itself linked to public drinking and drunkenness which leads to fights. This is further aggravated by a lack of accessible recreational facilities. Despite these difficulties, the authors point to children’s resourcefulness in carving out spaces for play and socialising in all environments (*ibid*: 86-93). In a study in England, Virginia Morrow found that the quality of common spaces often effectively excluded children from the social life of the community (see Morrow, 2001a). These studies tend to look at physical and social characteristics within individual neighbourhoods, highlighting factors that support children and those that undermine and pose obstacles for them. By integrating this type of analysis with historical and class factors and by placing Ocean View and its children within the broader local environment in the South Peninsula and Cape Town, this paper suggests the need for change both within and beyond the local environment if children’s lives are to be improved at a neighbourhood level. It is important to look at the ways in which the legacy of Apartheid city planning continues to impact on children’s everyday lives and at the ways in which this legacy is being overcome by children if we hope to facilitate integration. As pointed out by Elane Salo (2003: 4), most work on communities established by forced removals focuses on what was obliterated by Apartheid and does not indicate how “social webs have been painstakingly re-spun” in these areas or how they have acquired multiple new meanings since the original resettlement. This paper contributes to an understanding of these processes. By providing a detailed look at a specific neighbourhood in Cape Town, this paper offers a critique on the ways in which neighbourhood effects are often conceptualised, which reduces neighbourhoods to high and low risk areas, often pathologising the neighbourhoods and people who live in them. I highlight the complexities and contradictions which mean that neighbourhood characteristics simultaneously have positive and negative impacts on children’s lives and point to the creative ways in which children engage with these factors to negotiate through their everyday lives.

‘Neighbourhood’ and ‘community’ can be conceptualised in different ways. Broadly speaking the two concepts together refer to children’s physical and social environments outside of the home and school. In this analysis, the term ‘neighbourhood’ refers to the geographical area in which children and young people live, and the spaces and places that they go to on a regular basis. Following a child-centred approach the actual size of an individual’s neighbourhood was defined by the girls themselves and therefore varies. These ‘neighbourhoods’ can be described in terms of their physical, social, and cultural environments and the impacts of these on children’s lives. ‘Community’, on the

other hand, is defined as children and young people's social networks and the places and people with whom they identify. It has not been assumed that 'community' will necessarily fall within a geographically bounded area, and again children and young people provided the definitions. This is in line with other local research, which has found that young people's understandings of 'community' may not be limited by the racial and geographical boundaries of the past and that the physical boundaries of a 'community' are often contested and may be differentially understood (Salo, 2003: 8).

## Research setting and sample

Ocean View was originally established in 1968 under the Group Areas Act (1950) of the Apartheid government as an area of dormitory housing for 'coloured' people who were forcibly removed from surrounding areas that were re-zoned 'white', such as Simon's Town and Noordhoek. Situated on the Kommetjie Road between the previously zoned 'white' areas of Fish Hoek and Kommetjie on Cape Town's South Peninsula, Ocean View is about 45kms outside the city of Cape Town. Despite the fact that in post-Apartheid South Africa people's choice of residential area is no longer restricted by the colour of their skin, analysis of the 2001 national census shows that 98% of households in Ocean View remain 'coloured'<sup>5</sup>. Official statistics put the total population for Ocean View at 16 161, but unofficial estimates claim a figure of more than 35 000 residents.

The 2001 Census places unemployment in Ocean View at 20%, with most of those working earning between R801-1,600 and R1,601-3,200 per month. Among adults 20 years and over only 18% have a matric or post-matric qualification and almost a quarter of the adult population has less than grade 7 schooling. The 2001 census indicates a generally stable population with only 3% of adults having lived outside of Ocean View 5 years previously. A community profile compiled by a local NGO claims a young population, with 46% of residents under 19 years of age (OVDT, 2004: 7). The area is described as experiencing economic stagnation and deepening poverty (*ibid*). Overcrowding, homelessness, poverty and high unemployment characterise the area, reinforced by a peripheral location and physical isolation from centres of economic activity in the region (*ibid*: 1). According to the report 46% of the employable population is unemployed and of those working more than 60% earn less than R1 500 per month (*ibid*). Overcrowding in homes and on plots is described as leading to ever increasing incidents of domestic and child abuse, substance

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<sup>5</sup> Analysis of the 2001 Population Census in this paper was done by Prof Jeremy Seekings of the Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town.

abuse and health concerns such as Tuberculosis (*ibid*). Only 15% of Ocean View residents own their own houses, while the rest live in blocks of council flats, in semi-detached houses, or in backyards and shacks. Over 1700 families are seeking adequate shelter (*ibid*). There are seven formal and four informal crèches, two primary schools, one high school and a school for Learners with Special Needs. A number of spaces with playground equipment in various states of disrepair are scattered throughout the area, and other facilities include a soccer field, multi-purpose centre, library, health clinic, civic centre and police station.

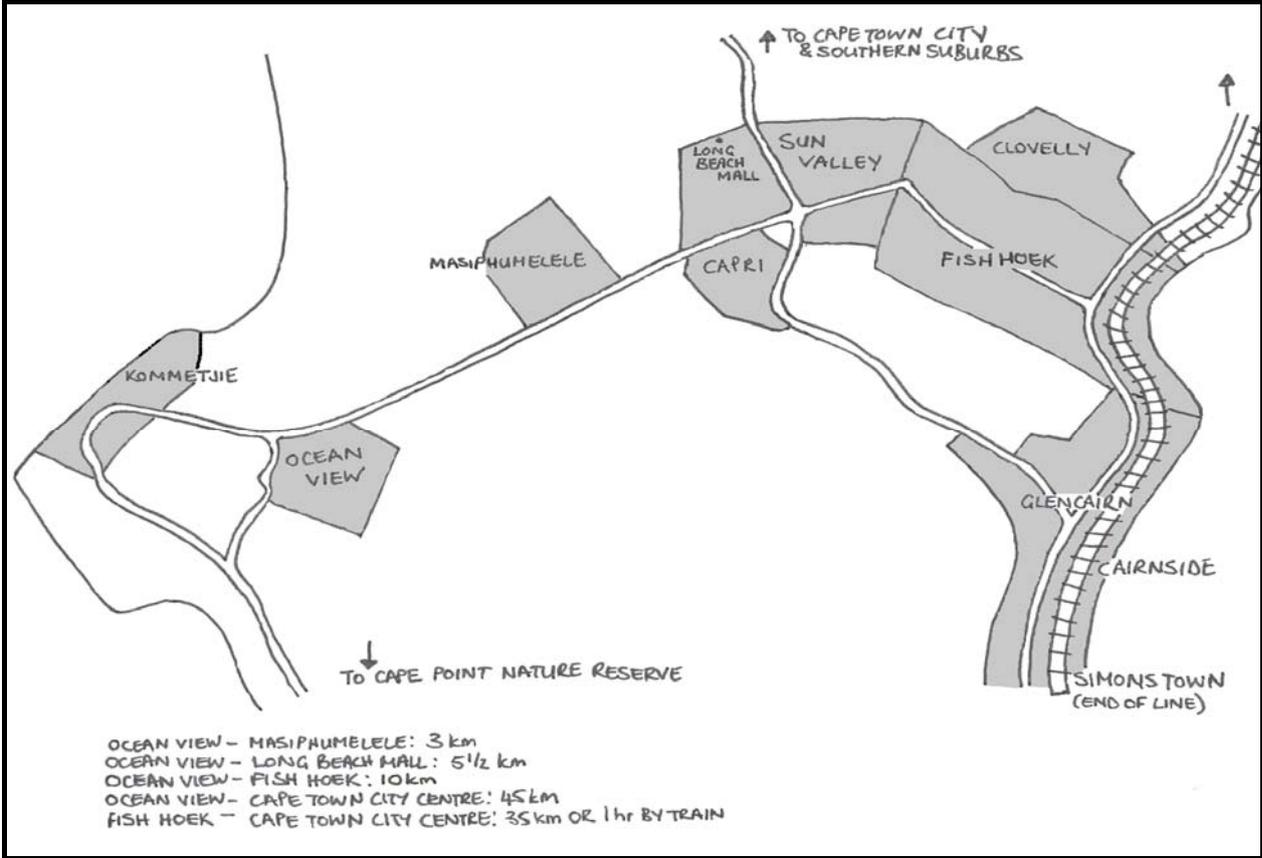


Figure 1: Map of the South Peninsula, showing Ocean View relative to other residential areas

This paper draws on data generated by a core sample of eight girls between the ages of 10 and 17, living and/or attending school in Ocean View<sup>6</sup>. All girls were part of initial observation carried out in schools and volunteered to join after school research groups. All took part in a combination of group and individual

<sup>6</sup> As the research took place over 2004 and 2005, the ages and grades of the girls changed. Ages and grades given here are as at the start of the research process. All girls except for Mandy passed at the end of 2004 and went onto the next grade at school in 2005. Mandy is repeating grade 11.

research activities, giving them the opportunity to express themselves both verbally and visually.

The two youngest participants attend one of the primary schools and took part in community mapping and other group visual exercises, as well as an individual visual narrative method<sup>7</sup> and individual interviews. Clarisa<sup>8</sup> is ten years old and in grade 4 and lives in a two-bedroom flat on the ground floor of a council block across the road from her school. She lives with her mother, father, one-year-old sister and her mother's uncle. Angelique is eleven years old and in grade 5. She lives with her mother in Masiphumelele<sup>9</sup> where they share a one-room shack with a curtain to divide the bedroom from the kitchen and living space.

The two young teenagers in the sample were both fourteen and in their first year of high school at the start of the research. They took part in community mapping; a visual exercise depicting supports, problems, and desired supports; two drama-based workshops; an individual diary keeping and photography exercise; and individual interviews. Samantha lives with her mother, step-father, two sisters, brother and a sister's child (the mother lives elsewhere) in a two-bedroom flat on the third floor of a council block just down from the high school. Mina lives in a three-bedroom freestanding house with her mother, father, three sisters, a niece, nephew and her sister's fiancé.

The four older girls were all seventeen and in grade 11 at the start of the research. They took part in the same set of research activities as the grade 8 girls, but instead of the drama workshops various informal discussion groups were run to investigate understandings of 'community', and issues relating to self-esteem and reasons for dropping out of school. Charney lives with her mother, father and brother in a flat above the main Ocean View supermarket. Nicola lived in two places over the course of the research. Initially her and her mother were living with lady from their church in her flat and then moved to live with her mother's aunt in a three-bedroom freestanding house where she

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<sup>7</sup> Adapted from the narrative therapy tool developed by Jonathan Morgan of REPPSI, a 'hero book' is an individual visual method, which allows children to tell their life stories through a series of drawing activities. It provides information on for example, children's mobility and perception of their community, who the important people in children's lives are (and where they are), as well as what problems children face and how they overcome them.

<sup>8</sup> Pseudonyms have been used to protect girls' identities and ensure confidentiality.

<sup>9</sup> Originally referred to as 'Site 5', Masiphumelele was established in the early 1990s and is located about 10 km closer to the city of Cape Town than Ocean View. Residents are all black Africans, and the vast majority are Xhosa speakers who have migrated from rural areas of the Eastern Cape in search of work. Official statistics put the population at 12,000 whereas unofficial estimates almost double this figure. Approximately 1,700 families live in shacks and although house-building is underway, only about 270 have been built so far. Unemployment and HIV prevalence are both high.

now lives with her mother, two great-aunts, a great-uncle, and her great-aunt's daughter and child. Veronique lives in a three bedroom, freestanding house, with her mother, father and brother. Finally, Mandy lives in Masiphumelele in a two-bedroom freestanding house with her mother, father, sister and brother.

## How do children experience and describe Ocean View?

Community mapping was used in the early part of fieldwork as a way of meeting children, building rapport with them, and gaining insight into their sense of 'community' as well as their use and perception of space and place. These activities were carried out with a much greater number of children than the individuals discussed in detail in this paper<sup>10</sup>. Working in groups, children and young people drew maps according to agreed upon categories<sup>11</sup>. Participants were told that their maps should contain the places that they go to and use rather than be a map of Ocean View *per se*. In this way children were not confined to a predetermined idea of community boundaries, allowing their own experiences and boundaries to emerge. The maps were not only useful in terms of depicting the physical spaces affecting children, but the discussion and explanations for what they had drawn highlighted social aspects of their environment as well. The description by children of Ocean View given below draws on this broader sample of map work.

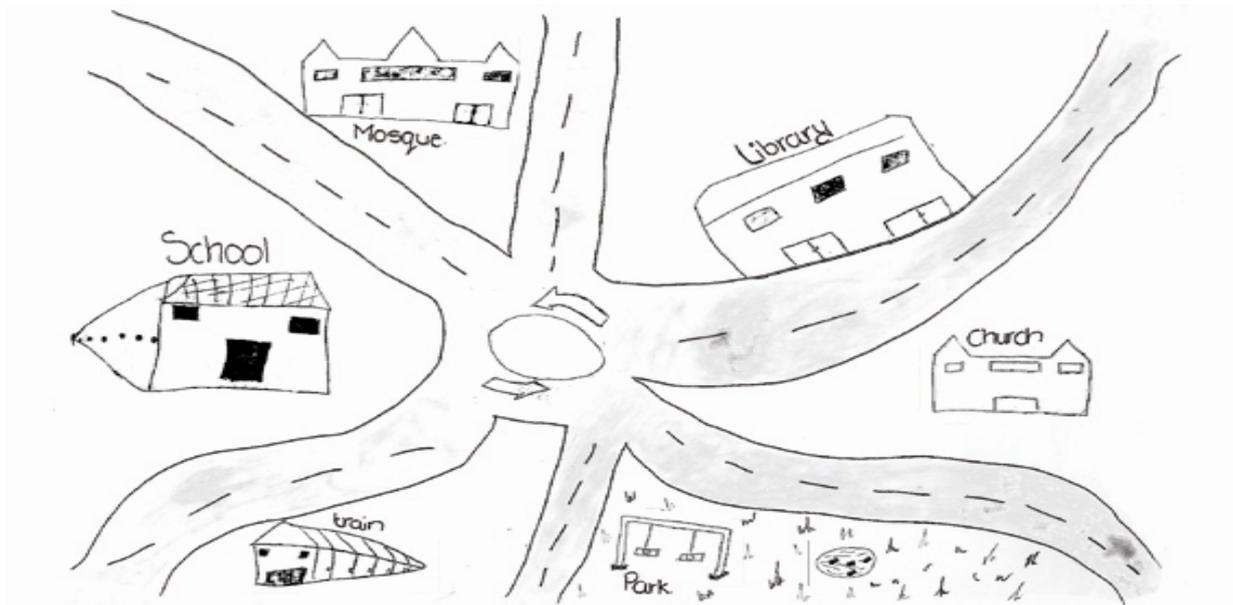
Public resources and facilities are important features in children's lives, and almost all maps identified churches, the Ocean View clinic or False Bay Hospital in Fish Hoek, the police station and library as important. Children and young people utilise public spaces for recreation and fun in Ocean View. The play park, game shops, multi-purpose centre and various open fields are all used extensively by primary school children and young teenagers. Teenagers of all

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<sup>10</sup> Community mapping was done with the after school research activity groups at the primary school and high school (a total of 12 girls and 7 boys aged 6 to 10; 10 girls and 14 boys aged 10 to 13, 9 girls and 3 boys aged 14-15 and 4 girls and 4 boys aged 17-18) as well as with 6 classes of grade 9 learners (a total of 85 boys and girls respectively).

<sup>11</sup> The researcher determined four categories: 1) places we go to have fun, 2) places we go to get things we need, 3) important places, and 4) dangerous places. When prompts were needed for 'places we go to get things we need' children were encouraged to think of where they go to get food, clothes and money, or if they are sick or sad. For 'important places' children were encouraged to think of places that are important for people their age as well as places where people make decisions that affect them. Both the primary school group and the grade 8 groups added in a category for 'safe places' or 'places we go when we are scared'. The grade 11 group chose to use the categories 'places we go for activities' and 'places we go for socialising' instead of using 'fun places'.

ages 'hang out' in the street, on the soccer field, in the surrounding mountains, the graveyard, as well as at friends' houses.

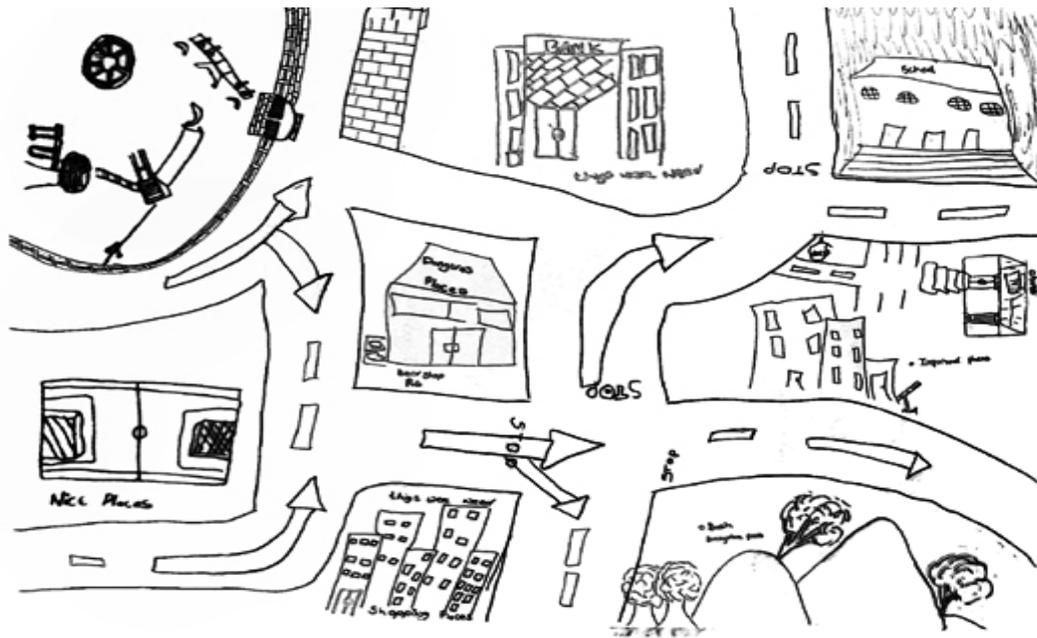


*Figure 2: 'Important Places', grade 9 girls*

*Note:* A collective map drawn by a group of grade 9 girls on 'Important Places', showing the school, library, play park, a church and mosque as well as the nearest train station in Fish Hoek.

The quality of recreational services in Ocean View was however, criticised by children. Some facilities are run down and many are used by adults and youths for drinking and taking drugs, which makes children uncomfortable and has been known to lead to physical attacks on them. All age groups wanted better quality and a greater variety of free leisure and recreational facilities and activities for children and young people within Ocean View. This was linked to their perceptions that children and young people in Ocean View are exceptionally talented when it comes to music, singing, dancing and other performing arts, and that this should be developed. Significantly, Ocean View is not children's chosen area for having fun and they prefer places like the Long Beach Mall in Sun Valley (about 6 km away) or the various beaches in the South Peninsula area.

Children's maps highlighted the peripheral location of Ocean View from centres of economic activity. The majority of shops depicted were either in Fish Hoek or at the Long Beach Mall, with only one map showing the 'house shops' in Ocean View, which sell clothes and household goods from local homes.



*Figure 3: 'Fun places', 'places to get things we need', 'important places' and 'dangerous places', grade 9s*

*Note:* Map by grade 9s showing 'fun places': the Ocean View play park and soccer field; 'places to get things we need': a bank and shops in Fish Hoek; 'important places': a school, church, and police station in Ocean View; and 'dangerous places': the mountains around Ocean View and a shebeen.

The children consulted do not experience their community as safe. In Ocean View, the danger and lack of security experienced by children and young people is connected to both the physical built environment (the presence of dark, open spaces) and more importantly to the social problems of alcohol and drug abuse and the associated violence in both public and private spaces. Children and young people in Ocean View describe high levels of violence (including fighting, muggings, rape, and stabbings) when talking about the types of problems that they face and when identifying places within Ocean View that they consider to be dangerous. As would be expected the perception of danger and violence increases with children's mobility outside of the home as they get older. Specific places identified as dangerous included certain blocks of flats, the soccer field (especially at night), pubs, clubs and shebeens, the various open and unlit spaces, as well as everywhere drug merchants operate. Children spoke of home, the Open Door (a non-profit organisation providing social work services dealing with child abuse and neglect), police station and clinic as potential safe places or places they could go if they were scared. Children did have some reservations about these places, especially around issues of trust and confidentiality and recognised that 'home' was not safe for all children. All age

groups wanted a safer environment, with less abuse, violence, drugs, alcohol and gangsterism as well as better policing. As children get older their concerns tend to be less about violence and physical danger and more about the social and emotional problems within the community, such as poor communication, lack of support, gossiping and unemployment.



Figure 4: 'Dangerous Places', grade 9 boys

*Note:* A map of 'Dangerous Places', drawn by a group of grade 9 boys depicting (from top left going clockwise) an area of informal housing, Mountain View, where children say a lot of gangsters live and where you can be robbed or stabbed; Soetwater where people go drag racing; the rubbish dump which is dark at night; the flats, where drinking and drug taking causing fighting and people sometimes get stabbed; and a shebeen, which children say exposes them to drinking, drug taking and violence.

## Themes and issues

The purpose of this section is to examine how children and young people in Ocean View experience their neighbourhoods and communities and the effects of their social and physical environments on their lives and well-being. For presentation purposes, after briefly looking at how children defined 'neighbourhood' and 'community', I divide the section into two parts, discussing firstly the physical aspects of Ocean View (the buildings, geographical location, and available facilities) and secondly the social aspects of 'community' that impact on well-being and social inclusion. This division does not imply that children experience these aspects as distinct. Rather, the data indicate a high degree of interconnection between them.

# 1. Young people debate the definition and essence of ‘neighbourhood’ and ‘community’

For all the girls, ‘neighbourhood’ referred to the physical space around where they lived, and the boundaries were usually determined by their everyday mobility. During individual interviews and a focus group with the grade 11 participants some insights were offered into what makes a ‘community’. The girls understood ‘community’ in both social and physical terms. For Veronique, Ocean View is a separate ‘community’ to Masiphumelele or Fish Hoek because they are a distance apart and each of them have their own demarcated space and boundaries. The two primary school girls also understood ‘community’ as connected to geographical area names such as Ocean View and Masiphumelele and that your ‘community’ would be the area where you lived. The older girls thought that being resident in an area is a necessary but not sufficient part of belonging to a ‘community’ as certain social conditions need to be present in order for a ‘community’ to exist at all. The most important of the social factors was solidarity, by which they meant that people of the same area would stand together against problems, support each other and not put each other down. Also important was that people attended and supported local events, such as those held at the school. Those attending these functions would be part of the ‘community’. They also felt that people had to be willing to help each other for there to be a ‘community’. Nicola specifically rejected Apartheid definitions of community<sup>12</sup>, drawing rather on the social factors of reciprocity and solidarity:

“Sometimes people think that a community is, how do I put this, confined to the race, and sometimes we, I notice it a lot, I mean if you a coloured person and you see, I’ve noticed there’s a, like in certain places I hear people say, no offence, but I’ve noticed that they say ‘Ag, these Africans *hulle wil net oorals intrek and hulle wil net so oorals die dinges and daai* [they just want to move in everywhere and they just want to do this and that everywhere]’. And that’s what you hear, and I want to say a community is not just about your colour, and it’s not just about where you come from, because you are part of a community, and if there’s love and if you, and if you trust one another and if you can be helpful then that’s a community” (Nicola, ‘community’ focus group).

Only two of the girls felt that community did not have to be limited to one’s residential area, and thought that where the above social factors existed, there

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<sup>12</sup> Under Apartheid there were frequent references to the “coloured community”, by which it was implied that sharing racial classification meant sharing a common culture, and that race was therefore key in defining the borders of communities.

could be a 'community'. Those that challenged this seemed to do so on the basis that these factors do not cross local residential area boundaries as people still lead quite separate and segregated lives:

“Ocean View forms its own community, because if we have functions people from Fish Hoek and Simons Town don't come. OK maybe a small minority, but I mean, but all of them don't know. So basically the community is just Ocean View, and Fish Hoek has its own community and wherever else has its own community” (Nicola, community focus group).

'Community' is one of the important sources of collective identity, being a powerful everyday notion by which people organise their lives, understand their localities and settlements and the quality of their social relationships (Jenkins, 1996: 105). As identity acquisition is a two-way process between an individual and the people and environment outside the individual (*ibid*: 58), the way children perceive their local environment will be important for ensuring positive identities. The way that girls experience living in Ocean View varied and caused much heated debate. 'Community' is often used as a feel-good word, with positive connotations assumed. Yet the majority of girls had a mixture of positive and negative feelings about Ocean View, pointing to the fact that positive notions of community are able to exist side-by-side with widespread social problems and anti-social behaviour, and that a 'community' can be defined as much by its positive as by its negative characteristics. Most felt that the majority of people in Ocean View are friendly and will help each other with certain things, especially the giving and lending of food, such as bread and sugar. At the same time, the girls do recognise that the social climate in Ocean View poses problems for young people living there. The older girls highlight the social problems of drug abuse and teenage pregnancy as being specifically relevant to girls and boys their age, and that these problems are partly connected to pre-teens wanting to experience what they see on television. The lack of consequences for their actions was also raised as a contributing factor. For example, Nicola pointed out that many teenage mothers just give their baby to their mother to look after. Girls of all ages highlighted child abuse (physical and sexual) and neglect as problems in the community, specifically implicating home circumstances and parents in this but seeing these problems as community-wide and connected to other social problems such as poverty and alcohol and drug abuse, both of which lead to and impact on the effects of this abuse or neglect. For example, in her photographic work Mina took a photograph of small children (ages 4 to 5) playing on an old, dirty mattress and spoke of mothers who do not care where their children play and who do not supervise their children. She said that adults do things like drinking in front of unsupervised small children and therefore do not set a good example. She

thought this was one of the reasons you see small children drinking and smoking.

Despite these negative perceptions, feeling that they were part of a community was important for some of the girls and they were able to insist on ‘community’ existing in Ocean View by emphasising certain factors in their definitions of ‘community’. Charney strongly rejects the negative images of Ocean View that are often put forward and has a particularly positive outlook on Ocean View as a ‘community’, defining it mainly around whether people participate in local events:

“Well basically, there is a community, because whenever there’s a function and stuff like that, who’s there to support you? The community. If the school has a karaoke or whatever, the community is there” (Charney, ‘community’ focus group).

The girls’ experience of Ocean View is influenced by the perceptions of other people both within and outside Ocean View’s borders. The identities and assumptions imposed from the outside on young people by virtue of the fact that they live in or attend school in Ocean View are both a burden and fiercely contested and rejected by them in conversation. Negative media coverage and the negative perceptions of Ocean View that it entrenches affect not only the way that young people feel about where they live, but can also affect what they believe is possible within their community and therefore how they behave. Charney and Nicola spoke eloquently on this issue with a male classmate Patrick, connecting negative images and identity to community apathy:

Patrick: And there’s so much bad stuff. If you go to somewhere like Claremont and you tell people where you at school and they say ‘oh that gangster place’ or something like that.

Charney: And there aren’t gangs anymore, I mean.

Nicola: And one of the things, I can compare the community to a person; if you always concentrate on the negative of the person then they will actually break down because nobody’s actually recognising their potential or highlighting their good points. And the same thing with the community, if you every time you hear bad news you going to say ‘Ag I might as well just leave and stop trying to do good’ or whatever, and the people might just start collapsing and that’s why I think the majority of the people lose hope in actually trying to become a community together because of what they read in the newspaper.

There is a perception that the media likes to perpetuate certain stereotyped and negative images of Ocean View, and girls referred to an incident where a local South Peninsula newspaper refused to write an article about the “good thing” Ocean View’s people were doing by having American exchange students to stay. In this way community-level self-esteem and the accompanying apathy, referred to above, need to be placed in a much broader environment, influenced by local media which creates and perpetuates stereotyped and segregated images in which social ‘problems’ and deviance are located in previously zoned ‘coloured’ and ‘black’ areas, and more nuanced reporting is generally reserved for the predominantly ‘white’ areas in which the local papers are based. Working on issues located within one geographical space may thus require moving outside of the boundaries of that space. At the same time girls highlight a complicity in perpetuating these stereotypes between the media and people in Ocean View who are in a position of power. Charney was dismayed by the principal’s declaration in a local newspaper that 60% of Ocean View Secondary School pupils are using the drug ‘tik’<sup>13</sup>:

“The thought that girls are selling themselves for drugs is scary, but I don’t want people thinking I am a ‘tik monster’ just because I go to this school. I’m also worried that the kids are going to retaliate [against what the principal said], parents might come in to complain and people will criticise the way he runs the school. It actually makes me feel sick because we have already had a lot of bad publicity.”  
(Charney, individual interview)

## **2. The physical environment**

### **The effects of community size and location**

Ocean View does not cover a particularly large area and is very clearly a separate physical space, not sharing boundaries with any other residential areas. As a result of these factors, children experience Ocean View as a ‘community’ in its own right. Ocean View is seen as a close-knit community because it is small, most residents have many relations living there, and a large proportion of families have lived there since it was established. Girls are ambivalent about these qualities which they experience as having both positive and negative consequences.

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Tik’ is a South African term used to refer to the methamphetamine drug otherwise known as ‘speed’. There have been extensive reports in Cape Town newspapers on the widespread and rapid increase of tik use and abuse amongst the youth of Cape Town. Ocean View is one of the areas that has been singled out in reports as having particularly high levels of tik abuse (see ‘Children selling sex to buy tik’, *Cape Times*, 4 April 2005)

“Because Ocean View is small everyone knows you and so people will look out for you” (Nicola, journal notes).

On the other hand it also increases the chances that girls will see people with whom they have conflict. Veronique does not like to go to a certain part of Ocean View because of this.

“Veronique: There are people down there who I have had ‘beef’ with, so I just walk away if I see them so they don’t see me.

Researcher: What would happen if they do see you?

Veronique: They would ask you sick questions, like sexual stuff”.

The small size of the community affects children’s anonymity and therefore what they are comfortable doing in Ocean View. Children may therefore not engage in activities they know their parents or others would disapprove of, with possible positive outcomes. Alternatively they may be encouraged to do these things away from the safer spaces in their homes and neighbourhoods.

“Most of her friends drink alcohol on the weekends if they go out in Hout Bay or go to other friends living in Hout Bay, but they don’t do it in Ocean View. This is because “your parents live in Ocean View and people know people. There [in Hout Bay] you can do your own thing”” (Veronique, individual interview notes).

Ocean View is not small enough however, that where you live relative to the people in your networks is unimportant. Because most people do not have cars, or if they do, they either cannot afford to use them on a daily basis or use them to get to and from work, children get around by walking. The physical proximity of people to the girls’ places of residence, therefore affects the level and nature of the support and resources they can provide, as girls tend to see more of people who live close by. For example, Veronique only sees an aunt she used to live with, and who is a potential source of emotional support, once every one or two weeks because she now lives a distance away in another part of Ocean View.

The peripheral location of Ocean View as well as general low disposable incomes means that for children of all ages, everyday life is limited to the social and physical borders of Ocean View, as travelling the distance to other places in the South Peninsula and beyond is not feasible on a regular basis. As residential mobility is low, their interpersonal networks are thus confined to the racial and class profile of Ocean View’s residents. Most Ocean View children go to school in Ocean View, with small numbers attending schools in the more affluent areas of the South Peninsula, such as Fish Hoek, Simons Town, Muizenberg and Kalk

Bay. Not more than 10% of learners at the secondary school come from areas outside of Ocean View<sup>14</sup>. Most children have to use public transport in the form of buses and taxis to Fish Hoek and then taxis or trains to the city centre and the rest of greater Cape Town. Although favourite places for socialising tend to be located outside of Ocean View, in Sun Valley (the Long Beach Mall), Fish Hoek and the Southern and Northern suburbs of Cape Town (places such as Cavendish Square, Ratanga Junction, and Grand West), these places are accessed infrequently and only on weekends. Everyday leisure and socialising happens in spaces within Ocean View, such as the play parks, soccerfield, game shops, friends' houses and the street. A minority of children (mostly boys) travel to Fish Hoek and Wynberg for soccer and cricket clubs. Ocean View is economically isolated and children have to go outside of Ocean View for most of their shopping for both food and clothes. Basic groceries can be bought in Ocean View, but most families shop for food at the larger supermarkets in Sun Valley and Fish Hoek, and clothes are bought at the malls in Sun Valley and Claremont as well as at shops in Fish Hoek, Wynberg and Cape Town.

Work opportunities in the area are also limited. Leisure and shopping outings provide children with access to physical spaces outside Ocean View, but these visits are usually made with adult and friend networks from within Ocean View, and are thus bound by the social space of Ocean View. Most children receive health care within Ocean View, most at the government run health clinic and few from private doctors operating in the area. For more serious health problems children have to go to False Bay hospital in Fish Hoek. Other reasons for travelling outside of Ocean View include to visit family who live in other parts of Cape Town. Again this tends to be reserved for holidays and special occasions, largely owing to the costs involved in getting there.

Parental work networks potentially provide children with interpersonal resources that extend local neighbourhood boundaries. Yet, owing to unemployment many children in Ocean View do not have this opportunity. Although the majority of adults working, do so outside of Ocean View, most remain within the South Peninsula, working at supermarket chains, factories and as fishermen. Many work colleagues are therefore also from Ocean View. Institutions such as the schools and clinic are also staffed mainly by Ocean View residents.

Solidarity and helpfulness were identified as key components for a 'community'. Most girls' experience of 'community' was confined to Ocean View as they felt that these conditions did not cross the old Apartheid boundaries in the South Peninsula. Although they are physically able to go into these spaces (as long as they have the money for transport) the lack of

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<sup>14</sup> Most learners from outside Ocean View come from the predominantly black African townships of Masiphumelele and Red Hill.

interpersonal connections excludes young people in Ocean View from accessing many of the social, cultural, material and financial resources available in these spaces. Some young people may therefore be uncomfortable in certain social settings, or unable to take advantage of more widely available recreational facilities. By perpetuating stereotypes, continued negative reporting in the media exacerbates this by discouraging people in other local areas from going to Ocean View. The limiting of everyday life to the spaces and people within Ocean View results in many social problems (such as teenage pregnancy and levels of drinking and drunkenness), rooted in Ocean View's history, self-perpetuating as norms within this space.

In contrast, studies with children in England revealed experiences of belonging to a 'virtual' community rather than a tightly-bound easily identifiable geographical location (Morrow, 2001a: 54). The experience in Ocean View also differs from the experiences of young people in Manenberg, Cape Town who were found to be transgressing the social and physical boundaries of their Apartheid defined physical neighbourhood by both literally and figuratively accessing more cosmopolitan spaces (Salo, 2003: 9). Literally accessing such spaces is much more difficult for children in Ocean View as the South Peninsula is separated from the rest of greater Cape Town by a mountain range, and Ocean View occupies a geographically peripheral space within the valley. Life on the other-side of the mountain range or "up-the-line" as the children refer to it tends to be idealised by them through the infrequent shopping trips made there and general lack of first-hand knowledge of what living and being in those spaces is about. Girls clearly compare their situation to the resources and opportunities available to young people living in other areas, (both those visited infrequently, such as Fish Hoek or the more affluent areas in the Southern suburbs, and those accessed 'virtually' through word-of-mouth and television). Unfavourable comparisons lead to a sense of deprivation and a lack of motivation. Children are aware that their chances of success after school are constrained by the resources and opportunities available to them because of where they live.

## **Unsafe spaces**

Unsafe areas or places where the girls have witnessed or fear violence within Ocean View are often connected to physical spaces used for selling and consuming alcohol and drugs, such as shebeens, the soccer field, and certain flats where drug merchants live. Being drunk or high leads to fighting over what often seem to be quite trivial things, such as someone swearing at a person. Peer pressure to drink and take drugs, which came up in a variety of methods as one of the main challenges facing young people in Ocean View, is affected by the prevalence and availability of drugs and alcohol in the area. Young people recognise that these behaviours can affect how well they do at school and

whether they manage to stay in school at all. Although not really a concern raised by the young people, there are also health implications involved. Girls from 14 upwards spoke of friends easily buying beer and wine at house shops or drinking at shebeens, and gave details of the cost of drugs and knew where drug dealers hide their drugs, indicating the pervasive and easy availability of drugs and alcohol in the area<sup>15</sup>.

Young people recognise that the socio-economic issues of unemployment and poverty play a role in the prevalence of substance abuse in Ocean View:

“One of the reasons why there are so many drugs in Ocean View and it is difficult to get rid of them is because people rely on selling drugs for a living. One girl said that many of the people in the school, or their parents, were selling drugs and had no other way of making a living” (Journal notes on discussion with grade 10 learners on reasons for dropping out of school).

Overcrowding in the council flats plays a role in the violence associated with and witnessed there. Overcrowding leads to those living in the flats spending a lot of time in communal spaces, thus increasing the likelihood of conflict. Samantha recorded three instances of conflict based on people’s use of public space in her diary. One morning she went to complain to people playing loud music who then laughed at her, her and her friends were chased by a man they had been teasing, and a woman threw water on her and her friends who were sitting and singing on her *stoep* [porch] to get out of the rain.

Places become more dangerous at night because they are unlit and quiet, making them easy spaces for attacks and muggings. Vandalised spaces and run-down spaces such as the buildings next to the multi-purpose centre are seen to attract people who engage in anti-social behaviour and are perceived to be dangerous.

“At night people sit in the building and that they can hurt you”  
(Clarisa, individual interview).

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<sup>15</sup> Giving into peer pressure is not a simple thing however as the girls made clear in their strong objections to a statement by a grade 11 boy, who said “If you have friends, then you’ve been through peer pressure”. How secure one feels in one’s friendships, and what is going on in the home environment will all have an effect. Individual factors such as confidence and self-esteem are also important ingredients in resisting peer pressure



“Inside the boys’ toilets at the buildings: it’s ugly and it’s a mess and they must clean it. Children go there to smoke” (Mina, photograph and diary exercise).

Despite these perceived dangers the girls in the sample have never experienced any violence against their own persons, which raises questions about strategies employed for avoiding danger and keeping safe. One main effect is that girls restrict their mobility and avoid certain places. For example, all the girls in the sample choose not to attend the discos at the multi-purpose centre, which they nick-named ‘club grab and stab’ and ‘*mes-steek jols*’ [stabbing parties] because people bring in alcohol which leads to fights. They also stay away from shebeens. Avoiding these places is easier, depending on where you live. Veronique, who lives up the road from a shebeen, cannot easily avoid it, which is why she has witnessed violence there. She does however make a point of not walking far at night, usually across the road to her neighbour or a few houses down to her best friend. Having close friends nearby is therefore important in order to be able to socialise safely at night.

The dangers associated with drugs are more difficult to avoid.

“The merchants are everywhere, you cannot avoid them. All you can do is say ‘no’” (Grade 9 girl, class discussion on mapping).

Often the only tactics available are to “just say ‘no’”, or to walk or look away. In a communal space outside the flat where she lives, Clarisa witnessed an argument over drugs. As the conflict became violent she chose to look away so as not to see a boy’s head being hit against a concrete slab. Although by no means adequate protection, children are able to make these small choices and decisions that afford them some protection when faced with these situations.

It is also important to note that the levels of perceived danger varied amongst the girls. Although they all felt mostly safe during the day in public spaces, at night some felt very unsafe and others completely safe. This was not related to their ages, to where they lived or to how much violence they had witnessed.

## **Having somewhere to ‘hang out’ or play**

The importance of places for young people to play and socialise has been highlighted by many researchers who point out that given a reasonable level of health and security most children choose to play which in turn activates an enormous potential for learning (Bartlett, 1999: 68). Unsafe places for play and socialising are of major concern to the children and young people in Ocean View and impact negatively on their quality of life. ‘Doing’ and ‘playing’ dominates the time younger girls spend with friends, and they therefore require spaces to do this in. As plots of land in Ocean View are small and most people do not have any outside space, public spaces where you can play and hang out with friends are very important. Clarisa spends 3 to 4 hours every day playing with her friends in the yard of her block of flats. This also seems to happen in Masiphumelele where Angelique spends about 3 hours everyday playing in the street and park. Mina and Samantha both play and talk with friends for more than 4 hours per day, using the public spaces in the flats, mountains, streets, local game- and video-shops and the multi-purpose centre extensively, as well as just walking around Ocean View with friends, to visit people in other parts of Ocean View. Samantha talks of being chased from the mountains by people who go there to smoke marijuana and take drugs and Mina mentioned that sometimes when you walk around Ocean View people try to make trouble with you and that she won’t go to the multi-purpose activities in the afternoon because the children fight.

Places like the park, multi-purpose centre and some flats are often frequented by adults and young people drinking or taking drugs and although some of the girls, such as Mina and Samantha are comfortable being in this environment and not partaking, others, such as Charney and Nicola talk about not liking to be at these places because of these activities and the fighting that sometimes breaks out. For those that are uncomfortable in the available public spaces, their homes and those of friends and family are the only options. Friends and family can provide

children with access to social spaces in the community. Mina knows many of her close girl friends because they live in the same blocks of flats as her cousins, and her social life centres around these flats and people. Nicola goes to the Library with friends after school, as well as the occasional outing organised by the school. Despite this resourcefulness in utilising networks to appropriate and attach their own meanings to spaces, discussions revealed that the girls would like to have better public spaces to hang out and do things with friends, like a nice park and safe sporting facilities.

## Private spaces

Talking and communicating with friends is a big part of the young and older teenage girls' friendships. Trusting someone enough to tell them intimate and personal things facilitates a sense of shared understanding and helps girls to realise that they are not alone with their struggles and problems, thus providing support in times of difficulty and confusion.

“For Mandy and her two close girl friends, sharing what they have been through in their lives with each other has brought them close and made Mandy feel that she has people in her life who *really understand* her and what she is going through with her ex-boyfriend. It seems to be through the actual sharing of intimate details that she feels she has real and valuable support” (Mandy, diary interview notes).

Sharing a personal, secret space with close friends<sup>16</sup> also provides girls with self-esteem, a sense of belonging, encouragement and motivation. Public space is not necessarily needed for this type of interaction, but private space is required. For many girls this is not available at home. For Samantha who shares her bedroom with two sisters, a brother and a niece, privacy is not often available at home. Most of her chats with friends therefore happen ‘sitting around the corner’ from her block of flats. Most girls use a combination of their homes, their friend’s homes and outside spaces, carving private spaces when and where they can. In doing the individual interviews with the girls I saw how they were able to do this, by shutting a bedroom door, arranging the interview for a time when family would not be home, sitting outside and talking about less private things when family or neighbours disturbed us. For some of the girls the most private spaces are found outside of the home. Nicola and Charney both wanted to do their interviews at the school so that we would not be disturbed.

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<sup>16</sup> For the girls of all ages, close friends that you trust with secrets and personal things are other girls.

## Living somewhere that looks nice

Having an environment that looks nice was important to most of the girls for a variety of reasons. Although many of them did not really mind the litter in Ocean View, they did refer to aspects of the physical environment that either made them feel proud or embarrassed and sad to live in Ocean View. Samantha's block of flats was being painted when she did the diary and photography exercise. She took many photographs in front of the newly painted flats, and as the following photographs and caption show, this made her feel proud of where she lived:

“They finished painting the second block. Now we can take photos here. If people write on the walls now they pay a R500 fine, and if they don't pay, they will *mung* [arrest] them. Now our block will look better than the others because they are written on and ours is not” (Samantha, photograph and diary exercise).



Veronique's appreciation of the scenery around Ocean View was clear from the photograph she took of the new double storey house being built in front of hers, which now partially blocks her view of the sunset over the sea. She also took pictures of the mountains and fynbos on the walks she goes on with her best-friend's mother and commented that she likes pretty scenery. Mina took a photograph of the flats to show the mountains and the dirty flats: “the good and

bad parts of Ocean View” according to her. The following photograph taken by Charney, shows how claiming the beauty in Ocean View is a source of positive collective identity for her.

“A view of the ocean from Lapland [an area in Ocean View]. It makes me angry when people say you can’t see the ocean from Ocean View – they are obviously not going to the right parts” (Charney, photograph and diary exercise).



Nicola felt that although she did not mind the run-down look of Ocean View personally, she did think that the dirt, litter and crumbling and unpainted houses made outside people judge Ocean View and its people badly (and therefore her). Other girls felt that the graffiti made their environment look unappealing, and Clarisa referred to it as “gangster stuff”. During the diary and photograph exercise, Mina recorded how she and her friends were sitting at the multi-purpose centre and talking about how run-down the soccer field is and about the dirty, messy and graffiti tagged toilets in the buildings and said that this made her feel ‘sad’ and ‘bad’ about living in Ocean View. Nicola also spoke of the vandalism that happens in Ocean View which makes one not want to bother trying to make the area look nice because “if you try and build something other people try and destroy it” (Nicola, ‘community’ focus group).

## Facilities and services

Girls see having the right sporting facilities as being very important (and the clubs and coaches that would provide the training and activities). Most girls felt they are not catered for on the sports front in Ocean View which some described as a “soccer place”. Even for a girl like Samantha who loves playing soccer, finding a team is difficult. She says all the clubs are full and although she trains informally on almost a daily basis with the boys from her flats, she cannot play matches as it is a boys’ team. During the photography exercise, Nicola took a photograph of her cousin practising cricket and chose the caption: “Could go pro”. She then said that if it had been a photograph of a girl she would have had to give it the caption: “could go pro if she went outside Ocean View”. Nicola’s best-friend plays cricket but has to go to Fish Hoek to play for a club, as there are only cricket clubs for boys in Ocean View. Being able to do this depends on having the resources to get to Fish Hoek once or twice a week and pay club fees. Nicola says “girls my age don’t have the same opportunities as boys; they have to travel for them”. Other girls indicated that they would participate if there was cricket, hockey and rollerblade hockey available. Part of the problem is that no-one asks the girls what sports they would like and my observations of local NGOs developing a sport and recreation plan for Ocean View’s children revealed a tendency to assume that providing soccer opportunities is enough, because of its widespread popularity. Volleyball and badminton are theoretically available at the multi-purpose centre, but girls say that “it is not happening”. The centre is not always open and many afternoons no activities happen at all.

The girls make do with what they have, but there is a sense of inadequacy, as revealed by Samantha responding that she would be doing “nothing, just stay at home” to a question about her weekend plans, even though she spends most of her time out and about with friends. Her sense of frustration and boredom was a theme I encountered again and again, and was connected to an awareness that elsewhere it is not this way.

“There is nothing for a girl or ‘young women’, should I say, to do. I am bored and I don’t know what to do with myself...I hate the fact that I have nothing to do...I don’t want this stupid life anymore” (Nicola reflection on her day in her diary).

“We were bored so we went to sit in front of the multi, and talked about stuff like what are we going to do” (Mina diary interview).

“Veronique thought it would be better to do the diary exercise over the holidays because she might actually have things to do then, otherwise she would just be writing the same thing everyday” (journal notes).

The type of support friends can provide is sometimes connected to available facilities in neighbourhoods. For Mandy and Nicola who have formed study groups with friends who share their goal of doing well at school, the libraries in Ocean View and Masiphumelele are key resources. In this way, the physical and social environments compliment each other; a library without the friends to motivate and encourage one would not facilitate better learning just as having encouraging friends without resources to use would not have the same impact.

## **The dynamic interface between physical, social and economic environments**

The physical environment interacts with the social and economic environments in Ocean View in other ways to create particular everyday experiences for the children and young people living there. Ocean View's size, location and social demographics (dominated by kin networks) are all important in determining the experience of Ocean View as a close-knit community, with both positive and negative consequences for children. These factors, together with the fact that the majority of Ocean View is working class or unemployed and that many residents have high levels of perceived danger, means that children and young people have restricted everyday mobility both within and beyond Ocean View.

The perception and experience of Ocean View as unsafe by many of the children, is itself rooted in the interaction of physical, social, economic and historical factors. Poverty and unemployment affect the availability and use of drugs and alcohol, which leads to both fighting and violence in public spaces and to increased incidents of child abuse and neglect. Overcrowding increases conflict, vandalised and run-down buildings attract anti-social behaviours, and the many unlit open spaces increase both real and perceived danger for children and young people. Danger and anti-social behaviour affects not only children's mobility, but also quality of life as drug-related danger could occur wherever drug merchants are and play spaces become unsafe. The quality of community space affects not only physical health and safety and capacity to learn but also children's social and emotional well-being, and influences the type of social interaction that is possible (Bartlett, 1999: 69-71). Certain types of spaces such as well-lit streets, places to sit and socialise, plants and trees, shops and other facilities, all encourage people to use neighbourhood space and thus can inhibit anti-social behaviour" (*ibid*: 71). In contrast the dirty, vandalised and unlit spaces in Ocean View tend to encourage anti-social behaviours such as drinking, especially at night. As well as causing direct danger, "physical and social disorder can provide opportunities for youth to be socialized into violent and deviant subcultures, particularly as they move into adolescence" (Donald *ibid*, 2000: 12).

### **3. The social environment**

#### **Social dynamics**

Many of the young people struggle to form a positive notion of the Ocean View ‘community’ because they perceive the social dynamics in Ocean View to be the opposite of the social factors required to make a place a ‘community’. These are experienced directly in the community at large and through the family, friends and other adults in individuals’ social networks<sup>17</sup>. The physical and social closeness of networks enhance both positive and negative effects for children. Social dynamics that exclude young people from a positive community experience include gossiping, judging, pulling each other down, being competitive, holding grudges, playing favourites, not respecting others, not supporting community events, and not helping each other out or standing together against social problems. Solving problems through violence rather than discussion and communication also creates a hostile environment. On the other hand community dynamics which create an inclusive environment in Ocean View are being friendly, non-judgemental and willing to help, doing things together, tolerating difference, being prepared to share one’s space, and taking pride in the environment. I provide a more detailed discussion of the most significant factors in the sections that follow.

#### **Helping people**

Kin ties are an important feature of the social environment in Ocean View. The dense kin networks in Ocean View are a source of much of the everyday help that people receive from outside of the home. Resident kin provide child-care for those whose parents are at work. Clarisa was looked after by an aunt after school until her mother’s uncle came to live with them. Now he looks after her until her mother returns from work. This assistance is not just about supervision.

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<sup>17</sup> Social networks bring important emotional, social and material resources into girls’ lives. In Ocean View these networks consist of extended family, friends and other adults from outside the family networks (such as parents’ friends, teachers, priests, neighbours and friends’ parents). Although benefits are not dependent on these networks being located within Ocean View, given the lack of everyday mobility outside of the Ocean View area, drawing on the resources available through them is often made easier by physical proximity. Access to these networks is also affected by physical and social aspects of children’s neighbourhoods and communities. Having spaces and social norms and dynamics which facilitate positive interaction is important. The role of social networks in young people’s lives, well-being and social inclusion is to be elaborated on in forthcoming work from the project by Rachel Bray, Susan Moses and Imke Gooskens, ‘Growing Up in the New South Africa: Perspectives from children and young people in Cape Town’, Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town.

Clarisa describes the ways in which her aunt and great-uncle have and do look after her, saying her aunt would give her bread, money to buy chips and a place for her to play outside and her uncle assists with other aspects of care by cleaning the house, making food, and washing the clothes and dishes. Many of them also give the girls material and financial resources, which are not only valuable in themselves, but also provide girls with the opportunity to feel spoiled, and therefore special and valued, where financial constraints at home do not allow for this.

Adults in the community provide financial and practical support for the girls. Nicola's priest offered to pay for her to go on a school trip to Namibia, and Veronique's priest has offered to help her compile a CV so she can look for a job. Samantha's neighbours help her by paying her to do errands for them, which means she has some money to spend on 'luxuries' like sweets and chips. The likelihood of thinking that neighbours would lend you money or take you to the hospital in an emergency depends on how involved the girl is with her neighbours. Samantha has by far the most interaction with people living in the area she defines as her 'neighbourhood', interacting with adults and children from early in the morning when she gets up until late at night when she is called inside by her mother, and has a very definite perception that they would help her with food and money if it was necessary.

Part of what makes the older girls feel that something is wrong or missing with the Ocean View 'community' is a sense of history and that at some point in the past, values used to be different and people used to help, even if they had nothing. This idealised past causes them to judge the present circumstances harshly.

Nicola: If you struggling you can't still help other people to get through life.

Charney: No, but that's being selfish.

Ronaldo: Because even if it's your last I think you should give it, because you will get double back.

Patrick: Mm-hmm

Charney: Ja, because that is what my mother does in the house with us, if someone comes knocking on the door for a piece of bread or something, then even if it's the last, she will give. And I argue with her sometimes and say there's nothing, and she says it's better to give in order to receive.

Researcher: So are you guys saying that that kind of thing is not happening enough in Ocean View?

Veronique: Ja.

(grade 11 'community' focus group)

People can also be suspicious of each other's motives, which can discourage one from helping out. Veronique used to baby-sit for her neighbour's grandchild when the child was first born and neither of her parents was around to look after her. Since she was reprimanded by the child's father, who said he did not want her touching his child, she no longer helps out in this way, only spending 10 minutes with her here and there.

## **Gossip and rumours**

Gossip, rumours and false accusations can have far-reaching effects on young people's lives. Girls' recounting of their experiences with this suggests that people in Ocean View often deal with interpersonal problems by talking to others rather than dealing with the person concerned directly. This can lead to false rumours being spread around the community, as misunderstandings cannot be defended or explained. Nicola and her mother were living with a woman from their church who became unhappy with the living arrangements. Instead of speaking directly to Nicola's mother she told other women from their church that Nicola and her mother thought they were too good for her place, and spread other false rumours. She then denied that anything was wrong, but weeks later sent them a cellular phone text message asking them to move out by the end of the week. As a result, Nicola lost her place to live and her church, as they felt that people saw and thought of them in a different light, making them uncomfortable in that space. Nicola and her mother had initially moved into this place because her grandmother had been gossiping about them.

"Nicola said there are lots of things going on in her family, lots of secrets. She said her granny causes problems for them - she gossips about Nicola and her mom, saying that Nicola is rude and that her mom breaks up marriages. After she said this, they moved from her grandmother's to stay with the woman from the Church." (journal notes).

All refer to girls having physical fights in and outside of school and say that this is usually because of boyfriends or because one has been gossiping about the other.

The fear of being gossiped about can even prevent people from asking for help.

“And then at the end of the day, why, I wouldn’t want to ask my neighbour if at the end of the day she, she or he’s going to talk about it. And I think that’s why sometimes people don’t want other people’s help because they say, ‘no, just now they talk about it’ or whatever” (Nicola, ‘community’ focus group).

“It’s not so much that people don’t want them to know their business, they’re just scared that it might leak out” (Charney, ‘community’ focus group).

One of the main reasons that girls and boys of all ages are reticent about using facilities like the clinic and the Open Door is because people may spread stories about you. The children felt that it was both those that work at these places and community members who are using the facilities or who see you go in, who could start rumours. A school social worker felt that the main problem comes from community members speculating as to why a child is using the service rather than from service providers breaking confidences.

## Being judged

Related to the tendency to gossip is the tendency to speculate and jump to conclusions about people’s behaviour and/or character. In trying to make sense of social problems facing the younger generation, young people feel that adults often jump to conclusions about them. Coupled with the tendency to gossip this can very easily lead to false information being spread around which can impact negatively on young people’s public images.

Mandy: No, if you lose weight, they say you have AIDS [laughs].

Ronaldo: My mother always tells my grandmother, and I used to be a chubby guy, and I’m growing and I’m tall and I’m thin, and my mommy asks me ‘*Ronaldo, wat goed doen jy? Lyk my jy druk tik.*’ *En ek sê ‘ja, lyk ek so maar, ek doen tik*’ [‘Ronaldo, what stuff are you doing? Looks to me like you are smoking tik’, and I say ‘Yes, I look so thin, I’m doing tik’] I don’t like my mom accuse me of stuff, because then I’m really going to do it. I don’t like it, then I’ll show her I’m really going to do it.

Veronique: *Is ja* [It is, yes].

Nicola: Then you'll be like my cousins as well. They always try and prove their parents they were right about them, ja.

Ronaldo: No, I really don't like that.

Mandy: And if you get fat, you're pregnant. ('Community' focus group discussion)

Girls both buy into and resist these identities imposed on them by adult's perceptions of what Ocean View's young people are like. Wanting to do right by your parents and to have a good reputation is part of the motivation which helps young people resist peer pressures, taking this away therefore affects their will-power to resist. The anger that it generates makes the young people want to teach their parents a lesson by becoming the 'problems' that their parents fear they are. In this way young people may resist these 'deviant identities' by buying into them. Other ways of resisting may also come at a price. For example, Nicola does not hang out in the streets at night for fear of people thinking that she is a prostitute. This comes on the back of reports that Ocean View girls are selling their bodies in order to buy 'tik'.

It is often the hypocrisy of adult judgements (saying that their children would not do things when they do, or being reprimanded for behaviour that the person themselves is guilty of) that most infuriates young people and alienates them from adult norms and rules. The following discussion between the grade 11 girls and a male classmate, Ronaldo, highlights this:

Ronaldo: Ok, if I'm doing something wrong, I'll admit I did it wrong, but don't accuse me and don't blame me and don't tell me to do stuff and I know you doing the same thing.

Charney: You know what bugs me the most, hey, if people see you doing something wrong but they don't see their children doing something wrong... ('Community' focus group discussion)

Girls especially feel that they are judged around issues of sex and sexuality. Although she claims that she just ignores what people say, Samantha wrote in her diary of kissing her boyfriend in public and people making comments. In an interview she said they would make comments about the girl in situations like this, saying things like "my kids would never do that", and "look at that *Jessie* [slut], see how she goes on and people think she is so innocent". Charney related a story of being told by an old lady to "pull her skirt down" when she wore a mini-skirt to church. She speculated that this woman enforces these gendered norms even though "she probably used to wear even shorter skirts". Charney

said if you wear short skirts or revealing clothing people will say that you are a 'slut' or 'easy'.

These gender based norms are not restricted to those living in Ocean View or to the adult population. In her diary Mandy writes of her experience of people in Masiphumelele talking about her because her boyfriend cheated on her:

“I felt like such a bitch to give him and he left and I felt hurt like I did not mean nothing. That’s the way people are talking, I walk down the street people start to gossip about our relationship that he uses me and left me for a ‘model c’ girl. How do you think that makes me feel? All I do is not go anywhere, I sit at home because I am scared of what people are saying about me” (Mandy, diary entry).

The judging and gossiping compounds the hurt she feels and impacts on her feeling comfortable in the public spaces of her neighbourhood. It sends the message that the girl is somehow not good enough or that she did something wrong to deserve this. In a group discussion with boys and girls from Ocean View, Masiphumelele and Fish Hoek it became clear that similar gendered norms exist across the areas. All of them thought it was very common for boys to go out with more than one girl at a time and that generally this was seen as fine and even desirable. Guys with multiple girlfriends would be considered 'real men' by their male friends, and although some girls would steer clear of these guys others would think they were 'cool' and want to go out with them. Thus treating girls badly is reinforced as a status symbol for guys, yet girls doing the same thing would for the most part be considered 'hoes' [whores] by both male and female peers.

Young people are not just victims of being judged however. One of Mina and Samantha's common pastimes, is to sit around with friends and 'make jokes' about other people. This causes both inclusion and exclusion as it creates an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. It cements the group and therefore increases feelings of inclusion for those participating in the group, but simultaneously excludes those being gossiped about or teased. Charney's confidence and outspoken opinions are frequently misjudged as her being 'stuck up' or full of herself. As a result she is often ostracised by her peers. She described the dynamics at her youth club as "apartheid" and "undercurrents", which she experiences through both what they say and the way they physically distance themselves from her.

## **Lack of respect**

The girls spoke about a general lack of respect between adults and children in Ocean View.

“Children in Ocean View is very *onbeskof* [rude], they don’t say ‘auntie’ and ‘uncle’ and they just shout ‘*d’jy*’ [‘you!’] (Samantha, individual interview).

They see this as being connected to feeling judged and labelled, to adults setting a bad example and to the fact that young people’s input is not often valued. This results in a cycle of children not being respected and therefore not being respectful.

“And even if you [are] 18 [years old] people still treat you like a child and that’s not fair on you as a person, I mean you’ve come a long way, and so people don’t give you, don’t recognise you as a young adult, sometimes people don’t recognise you and they think ‘Ag you younger than me why should I listen to you’, and sometimes you might even be right... sometimes when you are, when you excel in something, sometimes the older people don’t recognise it and say ‘Ag you young, what have you got to offer or what do you know’” (Nicola, ‘community’ focus group).

### **Pulling each other down: a community of ‘vision killers’**

Charney, the only girl in the sample doing very well at school, (she gets Bs and Cs and some As), is supported and encouraged in this at home, but at school she is often victimised by her peers, who spread false rumours about her having love affairs with people and blame her if teachers find out about others’ bad behaviour. During observation in the classrooms I noticed how learners cheered for a boy who had uncharacteristically got one answer right on a math test but had no show of support for a girl who got an A+. Some of the girls connect this to feelings of jealousy and competition.

“Charmaine, she’s also from Ocean View and people, cause she was one day on e-tv, you know the specials that they had, and somebody actually said that ‘*ja, nou that’s she’s op die TV, nou dink sy, sy’s all that*’ [‘yes, now that she’s on TV, now she thinks she’s all that’], and that’s not fair because if you have the guts to go somewhere in life then other people always want to put you down” (Nicola, ‘community’ focus group).

Nicola sees Ocean View as full of “vision killers”, who may be jealous of your dreams and so put you down. This perception is fuelled by experiences within her extended family. She tells of how her grandmother puts her cousin down saying things like ‘you are just like them’ and calling him a ‘moffie’; comments

he has internalised, as now when she asks him what he wants to be when he is older, he says ‘a moffie’.

Friends putting you down is another problem. While friends who support and encourage can be a major boost to self esteem and help young people go after their goals, many friends undermine this confidence and ambition. Friends are often quick to point out one’s mistakes and often put one down in order to “be on top”, saying that they are better at things than you, such as school work or getting boyfriends. Often instead of encouraging you, friends will tell you that “you are not going to make it”. In the diary exercise Samantha wrote that she had a good day because her friends did not make her feel bad by saying she is not going to achieve her dreams. The fact that she noticed this as special, implies that it happens often. Given the amount of time she spends with friends (all day at school, and most of the afternoon and evening) this could potentially have a big impact on her self-esteem and ambition.

Girls do try and avoid these negative inputs. For example, Nicola has decided not to share her dreams with others so they cannot be put down and decided to end a friendship with a girl who she felt was judging her because Nicola wants to make money in her career whereas this girl wants to help people. Charney tries to have as little as possible to do with the other youth leaders who judge her.

The bounded sense of community with its close-knit networks and social ties exacerbates the gossiping and judgemental behaviour experienced by the young people in Ocean View, but simultaneously increases the resources on which they can draw when they need help. The socio-economic environment together with the geographic isolation of the area decreases the opportunities available for young people. This is the broader context of the jealousy and “pulling down” of those that do achieve.

## **United and divided: the influence of history, class, colour and language on everyday life and identity**

Without a doubt, living in racially segregated areas still has an effect on where Ocean View’s young people feel comfortable in post-Apartheid South Africa. This is heightened by the isolation of Ocean View from other residential areas. Having access to spaces of other race groups is only possible through attending school or joining sports clubs and youth clubs in other areas. This seems to only happen in one direction: young people from the predominantly black African space of Masiphumelele go to Ocean View and predominantly white areas such as Fish Hoek, and young people from Ocean View also go to these ‘white’

spaces. Doing this requires money for transport and more expensive school<sup>18</sup> and club fees, and is therefore not an option for most children. Mandy is at school in Ocean View because her father has made education a priority and actively saves money for his children's education. Veronique stopped attending school in Fish Hoek<sup>19</sup> when her mother got divorced and could not afford the expensive fees. From her time at school in Fish Hoek, Veronique has a very close friend who lives in Capri, a predominantly white area in the Fish Hoek valley. Having a good friend who lives outside of your Apartheid defined residential area gives one access to 'other' racial and cultural spaces, helping to make these spaces less 'other'. Veronique is thus included in 'white' South Africa and culture in a way that many of her Ocean View peers are not. Veronique explained a coloured friend's discomfort at a party they attended with Veronique's white friends from Fish Hoek, by reference to the fact that this friend had never been to a party with just white people before and that her white friends behave differently to her coloured friends. It is almost as if the rules for what is 'cool' are different. She says her white friends act more childlike, making stupid jokes and laughing at silly things, something which would attract criticism from her coloured friends who always have "a lot to say" and often act older than what they are, being critical of what you say or do not say. The black African girls from Masiphumelele have experienced racism and discomfort attending school in Ocean View. Mandy tells a story of a coloured boy getting into a fight with a black boy and then threatening to kill everyone in the school who was black, and Angelique says that some of the coloured children at her school "don't like you so much, and say things to other children about you".

Colour still matters in Ocean View, but it is not a simple matter of being 'white', 'coloured' or 'black'. Amongst 'coloured' children in Ocean View 'whiteness' and 'darkness' operate divisively. This can be because of the literal lightness or darkness of one's complexion or through symbols and behaviour. For example, Charney and Veronique singled out a girl they do not like because she 'tries to be white'. They think this because she wears skirts over trousers, a style of dressing they see as being particularly associated with white people. This rejection of the symbolic crossing of racial borders implies that these girls retain an attachment to some form of 'coloured identity'. Some of the girls understand discrimination they have experienced as being related to the lightness or darkness of their skin. On her grandmother's birthday, Charney was given R400 less than some cousins and attributed it to her "not being dark enough". Veronique feels that children in the lower part of her neighbourhood do not like her because "I am white and they are not", referring to the fact that she has a

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<sup>18</sup> School fees in Fish Hoek are R7000 per year as opposed to R350 in Ocean View and R140 in Masiphumelele.

<sup>19</sup> Veronique was at school in Sun Valley and Fish Hoek from grade 1 to the end of grade 9.

particularly light complexion. And Nicola says that her father used to favour her younger sister because she was fair and Nicola was not.

Experience of divisions within Ocean View also occur around class. While official descriptions of Ocean View paint the picture of a homogenous area, children's discussions of their maps revealed that they experience class difference. There are perceived differences between those living in the council blocks of flats and those living in houses. Those living in the flats call children living in houses '*sturvies*', and feel that these children think they are better than them because they have "*kwaai* [cool] clothes" and other material things. Children in houses are often derogatory about children from the flats because they think they are rude. Different types of houses, and different residential areas within Ocean View are indicators of poverty or wealth. One way of contesting this label is for people to buy nice televisions, DVD-players, brand clothing for their children and the latest cellular phone models. The girls in the primary school art-based research group identified this as a problem within Ocean View that can cause children to go without their basic needs being met. Veronique also criticised people for wanting to have more than they can afford. The pressure to obtain these symbols and markers of wealth is felt strongly by the girls, and is seen to have very real consequences. In the drama workshop, grade 8 girls acted out a scene where a girl was dumped by her boyfriend because she went to shop at Pep Stores instead of Edgars<sup>20</sup>. Nicola spoke of not wanting to attend a youth club in Ocean View because churches are very fashion conscious, which leads to competition over what people are wearing. A school social worker tells of children being sent home in Levis, Nike trainers and Adiddas tracksuit-tops because they do not have school uniforms, which parents then claim they cannot afford. Class differences also affect girls' opportunities for socialising. The Long Beach Mall in Sun Valley is a favourite place for socialising, but requires getting a taxi there. Tellingly, out of six girls, only Veronique went to the mall during the week that they kept diaries, and she went from her friend's house in Capri where she was staying, and they were taken and fetched by this friend's father, who also paid for Veronique to see a movie. These are resources not available to most Ocean View children. Because travelling and participating in fun activities costs money, many children frequently find themselves limited to the inadequate leisure facilities within Ocean View.

Language is also a symbolic marker of space. Historical divisions between English and Afrikaans speakers in Ocean View placed English speakers above Afrikaans speakers in the Apartheid hierarchy, and afforded them certain

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<sup>20</sup> Pep Stores slogan is 'low prices for everyone' and it is one of the cheapest places to buy clothes. Edgars is a department store which stocks brand-name clothing and is significantly more expensive than Pep.

privileges such as being allowed to board the school buses first. Today there is ongoing rivalry, especially between the girls of the English and Afrikaans classes, something Nicola's mother, who was at school in Ocean View, says was happening 25 years ago. The Afrikaans pupils feel the English students think they are better than them, but English students feel that the Afrikaans students do not like them because they are English first language speakers. Language divisions occur not only within Ocean View but also between Ocean View and outside spaces. Most of the children speak a mixture of English and Afrikaans, using slang words often particular to the 'coloured' population of the Western Cape. Some feel that this excludes them from 'white areas' where people speak English or what they call "proper Afrikaans", as not understanding each other creates a barrier. Veronique thought this was also part of the reason for her friend feeling out of place at the Fish Hoek party, as the white children were all English speakers and her friend is a first language Afrikaans speaker who struggles with English. Young people also spoke of feeling uncomfortable on some public transport because they do not understand Xhosa and worry that people are talking about them.

Race, class, language, and colour all cause division within Ocean View and between Ocean View and outside spaces, pointing to the need to find ways of bridging these gaps. Much of the division is exacerbated by Ocean View's isolation, which not only keeps it separate from other local areas but encourages an inward-looking attitude, which heightens internal conflicts. Some of these divisions around language and colour seem to be hang-overs from the Apartheid past, but have also taken on new meanings in which 'blackness' and 'whiteness' can be both an advantage and disadvantage. The open economy and media of democratic South Africa places internal and external class differences firmly within a consumer culture and young people struggle with the pressures and identities attached to owning certain things. Having the right clothes is simultaneously a way of resisting and adding to the burden of being working class and poor. In the context of poverty this can have very real consequences for children whose families cannot afford these things. Having these brand clothes is a way of feeling included with both local and global peers, but can lead to exclusion from school because of financial constraints; not having them can mean exclusion from local peer groups.

## **Conclusion**

This analysis has highlighted ways in which aspects of the physical and social environments interconnect to enhance or inhibit positive experiences of everyday life for children and young people. Factors impacting directly on these experiences are embedded in and mediated by other factors in their

environments. For example, children highlight the importance of spending time with friends and of having places that facilitate this. Historic and current socio-economic status in Ocean View means that there is inadequate service provision with regards to leisure facilities, and social problems such as drug and alcohol abuse (connected to current and historic poverty) and the accompanying violence also often make what is available inaccessible. This serves to exclude young people from active participation in community life and many of the girls mostly stay at home. Girls are especially affected by the lack of adequate service provision around recreation in Ocean View, as gender dynamics and a lack of consultation with children means that soccer is the main sport on the agenda, and girls who want the same sporting opportunities as boys, often have to travel outside of Ocean View to find teams and clubs. Ocean View's location and the costs involved often exclude girls from these options. Lack of recreational facilities and activities leads to widespread feelings of boredom and frustration among the young people, who have a clear sense that it is not like this for young people living in other places, such as Fish Hoek. As has been found elsewhere around the world (see Bartlett, 1999: 71), the tendency to vandalise and use drugs and alcohol spoken of by the girls can at least in part be attributed to boredom and lack of opportunities for the young people in Ocean View. In this way negative physical and social features of the environment reinforce each other, creating a self-perpetuating cycle, which sustains levels of anti-social behaviours in the area. In this context however, and despite the difficulties in finding good spaces to spend time with friends, young people do show remarkable resourcefulness and creativity in carving out spaces for positive social interaction with peers and adults when and where they can.

Young people's perceptions of their neighbourhood environment have implications for their sense of identity and well-being. These perceptions are impacted on by the prevailing physical and social conditions, as well as by others' perceptions of Ocean View. The lack and inadequacy of public facilities (especially around recreation) in Ocean View; the state of the physical built environment, with its dilapidated buildings, litter, graffiti, dirt and vandalism; levels of violence and danger; and the perceived lack of solidarity amongst people all make forming a positive view of their community difficult for the girls in the sample, and girls spoke of feeling 'bad', 'sad' and 'embarrassed' about living in Ocean View. On the other hand, the nice aspects of their physical environment, such as the mountains and other natural scenery, or having the place where one lives newly painted, as well as the sense that people around them will help and look out for them, are all a source of pride and positive feelings and identity. The focus on the negative aspects of life in Ocean View both in local media and by the residents as well as the tendency of adults to assume that all Ocean View's children are engaged in undesirable behaviours impacts on children's levels of self-efficacy and leaves them feeling that things

are unlikely to change and that there is no point in trying to do better or change things. These feelings are reinforced by prevailing age hierarchies which tell children that they are unable to contribute anything of value, something mirrored by the lack of structures for young people's participation in community decision-making. Morrow suggests that a lack of self-efficacy and participation in one's community or neighbourhood is likely to have detrimental effects on one's sense of community identity and well-being (Morrow, 2001a: 47). Girls who are able to focus on the positive in Ocean View, do seem to do better in terms of commitment and determination when it comes to school work, staying away from drugs and alcohol and achieving goals. This is enabled by having people who support and encourage you in what you do.

At a neighbourhood level, historical factors (such as quality of institutions and facilities, the geographical design and location of Ocean View as peripheral and cut off from other residential and economic areas), interact with current economic factors (such as poverty, unemployment) resulting in an experience of community that is bound to the physical and social space within Ocean View. Thus children's everyday experiences are bound by race and class. Through its networks, the close-knit community has some positive effects for children, but it also exacerbates negative social dynamics and behaviours which have direct affects for children through, for example, high levels of drug and alcohol use and the accompanying violence as well as having to deal with challenges to one's self-esteem that come about through gossiping and being put down by others. The limited opportunities available to children in the area and social isolation affects what children believe is possible and therefore their motivation and the investments they make for their futures. Having positive images of 'community', networks that link children beyond the confines of Ocean View, structures which facilitate children's participation in community decision-making thus valuing their opinions and building self-efficacy, as well spaces that facilitate the forging of friendships with peers and with adults as these are the resources that children draw on to help negotiate obstacles in their everyday lives, would all support children in their present and future lives.

The importance of spaces, such as schools, youth and sports clubs, where children can make friends across class and colour boundaries must be emphasised. It is clearly not enough that these spaces have been legally de-racialised, because the legacy of Apartheid's racist economic policies means that class continues to fall along racial lines in the South Peninsula. These spaces need to be made accessible for children and young people regardless of class, and policies need to be put in place which facilitate and encourage two-way movement between the bounded communities in the area. Powerful actors, such as the state and media have a role and responsibility to challenge negative stereotypes that keep neighbourhoods segregated and feed into the negative

community identity that sustains cycles of anti-social behaviour and poor self-efficacy amongst many of the young people. As some of the girls in this study have shown, it is possible to hold onto a positive sense of community despite acknowledging social problems, and, a positive collective identity is a potential resource for dealing with these problems.

The specific way in which Ocean View's history, location and physical and social conditions influence each other and children and young people's experience of 'community', suggests that dealing with the problems children experience in area will require quite specific and holistic interventions that deal with all aspects of the area's physical and social isolation and build on children's creative use of networks and resources. Theories, such as social disorganisation theory, based in quantitative studies from the United States, cannot explain what is happening in specific communities and neighbourhoods in South Africa. In the former case, high residential mobility is associated with delinquent behaviour because of its negative impact on social cohesion and therefore the monitoring of child behaviour. The story of Ocean View shows the complex way in which these factors are related to outcomes such as delinquency. Given the historic and current social and economic configurations of the area, Ocean View has very low residential mobility. In the context of geographic isolation and poverty this restricts opportunities and leads to boredom and a sense of deprivation which fuels anti-social behaviours amongst young people. At the same time however, low residential mobility provides the interpersonal networks that young people draw on to negotiate the obstacles they encounter in everyday life.

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