Fragmenting the family? The complexity of household migration strategies in post-apartheid South Africa.

Draft paper for the UNU-WIDER & ARUA Development Conference on Migration and Mobility

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September 2017

Abstract

The disruption of family life is one of the important legacies of South Africa's colonial and apartheid history. Families were undermined by deliberate strategies implemented through the pass laws, forced removals, urban housing policy and the creation of the homelands. Despite the removal of legal restrictions on permanent urban settlement and family co-residence for Africans, patterns of internal and oscillating labour migration have endured, dual or stretched households continue to link urban and rural nodes, children have remained less urbanised than adults and many grow up without co-resident parents.

Although children are clearly affected by adult labour migration they have tended to be ignored in the migration discourse. A focus on children provides an unusual lens for considering migration dynamics and can help to advance an understanding of the complexities of household arrangements and migration processes for families. Using nationally representative panel data, the paper investigates some of the trends in parental co-residence arrangements and migration patterns when viewed from the perspective of children. It then draws on a detailed case study to reflect on the contributions of quantitative and qualitative data sources for enhancing our understanding of the migration strategies undertaken by families.

1. Introduction

The disruption of family life is one of the important legacies of South Africa's colonial and apartheid history. The migrant labour system meant that it was mainly men who worked in urban areas or on the mines, while the rural homelands became places for "surplus" people whose labour contributions were not needed (Platzky and Walker 1985). Children formed a substantial part of that surplus population, along with women and the elderly.

Despite the removal of legal impediments to permanent urban settlement and family co-residence for Africans, patterns of internal and oscillating labour migration have endured, dual or stretched households continue to link urban and rural nodes and children have remained less urbanised than adults. Along with neighbouring countries that historically provided migrant labour, South Africa has uniquely high rates of parental absence from children's lives (Hall and Posel 2012; Martin 2016; Posel and Devey 2006).

Importantly for children, labour migration rates increased in the first decade after apartheid and the increase was driven mainly by a rise in migration rates among prime-age women (Posel and Casale 2003; Collinson et al. 2007; Posel 2010). It is only since the lifting of apartheid laws that women have migrated in substantial numbers (Williams et al. 2011). At the same time rates of marriage and union formation, already low, continued to fall, remittances declined and unemployment rates remained persistently high. Households, and women especially, may have to make difficult choices about how to manage the competing demands of child care and income generation.

Internationally, and despite efforts to improve data on migration, quantitative surveys have tended to "pay minimal attention to children" (Castaldo et al. 2009:5), and this is true in South Africa too. Commentators have pointed out that children often migrate "as a consequence of many of the same processes that stimulate adult migration, and in response to living arrangements that emerge due to adult migration" (Hosegood and Ford 2003:1). But children do not necessarily migrate together with adults, and it cannot be assumed that their migration patterns follow the timing or directions of parents. Rather, children "participate in migration, both independently, as well as with their parents and caregivers as households relocate" (Richter et al. 2006:197) and children are also left behind when parents migrate. Within South Africa, there has been some analysis of children's household arrangements, mobility and migration patterns from the demographic

The paper addresses two main questions, one substantive and one methodological:

- What are the dynamics of children's mobility within South Africa and how do these interact with patterns of maternal migration?

- What insights into migration dynamics and associated household arrangements are gained through qualitative research?

Migration is fascinating from a disciplinary perspective as it lends itself to study by geographers, demographers, economists, sociologists, psychologists, political scientists and anthropologists. Yet, far from being an interdisciplinary melting pot, empirical research on migration has taken divergent methodological directions, with what has been described as a widening gap between quantitative

(mainly positivist) and qualitative (interpretive) approaches. Both have been critiqued for failing to connect adequately with theoretical frameworks and both have been accused of patently failing to explain real-world patterns of migration (De Haas 2014; Potts 2011). Taking into account the limitations and critiques of migration research, the paper draws on a mixed methods study designed to allow for breadth and depth, for a reflection on method and for some integration of analytical perspective. Quantitative analyses paint a national picture of children's household form and mobility patterns. A single case study, spanning three generations of mothers, deepens and augments the picture through the micro world of a family, providing the nuance, complexity and texture that survey data cannot.

2. Context and concepts: Migration, family fragmentation and the fluidity of households

Family fragmentation (and concern about it) is not new. Historical studies of kinship have documented the extended and complex structure of families in southern Africa where family members were not always present and children did not always live with their biological parents (Murray 1981). Labour migration to (and within) South Africa predates apartheid; the extended separation of migrants from their home environments was common in the region as far back as the late nineteenth century (Murray 1981; Russell 2003a; Walker 1990).

The practice of distributing (and moving) children across households is well documented, and "almost certainly predate[s] the economic and political upheavals of colonialism and industrialism. African children are expected to circulate between kin, as needed, for errands and companionship and according to capacity to support them. In southern Africa, children are expected especially to spend time in the household of their grandparents" (Russell 2003b:25). While the terms "fragmentation" or "dissolution" are commonly used to describe household dispersion as a negative consequence of migration patterns, or even abandonment, the practice of leaving children with family members in households of origin could also be regarded as the opposite – a strategy to retain an un-fragmented (albeit spatially dispersed) household.

Although it has been argued that household fluidity cannot be assumed to have originated with migrant labour (Ngwane 2003), the deliberate disruption of households and families by the apartheid regime, or what Budlender and Lund refer to as the "state-orchestrated destruction of family life" (2011:926), is widely acknowledged to have had a massive and lasting effect on African household structure (see for example Amoateng and Heaton 2007; Bray and Brandt 2007; Bray et al. 2010; Budlender and Lund 2011; Lee 2009; Madhavan and Schatz 2007; Reynolds and Burman 1986). In effect, the system "trapped the majority of South Africa's population in remote pockets of the country while instituting dependence on urban economic centres" (Schiel and Leibbrandt 2015: no page numbers provided). The effects on household form would certainly have influenced living arrangements for children, and it was observed that the impact on African household structure "will probably be slow to work itself out… the effects of decades of this system could therefore be expected to survive… the demise of the system itself" (Simkins 1986:18).

South Africa and its neighbouring countries remain unique in the extent of parental absence from children's lives. A recent international study of child care and co-residence arrangements found that, of the 77 countries studied, the three with the lowest rates of parental co-residence were South Africa (where 35 per cent of children lived with neither of their biological parents), Namibia (27%) and Swaziland (23%). Lesotho and Zimbabwe also featured in the bottom ten countries (Martin 2016). What these countries have in common is that they supply labour to South Africa.

Important variations in migration patterns have emerged in the post-apartheid period (Todes et al. 2010) and these may have relevance for children's living arrangements. First, and perhaps because the formal system of migration and labour recruitment no longer exists and mines are no longer major employers, temporary migrants are often involved in insecure and poorly paid work in the informal sector, in domestic employment or security services (Cox et al. 2004). The informal sector contributed nearly 60 per cent of the net increase in jobs between 1995 and 2003 (Casale et al. 2004) but temporary migration could be more insecure and less financially beneficial than it was under the formal migrant labour system.

Second, a rise in labour migration in South Africa between 1993 and 1999 is largely attributed to the feminisation of the labour force and increasing prevalence of migration among women (Hunter 2006; Posel 2004; Posel and Casale 2003). Overall, more women are migrating to urban centres for work or to look for work while retaining their attachment to a household of origin. In 1993, women made up 29 per cent of all temporary migrant workers from rural areas in South Africa. More recently there has been a narrowing of the (adult) gender differential in migration patterns (Casale and Posel 2006). By 2000, women made up 34 per cent of the urban migrant population (Posel and Casale 2003:5), and in 2008 women comprised 37 per cent of African labour migrants (Posel 2009). These migrants were identified from their households of origin, so the count would exclude those who were no longer seen as nonresident household members. This national trend of women's migration rates increasing is echoed in analyses from the rural Agincourt surveillance site (Collinson et al. 2006b). By 2012 the rates of male and female migration (defined as any move across a municipal boundary) had equalised so that the movement had become gender neutral (Schiel and Leibbrandt 2015).

At a sub-provincial level, women aged 15–25 years appear to be the most mobile group of all. The main categories of migrants (irrespective of temporary or permanent migrant status) are: young women moving alone (whether or not they are mothers); women moving with children; and women with men and children (Collinson et al. 2006a). Since children are potentially involved in all three, we can assume that children are affected by migrant labour – whether they move or are left behind.

An analysis of the effect of motherhood on labour participation among women in South Africa found that labour migration was a key reason for maternal absence: women with children are less likely to migrate, although this restraint is moderated when there is a substitute caregiver such as an adult female relative at the home of origin (Posel and van der Stoep 2008; Van der Stoep 2008). Case studies have illustrated the marginalising effects of being "unskilled", rural and female (Budlender and Lund 2011; Du Toit and Neves 2009), and how this influences choices about where to live and how to access income. Urban destinations may offer opportunities for income generation, but can further

marginalise women and their children by removing them from established chains of care, and child care can be unaffordable in the absence of kinship networks (Bray 2008).

A lack of child care options can in turn limit the caregiver's freedom to seek work and earn income. The literature suggests that women, who often bear both economic and household responsibilities, share these responsibilities within networks that span generations and geographic space and that children often remain at the rural home of origin when parents migrate from rural areas, an arrangement that is made possible by the availability of substitute caregivers – particularly grandparents (Ardington, Case and Hosegood 2009; Casale and Posel 2006; Madhavan et al. 2012).

Much of the South African discourse on migration stems from international models: the determinants of voluntary migration are seen as being primarily about labour and income. But this is based on an individual theory of rational choice and is clearly not the case for children as the labour market is not a pull factor for children. The broadening of migration theory to include social networks is linked to the new economics of labour approach described by Stark and Levhari (1982), which has parallels in anthropology's "household strategies" approach. An example of the latter is found in Trager's (1991) rich study of migration and family dependence in the Philippines. The theoretical introduction to her work identifies two dominant perspectives that articulate broadly with rational choice and dependency theory but can also be defined by their level of focus: the micro level (which focuses on individual decision making) in terms of rational choice, and the macro level (focusing on the structural-historical determinants of migration) using dependency theory. To these she adds an intermediate level: the household and social networks. These in turn enable different levels of focus in that social networks "provide a broader category of relationships than does analysis of household alone" but they are similar in "providing access to a middle level of social organisation" (Trager 1991:8). A child-centred lens on migration can help to craft a perspective that encompasses the social systems within and beyond the household, precisely because children are highly mobile, their care arrangements fluid, and in the case of young children at least, their needs uniquely different from those of adults.

The processes and mechanisms of migration may have particular implications for children. Temporary migration is enabled by the continued presence of family members in the sending area. Many of these left-behind members are children whose presence at a home of origin may serve to sustain the ties between urban and rural nodes. Some have argued that "gravitational flows" are starting to replace temporary or circular migration (Bekker 2001; Schiel and Leibbrandt 2015). This refers to processes where additional family members gravitate towards places where migrants live, thus over time eroding the pull of the home of origin and resulting in permanent migration. The literature, however, appears to be mixed on whether this is happening at any scale, and whether, if it did start, it would increase and eventually overtake temporary migration as the main migration trend. Potts (2011) argues that, in Southern Africa at any rate, circular migration is here to stay.

Circular migration commonly occurs in places where labour market conditions are insecure, and where there is a rural base (Todes et al. 2010; Potts 2011). In South Africa, a home of origin on rural land represents a "sense of security, identity and history … and a preferred place for retirement" (Posel 2004:286). Williams et al. argue that labour migrants need circular migration and dual housing arrangements as a matter of security: "The uncertainty of entry into the formal urban labor market

and the ever growing competition within the informal sector (as South African cities become nodes of internal and international migration), creates an imperative for migrants to maintain significant linkages to rural homes. These act as buffers or safety nets in times of economic or health related crises" (Williams et al. 2011: no page numbers provided).

Migration is now widely viewed as a cumulative and self-perpetuating process, facilitated over time by a network of kin, extended kin, and social networks. Migration gains momentum through a process of "cumulative causation" (Collinson et al. 2006a; Kok et al. 2003; Massey 1990; Stark and Levhari 1982). Thus "the propensity to migrate grows over time through expansion and intensification of the migrant network" (Zelinski 1971, cited in Collinson et al. 2006a). Migrant networks are described as a key mechanism for securing accommodation and accessing land and even job opportunities. But this very mechanism – the dependence on social networks for temporary lodging – may prohibit the simultaneous migration of children.

Not only are the processes of migration often unstable, the transitory places of residence may be unsafe or unfit for children. Informal settlements are important transitional spaces for urban migration, since informal housing can be used as an initial point of access to the city for people who cannot obtain their own property through formal processes (Gilbert and Crankshaw 1999; Lemanski 2009; Marx 2007). The main kinds of informality in urban areas are settlements on demarcated or invaded land, and backyard shacks on existing properties. There are known risks associated with informality – particularly for young children, who are vulnerable to a range of threats associated with crowded conditions, poor or absent water, sanitation and refuse removal services, the use of paraffin stoves and associated risk of fire or poisoning, perpetual problems with drainage and flooding, and long distances to reach health facilities and schools.

As with cumulative causation, chain migration is "the simultaneous or successive migration of individuals or groups from the same origin to the same destination" (Adepoju 2006:29). Adepoju argues that this process "has characterised African migration since pre-colonial times … [although] colonial regimes altered the form and nature, and hence the intensity and motivations for such migrations" (Ibid). A comparatively established literature on international migration has paid attention to children in trans-border family migration (see, for example, Escobal and Flores 2009; Evans 2007; Jeffrey 2010; Orellana et al. 2001; Trager 1991). Categories or ordering of children's migration in relation to their families include simultaneous migration (where children move together with the adult migrant/s), chain or staged migration (where children are initially left behind, with the expectation that they will later join the migrant destination household), circular or reverse migration (where children are sent away from the migrant home, or sent back to the place of origin), and autonomous or child-led migration (where the child moves independently, or in advance of other household members) (Massey et al. 1993; Orellana et al. 2001).

The migration literature points to migration as a livelihood strategy, but one available only to those who can afford it. The flipside of migration is non-migration or immobility. Given the tendency of humans to move about, it is remarkable that much contemporary migration theory and research appears more interested in mobility than immobility. It is only from the twentieth century that governments have formalised and enforced systems to control and manage international population

flows across countries (Massey 2015). De Haas (2014) outlines a proposed aspirations-capabilities migration framework which is not just about push-pull factors that drive migration but about the capability to be able to respond to those forces and realise aspirations. In these terms, migration is seen as "a function of aspirations and capabilities to migrate within a given set of opportunity structures" and, drawing on Amartya Sen's capabilities approach, human mobility is defined as "people's capability (freedom) to choose where to live, including the option to stay" (De Haas 2014:2). De Haas distinguishes between the instrumental and intrinsic dimensions of human mobility, conceptualising moving and staying as "complementary manifestations of the same migratory agency". Where people lack the capability or agency to migrate, De Haas describes this as involuntary immobility, or displacement in place. This concept is particularly relevant to a study of child mobility in the context of adult labour migration.

3. Quantitative data sources

Given the growing interest in understanding patterns of population mobility and migration in the region, detailed studies of migration patterns are surprisingly scarce. In particular, little is known about family migration and the dynamics of child mobility and care in relation to adult migration. The scarcity of migration research is partly due to the limitations of available data (Posel and Casale 2003; Rogan et al. 2009; Todes et al. 2010), including the constraints of cross-sectional or region-specific data, with narrowly defined households and poorly defined intra-household relationships.

Most of what is known about national migration rates comes from the population censuses and cross-sectional surveys including the 1993 Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development survey (PSLSD), the October Household Surveys which ran from 1995 to 1999 and the Labour Force Surveys up to 2005. After the mid-2000s questions on labour migration were deprioritised in the official national surveys – possibly because of expectations that temporary migration would decline (Posel 2006). In recent years most publicly available national surveys, such as those conducted regularly by South Africa's official statistics agency Stats SA, do not include any migration questions at all.

More detailed quantitative studies of migration in South Africa have drawn on data from the rural demographic surveillance sites at Hlabisa (KwaZulu-Natal) and Agincourt (Mpumalanga), both of which run panel studies with large samples. A limitation of these studies is that they are restricted to the rural districts in which the surveys are conducted, and cannot follow migrants who move outside the study area. The National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS) was established as South Africa's first national panel survey and has made a substantial contribution to the national migration data.

NIDS was designed and is conducted by the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) at the University of Cape Town, with financial support from the Presidency. The first wave of NIDS in 2008 covered a nationally representative sample of nearly 7 300 households, recording information on 28 226 resident members as well as 2 915 nonresident members. Resident members of sampled households who were successfully surveyed in the first wave (including 9 605 children under 15 years) constituted the baseline panel who were then tracked and interviewed over subsequent waves every two years. Four waves of data were available for the analysis presented in

this paper: the baseline in 2008, wave 2 (2010/11), wave 3 (2012) and wave 4 (2014/15). An inter-district change in place of residence between any of the waves was counted as a migration.

The analysis presented here draws mainly on the NIDS panel data, although cross-sectional surveys (including the PSLSD, the population census and the General Household Survey (GHS)) are also used for comparative trends over the two post-apartheid decades.

4. Children's households and parental co-residence arrangements

Household surveys have to include an operational definition of the household in order to set rules about who can be included on the household roster. These rules determine the parameters for what the household can look like, after which the membership is self-reported within the prescribed parameters. In this sense the composition of a household is to a large extent determined by those who designed the survey, and the definition can vary from one survey to another.

Most of the official national surveys use a narrow *de facto* definition of the household. The annual GHS, for example, defines a household as "every person who is considered to be a member of the household … who stayed here [in this household] at least four nights on average per week for the last four weeks" (Statistics South Africa 2015b). This definition excludes nonresident household members such as temporary migrants – even if they have close kinship ties and regard the household as their main home. A broader *de jure* definition of the household, by contrast, includes individuals who are regarded as household members but who spend some or even most of their time somewhere else. The two national SALDRU surveys (the PSLSD of 1993 and the NIDS panel study) apply three criteria for defining household membership, all of which must be fulfilled:

- Household members must have lived "under this roof" or within the same compound / homestead at least 15 days in the last 12 months; AND
- When they are together they share food from a common source; AND
- They contribute to or share in a common resource pool.

The SALDRU surveys therefore include nonresident household members such as migrant workers who return home at least once a year. A subsequent question is used to determine whether household members are resident members of the household – defined as those who usually reside in the household at least four nights a week (the same definition as in the Stats SA surveys).

Using the narrow definition of the household, Table 1 shows patterns of reported parental co-residence with children under 15 years. In 1993, just over a third (34.6%) of children had two parents living at home. Co-residence rates then declined further, reaching as low as 27 per cent in 2008 (when HIV-related orphaning reached its peak) and 29 per cent in 2014.

Table 1. Parental co-residence with children, 1993–2014

Child lives with...	1993	2008	2014
… both parents	34.6 (1.06)	27.1 (1.37)	28.7 (0.62)
… mother, not father	43.4 (0.90)	44.7 (1.17)	45.3 (0.57)
… father, not mother	2.7 (0.23)	2.5 (0.31)	3.1 (0.18)
… neither parent	19.3 (0.72)	25.8 (0.99)	22.9% (0.44)

Own calculations from PSLSD 1993, NIDS 2008 and GHS 2014, based on African children under 15 years only.
Standard errors in brackets.

The table illustrates the strong role of mothers who, in all years, lived together with nearly half of children in the absence of their fathers, whereas only between two and four per cent of children lived with their fathers but not their mothers. Rural children are less likely than urban children to live with their parents, and the difference has become more pronounced over time. Rural households bear a large burden of care for the children of orphaned and absent parents.

Orphaning is not the main reason for parental absence, but it did increase as a contributing factor after 1993. Of the 2.7 million children who had neither parent living in their household in 2014, 64 per cent had both parents known to be alive and 86 per cent had at least one living parent. Table 2 shows the scale of maternal and paternal orphaning attributed to the absence of mothers and fathers.

Table 2. Contribution of orphaning to parental absence

	1993	2014
Number of children without a co-resident MOTHER	2.6m	3.2m
Mother deceased *(as a percentage of children without co-resident mother)*	8%	24%
Number of children without a co-resident FATHER	7.4m	8.5m
Father deceased *(as a percentage of children without co-resident father)*	11%	19%

Own calculations from PSLSD 1993 and GHS 2014, based on African children under 15 years only.

The fact that parental deaths only account for a small share of parental absence suggests that enduring adult labour migration patterns continue to separate parents from children. Of the 13 million African children under 15 years in 2014, 2.6 million had biological mothers who lived somewhere else.

Parental absence does not necessarily mean that parents do not see their children or support them financially. Using the broad definition of the household and questions that NIDS asks about contact and support from absent parents, it is possible to explore the difference in patterns of support between parents who are non-resident household members (who may be assumed to have a stronger

attachment to the household) and those who live elsewhere and are not defined as non-resident members. Table 3 shows that children with non-resident parents are more likely to see their parents at least sometimes, compared to those with parents who live elsewhere and are not part of the household members. Similarly, children with non-resident parents are more likely to receive financial support from their parents. This supports the idea that non-residency status (which is also taken to define labour migration, when the reason for absence is related to employment) is indicative that the migrant remember retains an attachment to the household of origin and the people in it.

Table 3. Parental contact and financial support to children

How frequently does [parent] see the child?	MOTHER		FATHER	
	Non-resident HH member	Absent – lives elsewhere	Non-resident HH member	Absent – lives elsewhere
Every day	0.4 (0.32)	4.3 (0.89)	0.0	5.4 (0.56)
Several times a week	9.9 (2.97)	13.8 (1.77)	16.5 (6.29)	13.0 (0.99)
Several times a month	55.3 (5.08)	39.4 (2.52)	49.5 (5.88)	24.8 (1.07)
Several times a year	32.1 (2.73)	34.6 (2.56)	32.7 (5.67)	26.2 (1.26)
Never	2.4 (1.06)	8.0 (1.05)	1.2 (0.71)	30.6 (1.05)
[Parent] supports the child financially	70.3 (5.03)	50.4 (2.33)	82.5 (3.99)	38.3 (1.44)

Own calculations from NIDS 2008, based on African children under 15 years only. Standard errors in brackets.

From a children's perspective, however, it is clear that many absent parents remain in contact even if they are not part of the household. Only eight percent of children whose mothers are not household members "never" see their mother and well over half see their mothers at least once a month. A similar pattern is observed in respect of fathers: those who live elsewhere are less likely than non-resident members to be in contact with their children and less likely to support them financially. Over 30 percent of children whose fathers live elsewhere never see their fathers. Given the high rates of paternal absence in the first place, this suggests that substantial numbers of children have fathers who are absent not only from their households but from their lives. Given the low rate of co-residence between children and fathers, which also makes it difficult to link children to their fathers in the data, the remainder of this analysis focuses on the residential and mobility arrangements between children and their mothers.

In the absence of parents the burden of child care generally falls on the extended family, and complex or extended households have remained the norm for most children (Hall and Budlender 2013; Hill et al. 2008; Richter and Desmond 2008.

The next section draws on national longitudinal data from 2008 to 2014 to describe the extent of child and maternal migration and to explore the relationship between these migration events

5. Child and maternal migration

5.1 Constructing a balanced panel of children from the National Income Dynamics Study

The child panel analysed in this paper consists only of those who were defined as children throughout the four waves of NIDS (i.e. those who were still under 15 years in wave 4), spanning the years 2008 to 2014. In order to construct a balanced panel of children who were interviewed in wave one and successfully re-interviewed in wave 4, we limited the age group at wave 1 to children under eight years. Despite the low attrition rate for children (of less than 10 per cent over four waves of the panel) there is still a possibility of non-random attrition from the sample, which could bias the results. Logit regressions were used to estimate the likelihood of children attritting between waves 1 and 4, with a particular focus on the residential and vital status of mothers, as this is directly relevant to child mobility and care in relation to maternal migration. The likelihood of child attrition after wave 1 decreased with increasing age of the child (significant at the 99 per cent level), suggesting that, if attrition were related to movement of the child, then this was more likely to take place in the early years of a child's life. Children living in rural former homelands were less likely to attrite than those living in formal urban areas (significant at the 1 per cent level), and there was some differential attrition across provinces. Importantly, the regressions indicate that the variables of interest (related to mother's vital and co-residence status) do not affect child attrition significantly.

The balanced panel consisted of 3 750 children who were defined as African (but not necessarily South African).

5.2 Defining and estimating child migration

There are two main ways in which migration can be studied through quantitative surveys. The most common method is through self-reporting in cross-sectional surveys and population censuses where respondents are asked retrospective questions, for example about their previous place of residence and when they moved. The reliability of the data is known to be affected by recall error (see, for example, Hall 2015; Smith and Thomas 2003). Because the demographic and household data are typically limited to the current household there are also limits to the conclusions that can be drawn about the effects of migration on household composition and other outcomes.

The other main way of measuring migration quantitatively is through panel studies that track individuals over time, so that migration events are recorded in "real time" through repeated iterations of the survey, and the migration history is built up over the life course of each individual in the panel. This a more reliable but also more costly approach, especially for nationally representative studies. Panel surveys generally do not follow participants beyond country borders, so they are best suited to studies of internal migration.

Two estimates of movement were calculated from the panel data. The first counted whether children had moved place over the four waves, while the second counted moves across districts. The former is a measure of mobility, in that the move may take place within a district or over a longer distance, while the latter has been defined as geographic migration.

It is not possible to tell whether child migration rates have increased over the long term as there is no reliable baseline for comparison. NIDS provides the first national panel data from which migration can be measured directly rather than through retrospective reporting, which is less reliable. An analysis of NIDS data found that 2.5 million children (35%) had moved place and that nearly a million children (14% out of a cohort of seven million) migrated across municipalities over the eight year period spanning 2008 and 2014 (Hall & Posel, forthcoming).

5.3 Child migration streams

A transition matrix of sending and receiving geotypes (Table 4) shows high levels of movement of children between geography types, including both urban–rural and rural–urban migration. This suggests multiple migration streams for children, possibly operating in reverse directions.

Table 4. Sending and receiving geotypes for child migrants

Sending destination (2008)	Receiving destination (2014–2015)			
	Urban	Rural former homeland	Rural (farms)	Total
Urban	63.62	36.38	-	100
Rural (trad authority)	46.71	51.64	1.65	100
Rural (farms)	24.21	73.85	1.94	100
TOTAL	53.14	45.96	0.90	100

Source: NIDS Waves 1 & 4, based on the balanced panel of African children aged 0–8 in wave 1 who moved across district municipality boundaries at least once over waves 1–4. Panel weights used.
Note: Only the final (wave 4) destination is recorded here, although there may have been multiple moves between waves.

The national analysis of child migration shows geographic patterns of internal migration within South Africa are different to those of adults. As with an adult-focused analysis conducted by Schiel & Lebbrandt (2015) using the same data, the modal direction of child migration is to area types that are similar to the sending area (i.e. urban-to-urban or rural-to-rural). In the adult analysis, however, only 26 per cent of migrants from the former homelands had moved to urban areas (compared with 47 per cent of children), while 71 per cent had remained in rural areas under traditional authority. In the adult analysis, 85 per cent of those whose sending areas were urban, ended up in urban areas, while urban-to-rural migration was only 15 per cent. For children, by contrast, over a third (36%) of those who moved from an urban area ended up in a rural area. The multi-directional movement of children may be related to the independent movement of children in the context of adult labour migration, where for example children are sent home from urban to rural households, or brought from rural households to join migrant parents in urban areas.

5.4 Child and maternal migration

Maternal migration status was defined in the same way as for children: mothers of children were classified as migrants if they had moved across municipal boundaries at least once during the course of waves 1–4. It was not possible to complete this exercise for all the children in the sample as not all of them could be matched to mothers, even when it was established that their mothers were alive.

Mothers were mapped to children using data on the residential status of mothers and their unique person IDs. Of the 3750 children in the balanced sample, 488 were defined as having migrant mothers (12% when weighted), 2433 had non-migrant mothers, 326 were already maternally orphaned in wave 1 or their mother died between waves 1 and 4, and 503 had mothers whose migrant status could not be defined because they were not part of the panel.

Child migration is clearly correlated with maternal migration and, to a lesser extent, with maternal work-seeking behaviour. This is shown with a logit regression (Table 5), which estimates the likelihood of child migration in relation to mother's migration status and employment status. The analysis is restricted to children whose mothers were still alive in wave 4.

Table 5. Likelihood of child migration by mother migration and employment status

	Odds Ratio	Std. Err.	z	P>z	95% CI-	95% CI+
Mother migrated	42.043	0.173	907.100	0	41.705	42.384
Mother's w.1 employment status						
Discouraged workseeker	1.105	0.007	16.560	0	1.092	1.118
Actively seeking work	2.465	0.012	186.990	0	2.442	2.489
Employed	1.454	0.007	75.020	0	1.439	1.468
Child's w.1 age squared	0.991	0.000	-88.370	0	0.991	0.991
Child's w.1 geotype						
Urban areas	2.867	0.012	253.740	0	2.844	2.891
Commercial farms	8.553	0.063	293.040	0	8.431	8.677
Constant	0.028	0.000	-874.56	0	0.028	0.028

Number of observations = 2433

Log pseudolikelihood = -1208646.2

Source: NIDS waves 1–4, based on the balanced panel of African children aged 0–8 in wave 1, and their mothers. Analysis restricted to children whose mothers were alive in wave 4. Integer weights derived from wave 4 panel weights.
Omitted categories: Not economically active and traditional authority areas.

Children whose mothers migrated during the course of the panel were 42 times more likely to migrate than those whose mothers did not migrate, when controlling for maternal employment status, the age of the child and the child's geographic area type in wave 1. Those whose mothers were actively seeking work (the strict definition of unemployment) were two and a half times more likely to migrate than those whose mothers were not economically active. The association between child and maternal migration is corroborated by analyses from other more localised surveys (Bennet et al. 2015a, 2015b; Madhavan et al. 2012).

Even when child migration is associated with maternal migration it does not necessarily occur at the same time or in the same direction. More than half of the children who migrated did so independently of their mother in terms of timing (for example, to join their mother or to move away from their mother) – when weighted this amounted to 600,000 independent child migrants. Children who migrated were more likely than non-migrant children to be living apart from their mothers at baseline. Many of them migrated to join mothers who were looking for work, and almost 50 percent of child-mother migration events result in children living with their mothers. Yet migration events do not necessarily serve to unite children with their mothers.

The spatial patterns of changing co-residence arrangements in the context of migration are explored by comparing the location of the child's receiving household (urban versus rural) for each of the categories (Figure 1). The analysis is based only on children in the panel who migrated across municipal boundaries between waves 1 and 4.

Figure 1. Urban/rural location of receiving households for child migrants in wave 4, by change in maternal co-residence status over waves 1–4
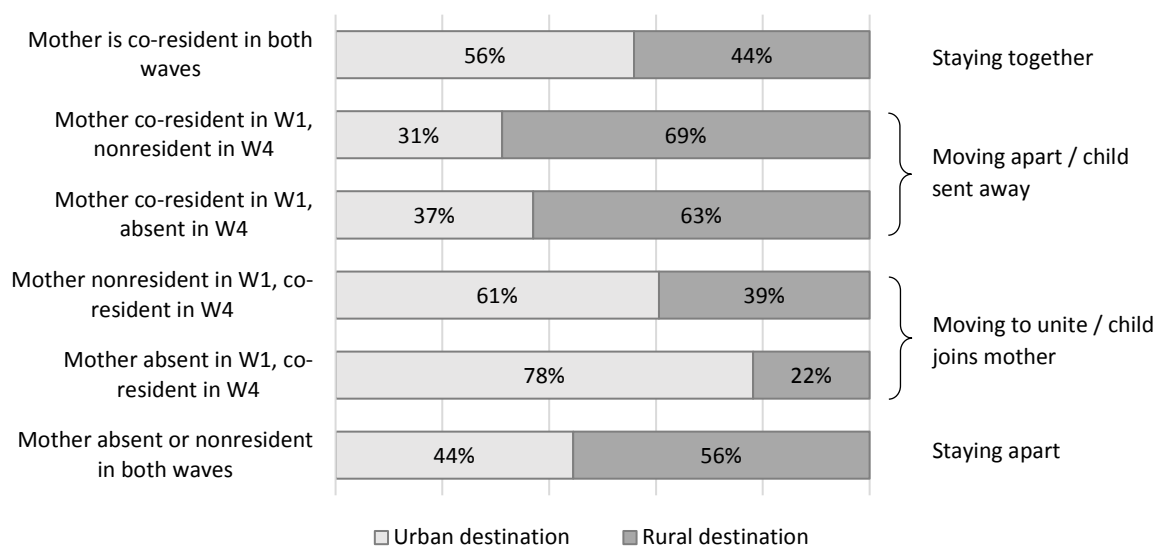
Source: NIDS Waves 1 & 4 (mother & child co-residence status); waves 1–4 (child migrant status). Based on African children aged 0–8 in Wave 1 defined as migrants, whose mothers were alive in wave 4. Panel weights used.

Migrant children who were always co-resident with their mothers were more likely to end up in urban areas than rural areas, while those who were always separate from their mothers were more likely to live in rural areas in wave 4. However, the confidence intervals for these statistics overlap. The other distributions suggest a clearer link between the geography of moves and maternal co-residence arrangements. Children whose mothers changed from being co-resident in the household to being nonresident or absent were more likely to be living in rural areas than urban areas in wave 4. These categories can be broadly clustered as migrant children who moved apart from their mothers. Conversely, an urban destination was most likely for children who had lived separately from their mothers in wave 1 (i.e. in households where their mothers were nonresident or absent) but were co-

resident with their mothers in wave 4. These are broadly defined as migrant children who united with their mothers.

The most striking and statistically significant contrast in the destination area is among child migrants who went to join their absent mother: 78 per cent of those whose mother's residence status had changed from absent to co-resident ended up in urban areas. The distributions suggest that migration to (or between) urban areas can serve to facilitate co-residence with mothers. An example of this would be when a child who previously stayed with a grandmother or other relative at the home of origin is sent to live with her migrant mother in the city. In contrast, migration to (or between) rural areas may serve to separate children from mothers. An example could be when migrant mothers are unable to manage both work (or workseeking) activities and care responsibilities for young children, and send their children to be cared for at their home of origin.

The analysis of the panel data has shown that children are highly mobile, that their mobility is associated with maternal migration but that the geographic patterns of child migration are different to those of adults. The migration of children may result in their living together with their mothers, but may equally separate them from mothers.

The next section presents a case study that illustrates some of the complexity of child and maternal migration and co-habitation arrangements in the context of broader household strategies.

## 6. Family migration to the city: a case study

The case study centres on the life history and migration experience of a single migrant mother, Lindiwe Jali,[1] her two children and her extended family, spanning three generations. The study was deliberately chosen as an example of a well-trodden internal migration route between the rural Eastern Cape and the Cape Town metropole. It provides a detailed account of life at the rural and urban ends of a migration path, and of multiple migrations within a single family. The effect of these movements is to link family members, through sequential migration, at the urban end, while retaining an occupied home of origin at the rural end.

Lindiwe was born and grew up in a small village south-east of Willowvale, towards the sea. The area was formerly part of the Transkei, one of the independent homelands created under apartheid and used as a labour reserve for white South Africa. Spread out over a few hills, the total population of the village at the time of the 2011 population census was just 1200 people, of whom nearly half were under 15 years. The population pyramid (Figure 2) shows a mass exodus of young adults, particularly men, from the age of 20, and the ratio of children to adults is much higher than the national average. There are few income-generating opportunities in the area other than small-scale subsistence agriculture and a small amount of private construction work.

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[1] Not her real name

Most of the time Lindiwe lives in Mandela Park,[2] a mainly informal township outside Cape Town with a rapidly growing population of migrants from South African and neighbouring countries. The population pyramid is strikingly different from that of her rural village. It shows a bulge in the population aged 20 to 40 years and an under-representation of children relative to the prime-age population. The exception is very young children: the pyramid suggests that many children move away after infancy. Mandela Park is a relatively new residential area, only settled in the mid-1990s, so there is no inter-generational history and few elderly people live here. Given that it is mainly informal, suffers regular shack fires and is severely under-serviced, with about twenty families sharing four toilets and one tap for drinking water, it is not a place where people would want to retire.

Figure 2. Population pyramids for the rural and urban sites
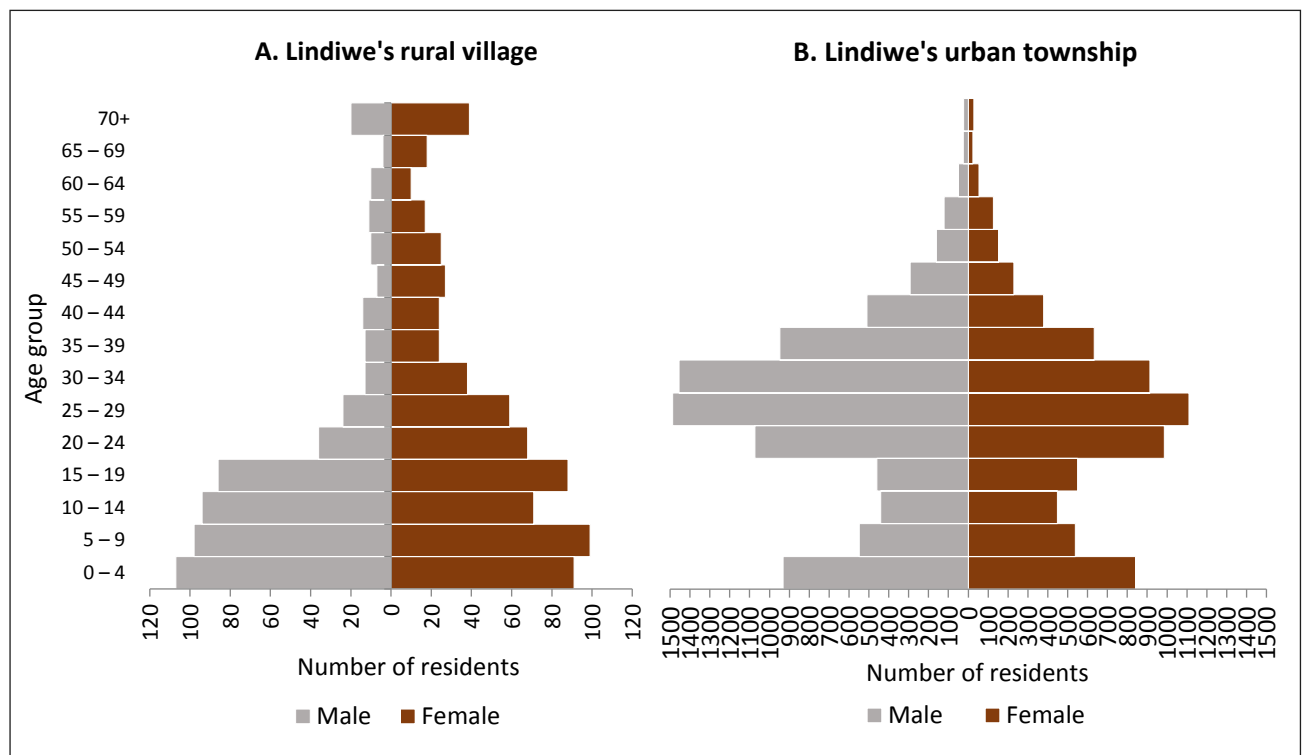
Own calculations from Census 2011 (100% census, using SuperCross).

As with quantitative studies, qualitative research can gather retrospective migration histories or participants can be followed over time. The approach used in the case study presented in this paper was a combination of the two, although the main migration events emerged through retrospective reporting. Lindiwe's initial account and its implied causal flow fitted neatly with the idea that if alternative care were available at the home of origin, a migrant mother would be inclined to delay co-migration of her children until she had some security – of employment, housing or both – before bringing her children to live with her. But things were not as simple as that. Over the nearly two years of research with the same family, the details and timing of migration events altered many times – a clear demonstration of the recall problems that quantitative surveys are likely to face.

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[2] Officially named Imizamo Yethu, Mandela Park is the name used by most residents, including Lindiwe.

A process of mapping the residential histories of family members revealed a much more complex tale of multiple migrations. Our process included two main visual tools. First, we used a matrix – a detailed timeline arranged as a grid, with a row for each year and individual columns for Lindiwe and each of her children, showing their age in each year, their main place of residence, their school and grade (for the children), and place of work (for Lindiwe). Another column tracked some of the other members of the family, especially her mother. We also marked down important events and shocks to the family, such as births, deaths and shack fires. Using this timeline we were able to plot the whereabouts of each person in relation to other family members and events, year by year, making adjustments and corrections each time we met.

Second, we developed a series of kinship diagrams showing family relationships and co-residence arrangements over time. The kinship network changed and fluctuated in size, and we were able to add more people as they entered her stories. Using these tools, we gradually adjusted and refined the sequence of the events by aligning activities, events and living arrangements across the whole family. Later, Lindiwe described this process as one that had helped to refresh her memories and given her a clearer picture of her own life course.

Lindiwe's childhood household was constantly in flux. She describes the household at a time she remembers when all her siblings had been born, and before the birth of her first child and the death of her father. The kinship diagram (Figure 2) depicts a household form that was more or less sustained for the years when Lindiwe was aged eight to fourteen (1988–1993). The main members were her biological mother, her father (who had by then retired from his job in Cape Town), her older half-brother (the son of her mother, born out of marriage), her three younger siblings and her father's two grandchildren from a previous marriage, both of whom were older than Lindiwe. His first wife had died, and two of their adult daughters had children of their own but could not have the children living with them. One daughter was unmarried and working as a live-in household help in another village, so could not have the child with her. The other was married and had two children, but her first child was not the child of her husband and so, according to custom, could not live in his house. It was decided that these grandchildren would be brought up by Lindiwe's mother.

Figure 2. Lindiwe's childhood household
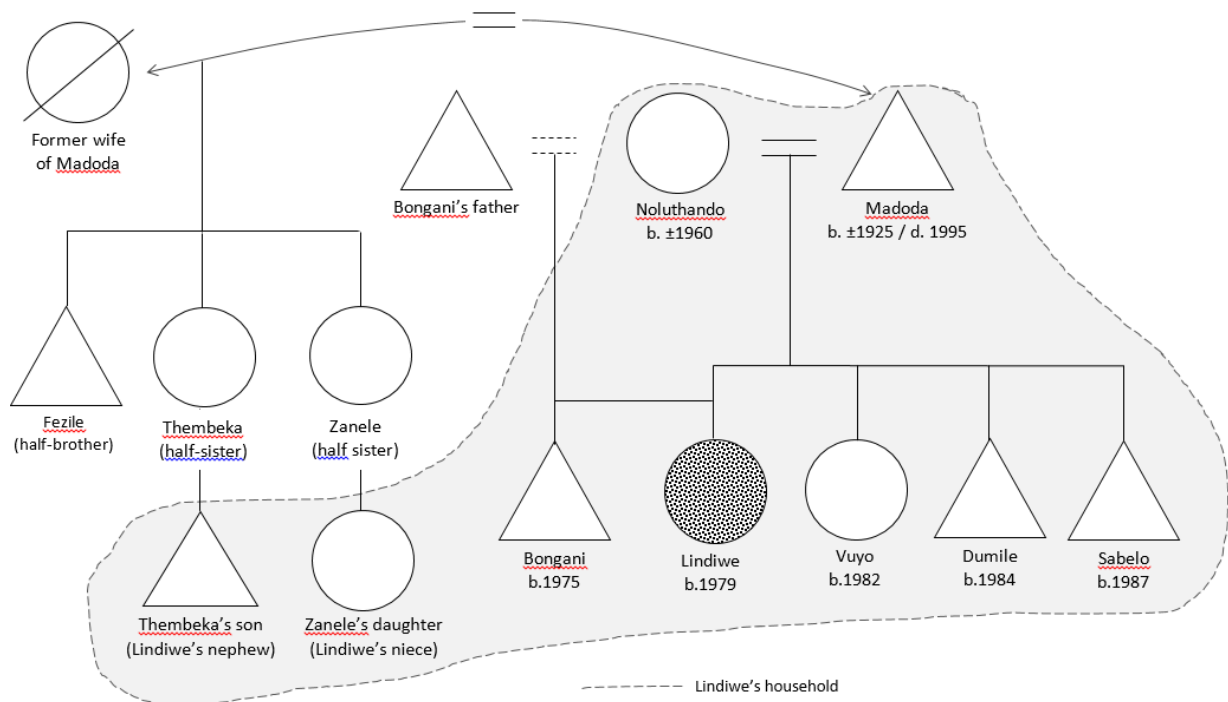
Child care arrangements were circulated around the extended family according to the needs of the children and of adults. At one stage Lindiwe's youngest brother was sent to live with an aunt in a neighbouring district to provide company and support because the aunt did not have children of her own. The arrangement only lasted half a year because the aunt was very strict and he was unhappy, and he was allowed to return home. Overall, the household was what would be described from survey data as a complex, three-generation household. To Lindiwe it was not complex; it was fairly normal compared with other households she knew as a child.

Lindiwe described her childhood in great detail over a number of interviews including two return trips to her rural village where we visited significant places together: her home, her primary school, the spring where she collected water, the paths that she walked. Her rural childhood was an important and vivid time that rooted her in the Eastern Cape. Some of her fondest childhood memories were of working – the sociability of collecting water and wood with other girls from the village, and of joining teams of children to help with household agriculture during the holidays. She experienced her rural education as harsh, humiliating and ultimately disempowering because it failed to teach her speak English, and this was a setback when she migrated to the city. Important events occurred that set the course of her life: a rape that resulted in her first pregnancy at the age of 15 and the birth of her daughter, Asanda; the emotional and financial shock when her father was murdered over a stolen horse; the fact that Asanda was brought up as her mother's child; and that she was forced to drop out of school soon after the birth of her second child, Sipho, when she was sent away to work.

Lindiwe's father had been the pioneer migrant of the family, working in Cape Town until his retirement. After his death her mother, Noluthando, sent Lindiwe's beloved oldest brother Bongani

to work in Cape Town so that he could send money back to the household. The household still did not have enough money to survive, so Noluthando also started working as a bus operator, taking tickets and looking after the passengers on the bus line from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town. Lindiwe, now 16, was the eldest child at home and was left in charge of her younger siblings and her baby daughter. Their aunt, who lived at a neighbouring homestead, kept an eye on the children and made sure they had food.

When asked how she made the decision to do work that required travel, leaving her children behind, Noluthando explained that there was no other option:

> It was never something I thought about except that it just became a problem when father [i.e. her husband] left me with nothing. I never thought that this could happen, and it just happened. I did not like to depend on people. So I felt that it would be all right on the buses … I would get to feed the children and I also found an opening to sell [material], and so I would keep going to Cape Town.

And another time she said:

> When you see the situation, you act, you get up and close it because life doesn't stand still. For us people life changes … and so when life changes you decide. I can't even tell my neighbour [the plan]. I just call them to tell them, "Please look after those children," you see that? You can feel the hardship, but you also have to do whatever. What I mean to say is that when they are left alone it's not that they are not loved, that is the truth, but it's because of the situation.

This theme, the absence of choice, recurred throughout our conversations with both Lindiwe and her mother when we were discussing migration and child care decisions. In fact the question of where children would live in relation to their caregivers was hardly ever described as a decision – just a necessary fact, without alternatives.

Noluthando's work was exhausting and the money was not enough even with the remittances from Bongani in Cape Town. Noluthando decided that Lindiwe, then aged 20, should go to the city and work to supplement the family income although she had not yet finished high school. By then Lindiwe had had her second child, Sipho. There was something of a tussle between the grandmothers: her boyfriend's mother believed that Lindiwe's education should be prioritised, but Lindiwe's mother, desperately working to support all her dependants, could not think about the needs of an individual child – her focus was on the survival of the family. Lindiwe says, "She saw that it wasn't working out because the money was too little, it was not enough for us [and] the burden was too much for her ... so she just gave up. She said I should go and find work: 'Lindiwe, I would like you to go [to Cape Town].'" Sipho's grandmother argued with Noluthando about it. Lindiwe herself wanted to stay at school, but she was not in a position to argue – she was the oldest child and had a responsibility to the family. Ultimately it was Noluthando's decision. Lindiwe was very clear: "[The decision] was made by her and not by me."

Another problem arose that made things even more urgent. Bongani had become sick in Cape Town and had stopped working. He was now living with a cousin from his mother's side, in a shack in Mandela Park, and somebody needed to care for him as the cousin was working at a shebeen and was out at night.

Our main support at that time was my brother, he would buy us school clothes and all of that. So it turned out that my brother was alone over there and there was no one else, he had no sister to take care of him. Our cousin would take care of him but she had to go to work, then there was no one. At that time I became pregnant with Sipho, and left school that year. I thought that the following year I would go back to school, but it turned out that I should go and take care of my brother, I left the child behind … That's how it started. My mother said, "Go to Cape Town to look after your brother because he's not well," you see, and when I arrived here I found that she had made it seem like a small thing, this business with my brother, but it turned out that all along my brother was sick, and he was not going to make it. So I was forced to stay in Cape Town and find work in order to help those who come after me.

Lindiwe believes this was her mother's intention all along: she knew that her son Bongani was dying and that, if Lindiwe went to Cape Town to care for him, then she would eventually take his place as breadwinner for the family. The matter was never discussed explicitly. In our conversation with Lindiwe and her mother, Noluthando explained that "things from the old days were not the kinds of things where you sit down [and discuss]; you would think about it while sleeping." In other words, the solution would come to you. Migration and co-residence decisions were described as a pattern of circumstance in which there was little or no choice, but only one possible response. The decision is therefore not a decision between options, but a realisation of what needs to be done.

Lindiwe and her brother stayed with her aunt's cousin in her shack in Mandela Park, the cousin helped Lindiwe to get a job at a local shebeen (tavern) while she looked for domestic work. The shebeen work was insecure, erratic and dangerous, keeping her out at night. There was no question of Lindiwe taking her own children with her to Cape Town. At first she thought it was a temporary trip. As time went on it was clear that this was no place for the children: three adults living in a small crowded one-roomed shack, one of them bedridden most of the time.

So her daughter Asanda stayed with Noluthando, who had stopped working on the buses altogether, and Sipho stayed with his paternal grandmother. Asanda turned six years old and Sipho turned two. They were in a state of what De Haas (2014) would term involuntary immobility in relation to their mother. "Oh it was difficult, more especially as I had left Sipho very young – he was young when I left him. All along I knew that he was safe where he was because he was with his grandmother, but it was painful – I mean it was not easy." The following year, Bongani's health deteriorated so badly that they knew it was terminal and he was taken back to the Eastern Cape where he died. Lindiwe stayed on in Cape Town, doing night shifts at the shebeen.

Back in the Eastern Cape, Asanda was eight years old and was going to a local pre-school but it was time for her to start formal schooling. Lindiwe and her mother agreed that Asanda would move to join Lindiwe in Cape Town so that she could start school there. "The reason why is because when I got here to Cape Town I found that it's better to go to school here. As I went to school in the Eastern Cape, I didn't learn English, and then I found that to learn in Xhosa didn't help me. So I wanted my children to have a better education than me."

Noluthando had spent a lot of time in Cape Town over the years (when vising her husband as a migrant worker, and also while working on the buses) and had many connections and family networks there, and she decided to move too, to help look after Asanda. Sipho was still in the Eastern Cape with his

grandmother. Lindiwe says, "I wasn't a hundred percent happy. My wish was that both my children could be with me. But because of my problem that I wasn't working [full time], I told myself that I must be patient until I get a job, and when I get the job both my children are going to come and live here." Although she didn't have the complete family she dreamed of, she knew that Sipho was in good hands and did not worry about him.

By the beginning of 2003, both Noluthando and Asanda were together with Lindiwe in Cape Town. They stayed with her cousin's sister and brother in a shack belonging to their cousin: five people in a small two-roomed structure. Lindiwe was still working at the shebeen, and was also very busy looking for a job as a domestic worker. She needed better working conditions and the security of a regular salary. By this time Lindiwe's sister and youngest brother Sabelo had also moved to Cape Town. Her younger brother Dumile, who had mental health problems, stayed alone at home in the village, looking after the house.

The informal settlement of Mandela Park is regularly gutted by shack fires that sweep through the area, fuelled by the strong south-easter. The media reported no less than six fires over a period of half a year while I was interviewing Lindiwe:

- Early August 2015: 1 shack burnt down; two children aged 9 and 14 died, their mother burnt and permanently disfigured;
- Mid-August 2015: 3 shacks burnt, 15–17 people displaced; three people burnt to death;
- November 2015: "dozens" of shacks destroyed;
- December 2015: 200 shacks razed; around 600 people left homeless (other reports put the number of displaced people at over 1000); one person burnt beyond recognition;
- Early February 2016: 60 shacks destroyed; 240 people homeless. The shack that Lindiwe owned and rented out was destroyed in this fire, which was mentioned in a small column on page 7 of a local newspaper;
- Late February 2016: 128 shacks destroyed; 538 people homeless and two people killed.

Lindiwe's cousin's shack, in which they were all living, burnt down in the first year that they lived together. Nobody was injured but they lost many of their possessions and had to rebuild. Family tensions grew, however, and Lindiwe and her mother knew they had to move out of the cousin's place. Noluthando, Lindiwe, Asanda and Lindiwe's younger sister moved into a new shack together, and her brother Sabelo had an adjoining room on the same site. Her other brother Dumile had moved from the Eastern Cape and was living in another shack elsewhere in the settlement. It was 2004. Their new shack burnt down the following year. It is impossible to get insurance against shack fires, and even the stokvels (group savings schemes) do not cover this kind of risk. So every time there was a fire, they had to start building and furnishing their home from scratch.

After the second fire Lindiwe got approval to build her own shack on a separate site because she had children and could be counted as a separate family. Noluthando rebuilt hers using the replacement materials provided by the municipality after her shack burnt down. Lindiwe used her own savings and money that she borrowed to buy her building materials. Lindiwe then lived in her new shack and Asanda lived with Noluthando.

At this time Lindiwe's sister brought Sipho on the bus to live in Cape Town. There were two main reasons for the move. First, he was due to start Grade 1 the following year and Lindiwe wanted him to benefit from the better schooling he could get in Cape Town. Second, Lindiwe had finally managed to get a job as a domestic worker and, although she only worked two days a week and she was earning very little, at least her income was stable. She had always intended to have both her children with her in Cape Town once she got a job.

The siblings Sipho and Asanda were now living together for the first time. Sipho was six and Asanda was eleven, and they stayed with their grandmother Noluthando in her shack. I asked Lindiwe why they were living in separate shacks. She explained:

> We were all staying together as family, but I was the big one, the breadwinner. So I decided that we could not all stay together. The reason was that if we have another fire we will still have another house. So it's better to have two … And it does help because even my mother's shack burnt again in 2008, and then we were all staying at my house. They were not close to each other, but not too far. I would see them [Noluthando and the children] every day, I would see them on the way to work, and I would buy the food and we had supper together.

Lindiwe describes the diversification of the family dwellings as a form of insurance against fire. Having a second shack at a slight distance meant that there was a lockable space to store the contents of one shack if it was under threat of fire and, provided one of the shacks survived, there would still be shelter for the family in the aftermath of a fire. The distance between the shacks was therefore an important consideration: they needed to be close enough for family life to continue but far enough to have a chance of one shack surviving a fire if the other was burnt. Although they operated as a single household, this configuration would defy all efforts to construct such a household from survey data. They regarded themselves as a family, shared resources and ate their meals together (all common requirements for defining members of the same household), but lived on different sites, which would be sampled separately. In a survey, they would appear as two distinct households: a single-adult household, and a three-generation household where two children have an absent mother.

Lindiwe continued to support the children and her mother, buying all their food and other necessities. In 2006 she god a second domestic job and was working full time. She supported the whole family, including her younger brother who was finishing high school, and her sister who was unemployed and living with her boyfriend. Noluthando's shack burnt down in 2008. They managed to get some of their possessions out and put them in Lindiwe's shack. The children were at home, and they still remember it well because that was the time that Asanda, aged 14 years, saved their neighbour's baby from the fire. This was their third shack fire in six years. They rebuilt Noluthando's shack, while all staying together in Lindiwe's shack.

Noluthando is a formidable and well-educated woman. She acknowledges: "I'm from the rural areas but we were taught by the old teachers who had strong education." She soon got involved in local politics and development work, and became a respected member of the street committee in Mandela Park. Through her contacts or her position she managed to get her name onto a waiting list for formal housing in 2007, and fast-tracked her way up the waiting list. Noluthando received her house in 2010

and moved in, together with her two grandchildren and her youngest son Sabelo. Lindiwe continued to live in her own shack.

But Noluthando only stayed for a year. With the whole family away from the Eastern Cape, their homestead there was locked up and empty. Their house had been broken into numerous times, and their possessions stolen. In addition to concerns about their rural home, Noluthando felt that her work in Cape Town was done. She had achieved her purpose, which was to ensure that her children could sustain themselves and the next generation.

> So when I saw that the children are now working, things now are not the same as before. And also, all of them including Sabelo, I have educated them by combining saliva and tears until they became real people. So I decided that I am not leaving behind people who can't take care of themselves over there. When my work ended it was good to come back home and open the house. So [I decided that] I am going home now because I am not leaving behind people who can't do anything for themselves, they are adults, and Asanda and others are at school, they are grown. So much that I came back in 2011.

When Noluthando left, Lindiwe moved into the formal house and lived with her children. Lindiwe was 32 years old, Asanda was 17 and Sipho was 12. It was the first time that the three of them had lived together in the same home. Her brother Dumile, who had a mental illness, also stayed with them a lot of the time and she continued to support him financially. The other siblings had their own homes now – her brother Sabelo in a shack in Mandela Park, and her sister Vuyo with her husband in Mfuleni – but they often visited each other.

Their quality of life had ostensibly improved. Lindiwe had a stable job, they were living in a formal house, and both her children were attending schools that she felt provided a good education. But there were still stresses and worries: about money, about the safety of her mother who was living alone in the Eastern Cape, and about the safety of her children in a township where gang violence was erupting and where HIV was rife.

Asanda passed matric at the end of 2014. She was accepted onto a training course to work on a luxury cruise ship in the Caribbean. She planned to start working immediately after completing the course and there was the prospect of being able to return substantial income as she would not have living expenses. Asanda was the new hope of the family: she would travel further and potentially earn more than anyone else.

In March 2016 the family experienced another shock: Asanda gave birth to a baby girl and Lindiwe became a granny at the age of 37. This threw into disarray Asanda's plans for working on the cruise ships. Initially she planned to delay her departure for six months, after which she would leave the baby with Lindiwe and become a migrant mother herself. In the meantime she got a job with an NGO, teaching life skills at a local school and found that she liked teaching. She decided to study further and was accepted on a course at a technical college some 200km from Cape Town. She plans to leave the baby with her mother during the week, but because Lindiwe has to keep working this means that the baby must go to a day mother – an additional cost. Another option is for the maternal grandmother Noluthando to move back to Cape Town and look after the baby, or for the paternal grandmother (who is also in the Eastern Cape) to do so.

Sabelo's shack burnt down in 2016, and he and his partner moved with their baby into a shack that they built on the property in front of the formal house where Lindiwe and her children lived. Sabelo contributed as he could, to electricity and food costs, but Lindiwe felt this as an enormous additional burden. Another tenant lived in a backyard shack on the same property, and the rent he paid was sent each month to Noluthando in the Eastern Cape, along with other remittances. The small property was now very crowded.

7. **Figure 3. Lindiwe's urban household in 2016**
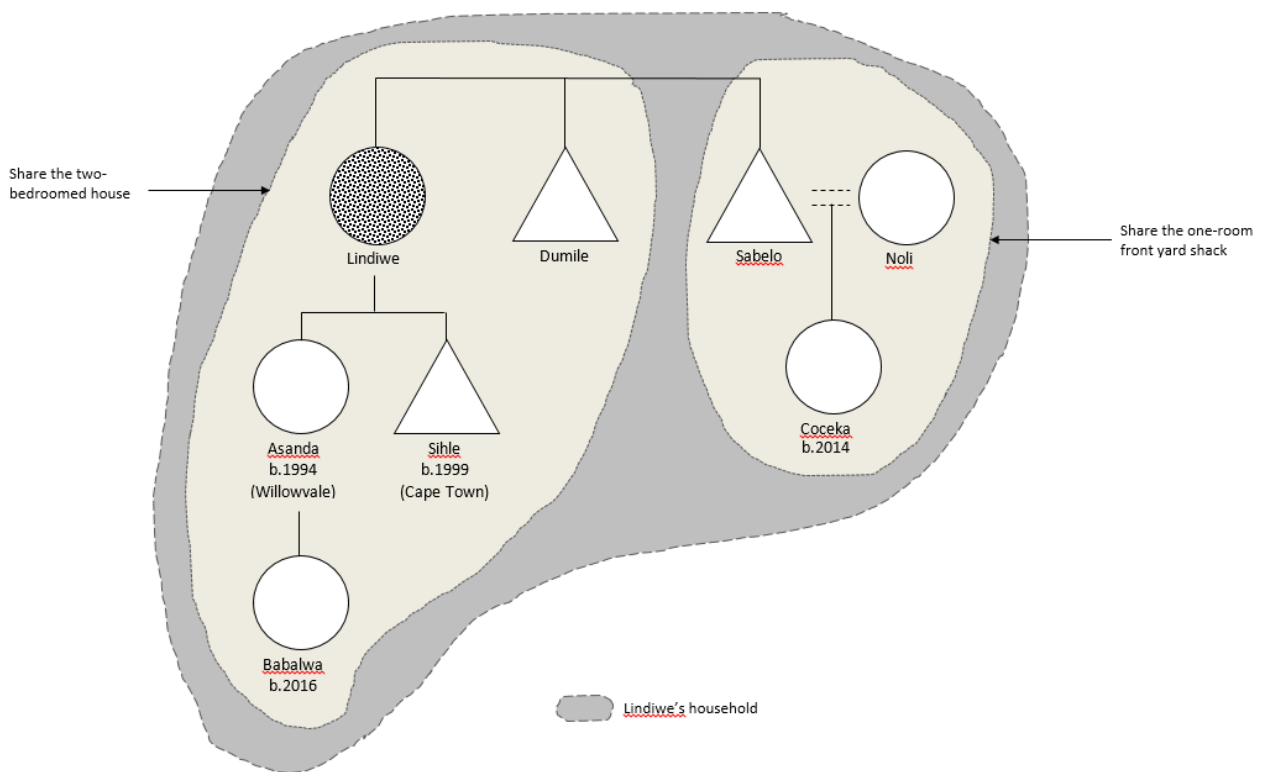
Back in the Eastern Cape, Noluthando was lonely and felt unsafe living on her own, even with extended family all around her. All her livestock had been stolen, and she is entirely dependent on remittances from Cape Town, which are not even enough for her to have airtime in case of emergencies. She has talked of leaving her rural home and returning to Cape Town. If this happens then Lindiwe will have to move out of the formal house, which belongs to her mother and does not have space for all of them. She would move back into the shack that she still owns and rents out. It is not clear whether her children and grandchild would move with her or remain in the house with their grandmother.

We did a return trip to Lindiwe's rural home at the end of 2015 and another in December 2016. The cost of the trips was covered by the research funds – otherwise she would not have had enough money to go home for Christmas. Lindiwe regards her rural home as her main home, the place where she is rooted and with which she maintains a connection. She remits money regularly to her mother and has also invested in building a house on the rural homestead. She explained that she had spent so much

time at her childhood home: she was there all the time, never went anywhere during the school holidays. She distinguished between being a resident and being a citizen, using those English words. In Cape Town she was a resident. She had a house there, and a job and a daily life. But in the Eastern Cape she was a citizen. This was her true home.

Lindiwe expects to be buried in her home village, although she is not sure whether she would retire there. One of the challenges over the course of our interviews was to try to determine whether she would be classified as a "permanent" or "temporary" migrant. Through the research it became apparent that these categories are not easily definable; that adult migrants may themselves vacillate between a sense of temporary and permanent status in the city. The hardships of township life, especially repeated shack fires and the loss of possessions that she had worked hard to accumulate, made Lindiwe feel certain that she was only in Cape Town to work and would return to her village at the first opportunity when she was no longer required to be a breadwinner for the family.

Sometimes she imagines surviving by planting crops as they did when she was a child and living off the land. To her, that is a "simple life". She does not imagine that her children will ever want to live permanently at the rural home, even though they call it home. Both she and her children suggest a generational shift in attachment to the rural home, and therefore also in circular migration – the strength of the ties depends on where one grew up.

Discussion

The qualitative study enhances the quantitative results in a number of ways. It demonstrates the complexity of household strategies and plans for child care in the context of female labour migration. It affirms and provides context for the patterns observed in the national data: that children mostly live with mothers, but a substantial share do not; that fathers rarely feature, but that grandmothers and extended family play a crucial role in providing child care; that women carry an enormous financial burden and may be forced to migrate without their children. The qualitative data also suggest that children's migration is deliberate and strategic but strongly influenced by circumstance: for example it may happen at different times for siblings depending on the available care arrangements and on their life stage and school readiness; it may be delayed far longer than planned, or happen prematurely, before the hoped-for living conditions are in place. Qualitative research can capture, in a way that surveys do not, the plans and aspirations of families and how these are modified over time as circumstances change – or fail to change in anticipated ways. For example, despite her desire to be with her children, the central character, a migrant mother, fails to have them living with her for much of their childhood, even after they migrate to the same place.

The case study illustrates the fluidity of household form and household relationships. Over the course of her life, Lindiwe lives in a large extended rural household as a child and later her own children are included; she lives in a small adult-only household in the city, without her children; in a three-generation household with her mother, her child and two cousins crammed into a single shack; in a single-adult household (leaving her children and mother in a skip-generation household); in a larger three-generation household including her mother, her children and her siblings; in a two-generation household with her brother and children; and ultimately in a large, complex, three-generation

household where she is a grandmother and has a backyard tenant and her younger brother's family in a front yard informal extension to the house.

Lindiwe's story starts with a retrospective life history in which events and decisions are compacted into clear (though at times contradictory) narratives. Even with this foreshortened perspective, there are at least 15 mobility events that affect Lindiwe, and later her children. The case study illustrates the mobility of children (and of their mother and other adult relatives) and the fact that mobility takes many forms. There are large moves across provinces, but also small moves as the family rebuilds destroyed shacks, reconfigures itself into separate households and then reunites in a formal house. Caregiving arrangements are important in that they influence the migration of mothers, grandmothers and children. But not all of children's mobility would be captured as geographic migration or even mobility across place.

The study describes a situation where children do not co-migrate with their mother even though she would have liked them to. The combination of unemployment, poverty and unsuitable living arrangements means that she cannot bring them to live with her. Through the case study we see the necessity of female labour migration, even at the cost of family fragmentation and the separation of mothers from children. The decisions are described not as decisions between a choice of options, but about a lack of options.

The theme of "no choice" is what May was referring to when he described radical analysts as arguing that "individual migrants should not be conceived of as rational actors, maximizing their interests through a system of market forces, but instead, that the movement of migrant workers is a system, which is therefore beyond the control of any individual" (1987:125). It has been argued that neither functionalist nor historical-structural theories have adequate room for the idea of individual agency (the former because people are assumed to respond automatically to cost-benefit opportunities and outcomes; the latter because people are assumed to move passively in response to broader capitalist forces) (De Haas 2014; Potts 2011). Yet interestingly, the absence of real agency or lack of choice is precisely Lindiwe's experience of migration, and in fact even her mother, who makes the decisions, describes a migration decision as being simply a realisation of the only course of action, devoid of choice. In Lindiwe's story, the desire for a better education for her children eventually outweighs the barriers to their migration – their migration is about investing in human capital for the next generation.

The case study describes multiple and multi-directional moves between rural and urban areas. It traces processes of stepwise urban migration for an entire family (and indeed the extended family, although they are not prominent in the case study itself. It also shows reverse migration in the case of Noluthando, the grandmother. The circularity of the migration route echoes Potts (2011) in her rejection of linear theorising particularly in the Southern African context of high unemployment rates and strong cultural attachment to land and place of origin. The fact of a rural home enables urban processes; the possibility of circular migration is the mechanism for urban migration. Thus the former homelands retain the insurance function that was deliberately adopted by the apartheid regime.

8. Conclusion

The reality of family and household form in South Africa is that neither households nor families have fixed boundaries; both extend over geographic space and degrees of kin, both are multi-generational and porous, shifting rather than static, and there are possibilities for overlaps and duplication in that many people may belong to more than one household, just as kinship ties connect multiple families in complex ways. The terms "household" and "family" are often used interchangeably, even in academic discourse that is specifically about households and families (Amoateng and Heaton 2007; Russell 2003a). The distinction is particularly complicated in the South African context, where family members who are immediately related by blood and marriage often spend much of their time living apart, while extended household arrangements, combined with a range of individual and household strategies such as labour migration, urbanisation and the allocation of care roles, create ties of co-residence between members who are less closely related by blood or marriage. As shown in the case study, a household may span different dwellings, so that even where surveys would sample units separately, there are familial relations of mutual support and householding that link households. These complexities are seldom reflected in household surveys or in policy instruments, which tend to require systems of classification that are fixed and comprehensive, where households need to be linked to an immovable structure, and where double-counting tends to be avoided.

If one tries to distinguish between the terms, then "household" might be regarded broadly as referring to arrangements of co-residence (even though household members need not be co-resident for much of the time), whereas "family" would refer to social groups that are related by kinship, marriage, adoption or other some other agnate affiliation and which endure over time and space. Both of these constructs are difficult, if not impossible, to replicate through household surveys, and it is clear that the "household" cannot be construed simply as the residential dimension of the "family" (Amoateng and Richter 2007; Hunter 2010; Russell 2003b; Spiegel and Mehlwana 1997). Arguably both are dynamic and there will always be some conceptual and definitional overlap, for both constructs may incorporate degrees of kinship, forms of emotional attachment, and relations of dependence and reciprocity.

Surveys are not well suited to examining extended household arrangements and systems of care. But despite their limited ability to portray the complexity of households and family structures, national household surveys are indispensable for describing broad national trends that cannot be captured through smaller surveys or more nuanced qualitative work. The available data sets, and particularly those like NIDS that use both broad and narrow definitions of the household, are designed to do the best job they can in characterising households and, in the case of NIDS, measuring the individual mobility of household members. The emphasis on following individuals rather than households is important because it acknowledges and caters for the fluidity of people in and out of households. Of course there are limits to what the data can show, particularly in contexts where populations are highly mobile. Household forms and relationships that precede the first wave of data collection are beyond the scope of the study; although attrition rates are low, some attrition will be the result of migration; and importantly the household survey approach offers only partial insights into family and social networks beyond the household, even if they are next door.

Migration events can result in the separation of children from mothers. Using survey data, however, it is not possible to distinguish between the voluntary and involuntary separation of mothers and children. Possible scenarios for voluntary separation could be when a grandmother or aunt would like a child to live with her for company and assistance. In this scenario, even if the separation is not what the child prefers, it is a deliberate decision of the family. Involuntary separation is when intention or aspiration cannot be realised. An example might be when the mother migrates to seek work and cannot take her child with her because of the cost of migrating, or because she does not have a suitable place to stay, or because there is no available or affordable child care. Even if a mother prefers to have her children living with her, this may have to be deferred because of financial or structural constraints. When a mother moves but the child cannot, this would be a case of the "involuntary immobility" described by De Haas (2014).

The analysis of micro data is complemented with qualitative research in the form of a case study that provides a rich account of maternal and child migration histories, demonstrating the complexity of mobility dynamics and living arrangements. The case study augments the quantitative analysis, providing context and demonstrating some of the considerations (but also the absence of choice) in processes of migration, household formation and child care. Descriptions of urban life highlight the many challenges of the township and strategies for survival as the family configures and reconfigures itself across households. Migration intentions come and go, a reminder that much migration (and non-migration) is responsive, determined by constraints, challenges and opportunities, and that long-term intentions are often superseded by short-term necessity.

The focus on a single migrant and her family enables the research to see the connectedness of the rural and urban homes, which are part of the same "single social field" (Trager 1991:vii). A qualitative approach enables the study of a broader set of family relationships than is possible from analysis of household surveys, limited as they are by their own sampling method and definition of the household. Not being restricted to a specific sampling point or household definition, the case study can trace a dispersed family which at various times spans households in urban and rural nodes, or multiple households at the urban end.

It describes a rural household that grew as it accommodated dependants, shrank as potential breadwinners were dispatched, grew again as it took in a next generation of children, and shrank again as adult members died or followed the urban pioneers to seek work, or when children went off to school. Throughout all these changes there was a sense that people's places were held in the imagination of the household, although the "full" household was seldom if ever convened, not even at Christmas time. These descriptions differ in tone from the fluidity described elsewhere, for it is not an easy flow between open doors but rather a series of difficult transitions in which households gamble on expensive routes, uncertain work opportunities and housing arrangements at the urban end, and an endless struggle for income to support dual and sometimes multiple households. Decisions about child care are made in the context of these broader household strategies.

The qualitative research describes the return migration of a sick household member and the separation of siblings who are sent to live in different households – a scenario that would be difficult to confirm even with panel data, as not all the intra-household relationships are defined in the

available surveys. It incorporates family members – aunts, cousins, a paternal grandmother – who would not be counted as part of the household but nevertheless play important roles in supporting household processes, stepping in to provide care and facilitating migration.

Processes of cumulative causation and chain migration are illustrated within an extended family, as successive members provided the next in-migrants with accommodation when they arrive in the city. It also describes child immobility in contexts where mothers move, demonstrating the inability of a mother to take her children with her to the city. Involuntary immobility was, in effect, legislated under apartheid. The concept of immobility can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of household migration strategies and challenge what is often a morally tinged critique of continuing family fragmentation in the post-apartheid era.

Migration is not arbitrary: it uses resources and is the outcome of decisions made at individual and household levels. This suggests that what might be termed family fragmentation can be a household strategy, the product of child care choices made in the context of external forces and structural constraints.

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