Constructing Activist Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa

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Abstract

With the understanding that every generation shares a generational consciousness, which locates individuals not only in a common geographical location, but also a historical one, this study uses social-constructionist accounts of collective identity, narrative inquiry and positioning theory to trace the moral careers of twenty-six young, middle-class activists, based in Cape Town, South Africa. In doing so it explores the relationship between their activism and identities, and how this relationship is contingent on the social and political context of post-apartheid South Africa.

The first part of this study provides an account of the dynamics of political community formation amongst this group of activists, how they generate a shared understanding of the world, how they construct borders of belonging and influence, and how these borders sometimes mirror broader social cleavages in post-apartheid in South Africa. The second part examines how participants draw on two major narratives, or morality plays, with which to construct their activist identities. The most significant of these is ‘the Struggle’, the story of the struggle against apartheid. The other is the ‘the TAC Method’, the story of the Treatment Action Campaign’s struggle for the treatment of those living with HIV and AIDS. These narratives serve not only as valuable cultural resources, but relative positioning within them as an important legitimization of their activist identities. Finally, the third part examines how this positioning, within ‘the Struggle’ narrative, is mediated by the sociality explored in the first section, most notably in relation to familial ties and race.

It concludes that *who we are matters in relation to what we do*, especially when what we do is activism. In a country like South Africa where the social cleavages are so deep, this is a crucial consideration for both activists and scholars of activism alike.
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It is a well-worn stereotype that activists rarely read about activism. After all, they’re too busy doing real work to read ivory tower-generated accounts, critiques, and histories of social change and social change work. But reflecting on, theorising, and historicising activism is crucial. (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003, p. 4)
Chapter 1
Introduction

What are the stories which we inherit from those who came before us, and how do we reformulate them, to make them ours? (Andrews, 2007, p. 178)

I am part of a network of politically interested and active, young, middle-class South Africans based in Cape Town, South Africa. We were all born into and children during some of the bloodiest decades of South Africa’s history, the 1970s and 1980s. We all lived through the political negotiations of the early 1990s, the release of Nelson Mandela, the historical moment of the end of one of the most oppressive regimes in modern history and the ushering in of one of the world’s most celebrated democracies. We are the progeny and heirs of the anti-apartheid struggle, one of the world’s greatest political struggles which gave us international icons like Nelson Mandela, and according to Thörn (2006) was the precursor of twentieth century global social movements. Our activism necessarily involves a reformulation of the traditions of the previous generations’, but it also involves the integration of ‘newer’ traditions made available by an expansion of the political landscape through the transition to democracy and processes of globalisation.

According to Mannheim (1952) ‘individuals who belong to the same generation, who share the same year of birth, are endowed, to that extent, with a common location in the historical dimension of the social process’ (p. 290). In other words, every generation shares a ‘generational consciousness’ which ‘links an individual’s location in an historical social structure with their views or conceptions of the social world’ (Pilcher, 1998, p. 4). The recognition of this symbiotic relationship (Andrews, 2007) between historical location and consciousness recognises the continuity of consciousness between generations through the stories we inherit, but also that ‘societal breakdowns, dislocations, and upheaval’ (Braungart & Braungart, 1990, p. 250), like South Africa’s transition to democracy in 1994, will profoundly impact on the ways in which we do our politics.

This study is interested in how young, middle-class South Africans who are socially and politically interested and active (henceforth referred to as activists) ‘inhabit’ (Erasmus, 2004) the narratives of our historical legacy, and how these inhabitations inform our movement through the contemporary South African social and political landscape. It is also interested in the corollary, i.e. how the contemporary South African context informs how we inhabit these historical legacies. The question is therefore, how do we inhabit these narratives that we have inherited from those who came before us, and how, in the context of a new South Africa are we rearticulating them to make them our own (Andrews, 2007, p. 178)?
1. **Shifting Landscapes: ‘New’ Struggles, ‘New’ Identities**

   Since the unbanning of liberation movements in 1990, our identities and aspirations have been unshackled. (Gevisser & Cameron, 1994, p. 4)

Struggles for social justice in post-apartheid South Africa are heavily contested. Apartheid’s pernicious legacy persists alongside new neo–liberal articulations of inequality and injustice. With those inequalities have emerged corresponding political struggles and their commensurate social movements. Grassroots movements like the Anti–Eviction Campaign\(^1\) and the Abahlali baseMjondolo (Shack Dwellers) Movement \(^2\) are a direct response to these growing socio-economic inequalities (Ballard, Habib, Valoida & Zuern 2006). Similarly, organisations like the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC)\(^3\) and Equal Education (EE)\(^4\) advocate for equal access to basic resources; the TAC doing so in relation to a distinctly post-apartheid phenomenon – HIV and AIDS – and EE in response to a clear legacy of the apartheid state – basic education. So called ‘new’ social movements have also emerged as a result of the opportunities presented by the by the transition to democracy, finding expression through the provisions of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex (LGBTI), disability and more radical feminist movements are a case in point.

In the absence of the monolith of apartheid, battle lines are not as straightforwardly drawn. The official demise of the apartheid government and the assimilation of the resistance movement into official structures of power was bound to change the shape of political resistance in South Africa, shifting not only the playing field but the players and their roles. As such it also presents broader debates around the very nature of political action. The blurring of the battles lines especially in relation to government poses not only questions about who the activists in post-apartheid South Africa are but what activism is? Is, for example, working in civil society with government to deliver on certain basic services, activism? Or is activism necessarily adversarial? Are those anti-apartheid struggle activists who now find themselves in positions of political power still activists or are they now agents of an oppressive state? If they are, then what constitutes activism?

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1. Formed in November 2000 the AEC is ‘an umbrella body for over ten community organizations, crisis committees, and concerned residents movements who have come together to organize and demand their rights to basic services’, ‘with the aim of fighting evictions, water cut-offs and poor health services, obtaining free electricity, securing decent housing, and opposing police brutality’ (http://antieviction.org.za).

2. Originating in Durban, in early 2005, Abahlali baseMjondolo is, according to its website, the ‘largest organisation of the militant poor in post-apartheid South Africa’. Their ‘key demand is for ‘land and housing in the city’ but it has also successfully politised and fought for an end to forced removals and for access to education and the provision of water, electricity, sanitation, health care and refuse removal as well as bottom up popular democracy’. (http://www.abahlali.org)

3. TAC ‘advocates for increased access to treatment, care and support services for people living with HIV and campaigns to reduce new HIV infection’. According to its website it has 16 000 members, 267 branches and 72 full time staff members, and is ‘the leading civil society force behind comprehensive health care services for people living with HIV&AIDS in South Africa’. The TAC formed in 1998 in Cape Town, South Africa. (http://www.tac.org.za)

4. EE formed in 2008. Through its various campaigns it advocates for the equal access to educational resources for all South African children. Their campaigns focus mainly on inadequate and poor resources in underprivileged schools. Their latest campaign is for basic Norms and Standards for School Infrastructure. (http://www.equaleducation.org.za)
Does it entail mass mobilisation, in the form of protest marches, or can the challenge to power be mounted in other ways? These questions raise fundamental considerations about the nature of power relations in post-apartheid South Africa and provide an opportunity to reflect on where and how relationships of power constellate themselves, in both historically continuous and changing ways.

It is not just the game and the players that are changing, however, so are the playing fields. It is often stated that the revolution in South Africa was ‘incomplete’ (Britton, 2002). This point was made in relation to the persistence of patriarchy and male domination in post-apartheid South Africa, but it can also be made about the incompleteness of the socialist revolution and lack of economic redistribution. It can further refer to the incompleteness of the social and cultural revolution. Our institutions of higher learning are a case in point with the radical imperative for deep transformation in the shape of language and curriculum reform being raised for urgent attention given the ways in which these institutions continue to demand assimilation into persistent colonial knowledge systems and cultures of whiteness (Soudien, 2008). Similarly, capital continues to venerate the cultural and material accoutrements of whiteness, disguised in the language of ‘world class’ and ‘global standards’ (Steyn & Kelly, 2010), presenting a complex intersection of neoliberal economic policy and persisting racial formation (Goldberg, 2009). The simple lack of demographic transformation in South Africa organisations bears testament to this.

No considered engagement with activism in this context can take that debate lightly. Firstly, it compels an engagement with the theoretical debates over where and how power operates, as not merely the coercion of tyrannical power but as expressed through the ‘everyday practices of a well-intentioned society’ (Young, 2000, p. 36) not only in the public, but the personal (Hanisch, 1970). Secondly, and leading from the first point, it necessitates debate on what constitutes activism in this post-apartheid context, and relatedly what and who activists are.

These are important debates because there are emergent forms of activism which engage these shifting dynamics in powerful and creative ways. One of the questions I was often asked on telling people (especially older people who had been active in the anti-apartheid struggle) that I was doing research on young activists in post-apartheid South Africa, was ‘Really? Are there any activists left?’ There is a strong discourse that young, especially middle-class, South Africans are politically apathetic and only interested in personal enrichment and hedonistic pursuits, and although this may be part of the story, it is not all of it. There are young people in South Africa who are politically and socially interested and engaged, and who are working to create a more inclusive, equitable and just South African society. How they do it, however, does not always resemble the ways in which previous generations did it. The explosion of internet and mobile technologies are providing young activists with powerful ‘modern repertoires’ (Norris, 2004) of political action, whilst re–invigorated cultural understandings of power and resistance, are giving rise to more active modes of cultural
resistance. How young South African activists are doing their activism responds to the shifting socio–political and technological context, which both draws on the traditions of the past, and responds to the imperatives of the present.

The danger is, if we don’t take these debates seriously, and continue to limit ourselves to ‘traditional repertoires’ (Norris, 2004) of activism in our analyses, we fail to recognise these powerful emergent forms and overlook them. In overlooking them, not only do we fail to engage them theoretically as modes of political resistance, thereby reproducing an incomplete picture of our political landscape, but we also overlook them as rich, complex and important sites for identity formation.

Different [identities]⁵ become relevant, common or even possible, in different historical times, in different places and in different political situations. (Epstein, 1998, p. 49).

It is not just the political landscape which has shifted, however. According to Steyn (2001) ‘South Africans, willingly or unwillingly, successfully or unsuccessfully, are engaged in one of the most profound collective psychological adjustments happening in the contemporary world’ (Steyn, 2001, p. xxi). The transition to democracy has meant the complication of identities in post-apartheid South Africa, with different kinds of selves (Epstein, 1998), to those of apartheid South Africa, available across a wider range of identifications. Amongst others, the provisions of our Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) which ensure the rights of sexual, religious, cultural, etc. minorities has even in the face of continued prejudice and violence, created more legitimate social space for the enactment of these identities (Gevisser & Cameron, 1994). Global flows of popular culture are stronger than ever, and provide, especially, young South Africans with resources beyond this immediate context to forge their identities with (e.g. Besteman, 2008; Nuttall, 2004; Salo, 2005). Finally, with the delegitimisation of the master narrative of apartheid and its ideological foundation in white supremacy, racial identities are undergoing serious negotiation, and, for example, re–articulated whitenesses coexist with new racial identity formations (Steyn, 2001).⁶

Scholars working in the area of racialised identity formation have explored the changing shape of white (Steyn, 2001), coloured (Adhikahri, 2009; Erasmus, 2001), black especially middle-class identities (Nuttall, 2004; Stevens & Lockhat, 1997) and the increasingly rich and complex identities emerging in between. It is fairly obvious why Soudien (2007) suggests that identity in South Africa cannot be seen outside of a

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⁵ Epstein’s (1998) original thought was actually about masculinities. The quote read: ‘Different masculinities become relevant, common or even possible, in different historical times, in different places and in different political situations’ (p. 49).

⁶ Given the ways in which race has been used in South Africa to disenfranchise, devalue and dehumanise, I feel it is necessary to qualify my use of it here. Like all categories of social difference, I recognise race as ‘a social construct embedded in history and politics with fluid and changing rather than fixed and given meanings’ (Erasmus, 2008, p. 174). I use the apartheid category labels of black (African), white, coloured and indian inside of this understanding. It is also why I always use lowercase when writing them.
consideration of race and why any enquiry into identity must be cognisant of how racial identity projects in post-apartheid South Africa are undergoing major shifts. Although many of these shifts are rearticulations of the old apartheid categories and hierarchies, and specifically in the case of white identities, serve to entrench and perpetuate privilege (Steyn, 2011; Steyn & Foster, 2007), there are those identity projects that are working with race differently, in more progressive and reconciliatory ways. Interestingly, these differently raced identity projects are associated with social and political engagement (Besteman, 2008; Soudien, 2007).

Given the salience of shifts in identity, especially racial identity, as a feature of this post-apartheid landscape it must be considered an important feature of this generational consciousness. These young activists are inevitably negotiating their identities, not only as activists, but as men and women, straight and gay, black and white, etc. as they navigate the terrain, including the political terrain, of post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, the anti-apartheid struggle was a highly racialised one. As such, racial identity must surely be significant in the way these young activists inhabit the narratives of this legacy. The question that arises then is how? How do these contemporary contestations of identity, especially racial identity, intersect with the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle?

Given the significance of identity in general, and racial identity in particular, in the post-apartheid context and how it is likely to interface with activism, it is strange indeed that so little research has been done on this relationship. Enquiries into activism have generally been dominated by sociological accounts of the emergence, organisation and mobilisation of social movements especially the TAC (e.g. Ballard et. al., 2006), with only a handful of studies focussing in on activists’ identities. Where studies with a focus on identity have been conducted, they have been primarily about anti-apartheid activists (e.g. Conway, 2012; Price 2002). There have been very few studies into activist identity in post-apartheid South Africa (Chadwick & Foster, 2005; Squire, 2007), and where they have been conducted, some have addressed identity only obliquely (Robins, 2006). Furthermore, whereas all the studies with anti-apartheid activists focus on racial identity, not one of the post-apartheid studies does so. It is understandable given the broader range of struggles that the post-apartheid context presents that these studies will focus on areas such as HIV and AIDS and LGBTI struggles, but given the enduring significance of race in post-apartheid South Africa, the complete lack of engagement with race in the context of post-apartheid resistance politics is a gaping hole.

2. Activism & Identity

*It is through hearing stories that children learn what the cast of characters may be in the drama into which they have been born and what the ways of the world are.* (MacIntyre, 1981, p. 201)
The link between activism and identity is well established and there has been a growing recognition of the importance of the ‘psychological’ in social movement analyses (Stryker, Owens & White, 2000). Similarly, under what has been called the ‘cultural turn’ in social movement analyses there has been a growing recognition of social movements as cultural formations, and within that an energising of questions of identity in social movement analyses (e.g. McAdam, 1994; Melucci, 1985, 1995, 1996; Polletta, 2006). Here social movements are understood as ‘fragile and heterogeneous social constructions’ (Keane & Mier, 1989, p. 4), which exist in dialectical relationship with the identities of movement participants. Narrative theorists have conceptualised social movements as ‘bundle of narratives’ (Fine, 2002, p. 229) suggesting that this dialectical relationship takes a distinctly narrative form; in other words, it is not only that we ‘learn the cast of characters’ and ‘ways of the world’ through narrative, but that ‘we speak ourselves into communities, producing ourselves as subjects and communities’ (Morgan, 2004, p. 334).

Understanding social movements as cultural formations, means understanding that activism, like any other human activity, is a highly social one. This study understands this sociality through the prism of social constructionist accounts of collective identity (Melucci, 1995). Here collective identity is understood not simply as individuals aligning their individual beliefs to that of a particular organisation, but rather a ‘shared’ and ‘interactive’ way of being negotiated between participants in relation to movement ‘idiocultures’ (Fine, 2002). Furthermore, collective identity is not contained neatly within organisational membership, but rather takes expression through ‘networks of meaning’ which are largely ‘subterranean’ (Melucci, 1996), or occurring below the day-to-day business of being an activist. Here shared and interactive ways of being are not only expressed at protest marches, mass meetings, press conferences, but also cultural events, house parties, on Facebook and other online platforms, and can themselves translate into a form of ‘life politics’ or ‘politics of human life choices’ (Plummer, 1995, p. 147).

Using a social constructionist account of collective identity of this nature is important for an enquiry into activist identity in post-apartheid South Africa for two main of reasons. First, it recognises that identities, especially political identities, are constituted collectively. This does not mean that they are tethered to organisational memberships, simply that they are collectively mediated. As such activists will necessarily navigate the complexity of their political landscapes and their related identity projects in relation to various collectivities (political and social). Given the ambiguities around the battle lines, the emergence of so many new sites of struggle and the complexity of identity projects in general in post-apartheid South Africa, what these collectives are and how they mediate these activist identities provides an important insight, not only into these identities but also the political landscape. Second, it recognises that these collectivities do not simply take the shape of organisational membership. This is a serious limitation of most studies on activism in South Africa and elsewhere, which often restrict the application of collective identity to organisational membership, erasing vast tracts of political action from the analysis, most notably those which take the form of ‘life
politics’ (Plummer, 1995). Rising to this ‘morphological challenge’ (Melucci, 1989) does two things. It provides a means to examine how our politics is expressed in forms beyond those we usually acknowledge and in so doing expand our understandings of political action in any given context. It also opens new sites within which to examine identity formation.

For these reasons, this study takes this ‘morphological challenge’ very seriously. Understanding how individual activists inhabit the narratives of the past requires that we understand that this habitation is mediated through collectivity, and further, that this collectivity is morphologically much more complex than simple organisational membership. To engage the complexity of this generational consciousness with any less intricacy, risks missing the very details that make it sui generis.

3. This Study

Using a culturally-orientated approach to narrative (Squire, 2007), this study traces the ‘moral careers’ (Parker, 2005) of twenty–six young activists, based in Cape Town, South Africa. All are members of my extended social and professional network, they constitute a part of a larger ‘subterranean’ network of association, centred around social justice activism in Cape Town and represent a snapshot of middle-class, Cape Town based progressive/liberal politics and culture.

At the time of the interviews in 2009, they were under the age of forty, lived in the greater Cape Town area and were politically interested and active. This activity ranged from journalism, film-making, executive membership of fairly high profile social justice NGOs or academic research units, to being active volunteers in community based organisations. Although they did not all identify as activists, they all expressed a desire to contribute to the deepening of democracy and social justice in post-apartheid South Africa through their work and volunteerism. Their ambivalence around the term, in fact, yields some interesting contestation over what activism looks like in post-apartheid South Africa. None of them were active in the anti-apartheid struggle, although some of them had parents, family or friends who had been. They are black, white, coloured, male, female, Jewish, Christian, Buddhist, agnostic, atheist, straight, gay, bisexual, English, Afrikaans, Tswana, Shona, South African-born, Zimbabwean-born, originating from Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Cape Town, and various places in between, university educated and not. At the time of the interview, they all identified as middle-class.

Between January and September of 2009 I conducted two approximately ninety-minute interviews with each. The interviews were transcribed, and these transcriptions form the body of data for this study.
4. Limitations & Values

This study does not lay claim to some general truth the relationship between identity and activism in post-apartheid South Africa. Rather than making generalisations, this study is motivated by the importance of the particularisation and localisation of identity (Frankenberg, 1993; Hollway, 1989; Steyn, 2001) in order to fully engage with the theoretical articulations of the ‘multiplicity’ (Frankenberg, 1993) of these identities. The value lies in the exploration of how the various threads of their experience weave together to form the complex tapestry of their identities as young socially interested and active people. Nevertheless, the implications of this study are both particular and general, exploring individual articulations and examining ‘how each is inscribed in differing ways into a shared history’ (ibid., p. 18).

Relatedly it is limited in its range. It only focuses on middle-class, relatively socio-economically privileged participants. It does not focus on grassroots, township and community-based activists. This is not because it not rich and fertile ground for investigation, rather this focus is due to the following reason. The original focus of this project was on privileged positionality, and how people positioned as such came to activism in this post-apartheid context. Given that I wasn’t interested in any one particular issue or area of struggle\(^7\), deciding what constituted privilege proved difficult, and I arrived at class as the most appropriate cleavage. As such I sampled for people who identified as middle-class. However, using a snowballing methodology, I realised that the classed nature of my sample was not simply due to my sampling criteria, but a function of the network itself, which although diverse in many other ways, i.e. race, religion, sexuality, place of origin, etc. is deeply classed. I subsequently dropped the interest in privilege as a variable. However, class privilege is a characteristic of this sample, and will inform these identity projects.

The study is also only focused on Cape Town. There are, of course, political identity formation projects occurring in other metropoles. Cape Town is not special in this way. Johannesburg and Durban especially are sites of similarly emergent political identity projects, and given differences in racial dynamics across the cities, these would be interesting and theoretically important sites of enquiry. Cape Town, however, has a particular set of identity concerns and conflicts, especially with regards to race and a particular politics. Not only does it have a racial demography which is very different from the rest of South Africa\(^8\), but being the seat of Parliament, the capital of the only province run by the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA), the home of one of South Africa’s most liberal universities during the anti-apartheid struggle, the University

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\(^7\) If I had focussed on LGBTI struggles I could have sampled for straight people, gender for men, etc.

\(^8\) According to a survey conducted in 2010 by the South African Institute of Race Relations (2012a) the racial demographic breakdown of South Africa is as follows: 79.5% black, 8.9% coloured, 9% white and 2.5% indian. The Western Cape, the province where Cape Town is situated, is quite different with a much smaller black population (30.4%), a much larger coloured population (52.1%), a marginally larger white population (16.6%) and a smaller indian population (1%).
Finally, political consciousness and action does not only manifest in emancipatory ways, and as Castells (2010) points out ‘social movements may be socially conservative, socially revolutionary, or both or none’ (p. 73). People involved in conservative and right wing political movements are also politically interested and active. My interest is not with these groups of people. My interest is in people whose political alignments are emancipatory in nature and which contribute to social justice. I am interested in people who work to dismantle structures privilege and oppression, not (consciously) entrench them, and I follow Pieterse’s (2010) lead on what this progressive or emancipatory politics may look like:

… it must compel the powerful and privileged to be forced to acknowledge their different cultures and assumptions, which is typically rendered invisible by virtue of being the social norm… (p. 441).

5. Outline

This thesis is divided into three distinct but interrelated sections.

Chapters Two through Four elaborate on the argument for this study, providing context and theoretical foundation. Chapter Two provides a description of the social and political landscape which features so heavily in the consideration of these identities. It describes both significant political and social shifts since 1994, and considers the importance of these in enquiries into activist identities. Chapter Three provides a description and consideration of another kind of landscape; that of the theoretical debates around the nature of power and political resistance. Drawing on the politics of the new social movements, and most specifically feminism, it makes the argument for the importance of considering modern repertoires of political action in an enquiry of this nature. Chapter Four examines the relationship between activism and identity, and specifically how this has been articulated in South African studies. It introduces a social constructionist and narrative account of collective identity, which provides the argument for this study’s conceptualisation of identity as rendered collectively through narrative.

Chapters Five and Six provide the theoretical framework and commensurate methodology of this study. Chapter Five provides an overview of the salient debates in the field of narrative inquiry, thereby locating this study theoretically in a ‘culturally-orientated’ (Squire, 2008) approach to narrative. It also introduces positioning theory as further means to examine identity formation processes rendered through narrative. Chapter Six describes the methodology. This involves the operationalising of the theoretical framework, paying particular concern to the ethical dilemmas involved in a study of this nature.
Chapters Seven through Nine are the analysis chapters. All three analysis chapters draw on participants’ accounts of how they became politically interested and active, each focusing on a different but related aspect. Chapter Seven explores stories of belonging and exclusion, which provide insight into the sociality of political participation and identity formation. Through these stories the entanglements of social networks and personal relationships with political participation and related identity formation processes, are examined. Chapter Eight shifts to identity formation in the context of cultural and historical context. Two ‘master narratives’ (Andrews, 2004) or ‘morality plays’ (Andrews, 2007) are identified as the primary cultural resources which provide participants’ access to particular traditions of resistance and with which they construct their activist identities, namely ‘the Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’. The chapter examines how participants position themselves in relation to these narratives, and how these positionings are related to claims to political legitimacy. Chapter Nine, brings the previous two foci together by examining how the ways in which participants position themselves in specifically ‘the Struggle’ narrative, is profoundly a function of their sociality. The two most important aspects of this sociality are familial ties and race. Finally, Chapter Ten provides an overview of major learnings and considers what insights the findings provide into the generational consciousness of young activists in post-apartheid South Africa.
Chapter 2
Of Change & Continuities: The Historical & Political Context of Post-apartheid South Africa

South African society lingers as one of the few in the world where the structure of oppression appears clear. But as the judicial frameworks of segregation, disenfranchisement and minority privilege begin to fall away, what remains is a social reality which may be just as pernicious and disempowering, but much more murky – where it is harder to get a grip on just what factors and forces constitute the nature of oppression. (Simone cited in Hook, Kiguwa, Mkhize & Collins, 2004, p. 273)

Not only has South Africa undergone one of the most remarkable political transitions in modern history, but tucked away on the southern tip of Africa, it has not escaped the cultural and economic ‘flows’ and ‘forces’ (Burawoy, 2000) of globalisation. It is this ‘double transition’ (Alexander, 2006), which informs this ‘generational consciousness’ (Mannheim, 1952) and provides the context for identity formation projects. However, ‘new identity is always post-some-old-identity’ (Appiah, 1998, p. 98) and post-apartheid South Africa, is still a South Africa deeply shaped by colonial and apartheid histories. Like any other place in any other time it vibrates between history and possibility, both rendering the present. Any consideration of identity must be located in context; recognising this history, whilst simultaneously being open to new articulations, expressions and forms.

This chapter traces the shifts and continuities that characterise post-apartheid South Africa. It does this with an understanding that these shifts and continuities all render the particular context, which informs the generational consciousness of young South African activists, and as such are relevant to the engagement of these identities. First, it examines shifts in the social and economic context of post-apartheid South Africa. Secondly, it considers emergent identity formations, especially racialised ones. Finally, it considers the continuities and changes in our resistance politics.

1. Shifting Economic & Social Context

According to Alexander (2006) post-apartheid South Africa is a context shaped by the double transition of democratisation and globalisation, where the effects of globalisation were delayed due to the repressive nature of the apartheid government and the internal struggle against it. South Africa only became fully open to these economic and cultural flows and forces after 1994, the year that marked the political transition to democracy,
resulting in much more complex social and cultural fabric (Alexander, 2006). However, economic globalisation serving the interests of neo-liberal capitalism has resulted in a hierarchical, ‘vertical arrangement’ (ibid.) of culture and capital. A major aspect of the compromise of the realisation of social justice in South Africa was the adoption of the ‘forceful flow’ of neoliberal economic models and by extension, the associated ideological framework of governance (Robins, 2008a). This has not only had an impact on the socio-economic and political landscape, but as a result, also on the nature of struggles for social justice in post-apartheid South Africa (Ballard et al., 2006; Gibson, 2006; Robins 2005, 2008). Constraints imposed by global financial institutions and the subsequent adoption of economic policies like Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) have undermined the social transformation agenda of the post-apartheid state cementing post-apartheid South Africa’s commitment to neoliberal capital (Alexander, 2006; Goldberg, 2009; Robins, 2005, 2008). Although South Africa’s economy has grown steadily so have levels of highly racialised economic inequality, with South Africa having one of the highest GINI coefficients in the world. South Africa’s (economic and racial) inequalities now resemble those of countries, like the United States of America and Brazil, where inequality and poverty are accepted as an ‘unfortunate, but normal’ (Besteman, 2008, p. 7).

Compounding socio-economic misfortune has been the impact of HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS presents as one of the most crippling influences on the lived realities of millions of (especially) poor black South Africans. Eleven per cent of all South Africans over the age of two are infected with HIV, with a disproportionate amount of those being young black women (Shisana et al., 2009). Not only does this pose a critical public health issue but it has social and economic repercussions, not least of all the loss of a generation of young productive people and the orphaning of millions of children. According to Posel (2008) HIV and AIDS is ‘far more than a matter of public health’, in that it has ‘wide ranging political and symbolic repercussions that cut to the very meaning of South Africa’s “liberation”’ (p. 18). The challenges posed by HIV and AIDS to the lived realities of South Africans are those which show up the extent to which that ‘liberation’ is incomplete (Britton, 2002). The advent of HIV and AIDS in post-apartheid South Africa is particularly significant to this study, as HIV and AIDS activism has become a definitive point of struggle in the post-apartheid context through organisations like the TAC.

Gender is another significant site of social inequality. Although never formally institutionalised like race,

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9 It is argued that globalisation is hardly a new phenomenon (colonialism was also associated with increased ‘force’ and ‘flow’ of culture and capital too), thereby calling into question the seismic societal shifts that it might have engendered. Hall (1997a) points out that even though located in a much longer history, the current post-modern global context provides new ‘forms’ and ‘rhythms’ of global relationship.

10 Introduced in 1996 GEAR is a macro-economic plan aimed at developing a ‘competitive fast growing economy’ (Department of Finance, 1996, p.1), which involves primarily the ‘brisk expansion’ (ibid., p. 2) of the private sector in order to create wealth and jobs. Its critics argue that growth does not equate distribution of wealth, and that its focus on global competitiveness and expansion is in fact increasing levels of socio-economic inequality.

11 According to The Presidency of the Republic of South Africa (2009), South Africa’s GINI coefficient is above 0.5 and indicates extremely high levels of racialised inequality.
gender was given similar consideration in the Constitution of our new democracy and its transformative instruments. Provisions were made for women in employment equity\textsuperscript{12}, and although men still hold disproportionate levels of seniority in organisations, there has been a marked increase in women in senior positions (Commission for Employment Equity, 2011). Women now, for example, make up for forty-five per cent of representation in Parliament (‘SA tops SADC women’s representation’, 2010). Thorough sexual harassment policies are mandatory for all companies and civil society have made important contributions to criminal law through, for example, the Sexual Offences Act of 2007. However, as with race, despite formal measures to counter gender inequality and sexism, South Africa remains a deeply patriarchal society, with high levels of gendered inequality and violence. Black women remain the poorest demographic of our population (South African Institute of Race Relations, 2012b) and where progress has been made with regards to gender in the formal economy, it is largely white women who are the beneficiaries (Commission for Employment Equity, 2011). Our rape statistics are amongst the highest in the world, and our legal justice system continues to fail the mostly female victims of gender based violence and sexual assault (South African Police Services, 2011).

Like gender, struggles over LGBTI\textsuperscript{13} rights are another significant site of struggle. Although LGBTI communities obviously existed under apartheid, South Africa’s new Constitutional provisions have provided greater freedom and legitimacy for ‘others’, like LGBTI communities, to lay claim to community and its commensurate rights. Developments such as the passing of the 2006 Civil Union Act (which makes provision for same sex marriage) demonstrate the possibilities of community made possible by the new legal framework. However, like gender, the provisions on paper often fail to translate into lived reality. Despite the provisions of the Constitution, homophobia has taken on particularly virulent form in recent years, finding expression in homophobic statements by the President (see for example ‘Zuma earns wrath of gays’, 2006) to, most tragically, the targeted murder of black lesbians (see for example Kelly, 2009).

None of this is to suggest that post-apartheid South Africa is a completely different place to apartheid South Africa. On the contrary, many of the social ills South Africa faces are a function of apartheid’s pernicious legacy and much of the logic that pervades the discrimination and violence of post-apartheid South Africa has origins in apartheid logics. What shifting social realities suggest is just that; that the social fabric is shifting. This place is not ‘new’, but it is changing, and nowhere is this more notable than in relation to race. Although the state no longer experiences itself as explicitly racially ordered, the ‘analytics of racism’ remain embedded in the ‘structural informalities of society’ (Goldberg, 2009, p. 314), mirroring the ‘global normal’ (ibid.). Although South African enjoys the growth of a black middle-class, facilitated in part by measures such as

\textsuperscript{12} The Employment Equity Act of 1998 makes provision for the implementation of affirmative action ‘to redress disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups’ (p. 5). These designated groups include ‘black people, women and people with disabilities’ (ibid., p. 3).

\textsuperscript{13} Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Intersex
Employment Equity and Black Economic Empowerment\textsuperscript{14}, economic inequalities remain deeply racialised. According to Goldberg (2009) ‘post-apartheid South Africa, then, has come to exemplify neoliberal racial articulation’ (p. 314) and like other neoliberalising racial contexts (USA and Brazil) rather than be explicitly articulated through state structures, like during apartheid, ‘race [has] faded into the very structures embedded in the architecture, of neoliberal sociality, in its logics and social relations’ (ibid.).

Evidence of this is seen across South African society. Organisations, including those in higher education, continue to struggle with lack of demographic transformation (Commission for Employment Equity Report, 2010–2011), and racist institutional cultures (Soudien, 2008; Steyn & Kelly, 2010). Sometimes this is manifest in informal, everyday ways such as experiences of everyday racism (Erasmus and De Wet, 2006), other times it takes on overt and tragic dehumanisation, such as occurred at the University of the Free State in 2008\textsuperscript{15}. Racialised spatial segregation persists, and is in fact being compounded through growing securitisation. A number of scholars have explored the ways in which space is being racially policed in post-apartheid South Africa using rhetorics of crime, disease, property price, etc. (Ballard, 2004a & b; Popke & Ballard, 2004). Durrheim and Dixon (2001) and Dixon and Durrheim’s (2003) studies of beaches on KwaZulu-Natal’s south coast show how beachgoers’ spatial organisation follow apartheid racial categorisations. Studies of racial patterns of interaction conducted in Long Street in Cape Town\textsuperscript{16} show similar patterns of informal segregation (Dixon, Tredoux, Durrheim, Finchilescu & Clack, 2008; Tredoux & Dixon, 2009). Studies at the University of Cape Town show how friendship groupings in the university’s residences follow similar patterns (Finchilescu & Tredoux, 2007). Race and racism continue to find expression in more and more complex ways. Nadine Dolby’s (2001) work with school children of various races in Durban shows how various genres or music and the associated aesthetic are deeply racialised and result in racial segregation under the guise of ‘taste’. Pattman and Bhana’s (2009) work with black and Indian teenagers in KwaZulu Natal is a powerful study in how race operates through constructions of gender, but also how apartheid’s racial hierarchies continue to inform the subjectivities of both black and white people. Finally, racism is being directed in ever more complex ways. The xenophobic violence of 2008\textsuperscript{17} brought sharply into focus the expression of racialised animosities against black African immigrants. Although many scholars account for the violence and ongoing harassment of black African immigrants in purely socio-economic terms, analysts like Erasmus (2005), Nyamnjoh (2006) and Gqola (2008) recognise apartheid’s racial logics at work.

\textsuperscript{14} As made provision for in the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003), the intention of which is to ‘increase the broad-based and effective participation of black people in the economy’ (p. 3).

\textsuperscript{15} In February 2008 controversy erupted when four white students, from a residence named Reitz, made a video depicting five black workers being subjected to various activities. Amongst these activities, was the forced consumption of food, which had apparently been urinated on. The case received international and local coverage and was widely condemned. It also generated high levels of racial hostility on campus (‘Racist video’, 2008, February 26).

\textsuperscript{16} Long Street is a main street in the Cape Town city centre. Known for its numerous pubs, restaurants and clubs it is arguably the centre of nightlife in Cape Town.

\textsuperscript{17} In May 2008 large groups of South African citizens violently attacked and killed foreign nationals from other parts of the continent, in communities across the country. Tens of thousands of foreign nationals were displaced while their businesses were looted and homes ransacked (South African Migration Project, 2008).
Although of course not an exhaustive account, this section has mapped out some of what I consider to be the most important co-ordinates in the social and economic landscape of post-apartheid South Africa, which form the backdrop for the activist identity projects under interrogation in this thesis. The following section expands on the exploration of this landscape, focussing in its commensurate shifting identity projects.

2. Shifting Identity Projects

The double transition of democratisation and globalisation, has also had profound implications for identity formation projects in post-apartheid South Africa (Alexander, 2006). According to Steyn (2001):

The social revisions brought about by the political realignment of the different population groups in relation to each other are far reaching and complex, and multiple. Not least among these are the renegotiation of identities (p. xxi).

This renegotiation in post-apartheid South Africa involves asking questions like ‘Who am I in a democratic South Africa?’ and ‘Who is my community, now that the world of possibility is much broader?’ (Besteman, 2008, p. 12) to make sense of the ‘significance and relevance’ (ibid.) of ‘old’ social categories in relation to the post-apartheid context. With the fragmentation of the master narrative of apartheid came not only the fragmentation of the identities with which it was associated, but compounding these extraordinary political circumstances, are greater global flows and forces brought about by the opening of South Africa’s political, economic and cultural borders in the processes of globalisation. Increased global flows have resulted in greater numbers of interactions with ‘others’, and as a result the relevatisation of old narratives and more access to alternative positionality through expanded interactions (Massey, 1993). Although accompanied by uncertainty and potentially conflict, these opportunities have meant a greater multiplicity of possible identities for South Africans, and important opportunities for the remaking of identities. Although this is true for all identity formations including gendered, national, cultural, etc. identities, it is especially true with regards to race.

According to Soudien (2008) in South Africa ‘identity became synonymous with race, and as a consequence, inexpressible outside race’ (p. 13). As such ‘it is impossible to think about social identities in South Africa without the consideration of race and ethnicity’ (Alexander, 2006, p. 24). This is not to reduce all questions of identity to those of racial identity, but simply to point to the power of race in rendering identity projects in post-apartheid South Africa. So although identities informed by all manner of social cleavage are being ‘inhabited’ differently (Erasmus, 2004) in this post-apartheid context, given its historical salience, this study
is interested primarily in racial identity, and secondarily in those identities which intersect with race, like gender, sexual orientation and nationality.

Numerous scholars have considered the shifting racial identities in post-apartheid South Africa. The two largest bodies of work on racial identity are in the areas of colouredness/coloured identity and whiteness/white identity. Arguably, most contested amongst South Africa’s post-apartheid racial identification is that of colouredness. Scholars like Erasmus (2001) and Adhikari (2005, 2009) trace the evolution and contestation of coloured identity from pre-apartheid through to post-apartheid South Africa, and there are a number of studies exploring the effect of South Africa’s double transition on possibilities for identification through, for example hip-hop and popular culture (Battersby, 2003; Pieterse, 2010), and their intersections with gender (Salo & Davids, 2009). Similarly, Steyn (2001) traces the evolution of white identity, largely tracking how white South Africans are making sense of being white in a post-apartheid South Africa. She identifies five narratives of whiteness engaged by white South Africans, ranging from those which assume unchanged relationships between black and white, and those which are challenging this relationship by attempting to ‘move away’ (p. 58) from their whiteness. Unfortunately, according to Steyn (2004, 2005), white identity still largely involves finding ways to reconстallate master narratives of whiteness and white privilege, through what she calls ‘white talk’. She has considered especially the crisis in Afrikaner identity as Afrikaners navigate a whiteness ‘disgraced’ (Steyn, 2004) attempting to find a place for Afrikanerdom in the New South Africa.

However, shifting identity projects also generate the possibility of potentially progressive ways of being. According to Alexander (2006) ‘people at local level draw on global resources in forging new and potentially “progressive” identities’ (p. 20). This opportunity to inhabit race differently (Erasmus, 2004) is especially relevant to those subject positions which have been historically centred, in this case white people. This ‘subjective decentring’ (Sandoval, 2000, p. 27) is, interestingly, reflected in the post-apartheid autobiographical work of white South Africans. In their overview of auto/biography in contemporary South Africa, Couille et al. (2006) make the point that ‘in the past decade it seems that an uncommonly large number of life stories evince uncertainty and also greater formal freedom’ (p. 35) which has the effect of ‘opening selves up to new models of truth and negotiating new kinds of selves’ (p. 35), especially, racialised

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18 According to Steyn (2001) all these narratives are underwritten by the apartheid version of the master narrative of whiteness but define varying relative positions to it. Still colonial after all these years is a narrative, which basically assumes an unchanged power relationship between blacks and whites; whites superior, blacks inferior. This shouldn’t happen to a white constructs whites as victims in a situation which is a reversal of the ways things should be, that is whites superior and blacks inferior. The narrators of Don’t think white it’s alright acknowledge the change in the power relationship between black and white, however, and are ‘trying to find practical, even creative, ways to remain white in the new South Africa’ (ibid., p. 58). Then there are those who did not ‘internalise the enculturation of racialised South African society’ (ibid.). Theirs is a tale of evasion and captured in A whiter shade of white. Finally there are those ‘who are moving away from their whiteness’ (ibid.) in different ways – they tell the story of Under African skies or White but not quite.
selves. They make reference to works by Antjie Krog\textsuperscript{19}, Breyten Breytenbach\textsuperscript{20}, and Wilhelm Verwoerd\textsuperscript{21}, all of whom present deeply contested narratives of themselves as post-apartheid racialised subjects.

The most active area of research into questions of potentially progressive racial identity formation related to the double transition, however, is in the area of youth culture. Soudien (2007) suggests that growing up in post-apartheid South Africa requires not only significant ‘headwork’ (p. 1), but that it amounts to a ‘challenge of consciousness’ (p. 2). Although shaped by their race, class, language, gender and apartheid history, young South Africans are much more than that, and we need to account for the ‘incredible refusal of [some] young people to succumb to the pressures of conflicting social forces’ (ibid., p. 32). The main tension in this challenge of consciousness, is the integration of historical, especially racial, location and adherent legacies and the homogenising imperatives of globalisation, in identity formation projects.

Nuttall’s (2004) work with what she calls ‘generation Y’ shows how young South African’s of all races living in Johannesburg access global consumer culture as a way of transcending racial identifications. Salo’s (2005) work with coloured youth in Manenberg in Cape Town shows similarly how young women are able to construct themselves outside of the confines of their repressive, racialised, local contexts by accessing global cultural products like soap operas and music. Similarly, hip-hop has been a medium for ‘for township youth to connect with a transnational urban and ghetto youth culture’ and to provide ‘an art form for exploring local realities and identities’ (Besteman, 2008, p. 183). Especially more conscious hip-hop with its message of black consciousness has provided opportunities for young black and coloured people to imagine and inhabit race differently (Battersby, 2003; Haupt, 2008; Pieterse, 2010). With that said, there are, however, critics of the over-optimism of the potential for global culture to eradicate local prejudice and social division and Salo (2005) also reminds us that ‘the creative use of these imported cultural practices and products frequently resonate with local social division and struggles around race, gender and class and the struggles about the meanings of local identities’ (p. 175). The previously cited study by Dolby (2001), where global popular culture becomes an expression of local racial cleavages, is a case in point.

Amongst more socially conscious youth identities\textsuperscript{22}, however, Soudien (2007) identifies a ‘cross-racial’ (as opposed to anti-racial or non-racial) character. By cross-racial he means that:

\textsuperscript{19} Country of my skull (1998) and A change of tongue (2003)
\textsuperscript{20} Dog heart: A travel memoir (1998)
\textsuperscript{21} \textit{Viva Verwoerd: Kronieke van 'n keuse} (1996) with English translation \textit{My winds of change} (1997). Verwoerd is grandson of H.F. Verwoerd, President of South Africa from 1958 to 1966, and considered to be the ‘architect of apartheid’.
\textsuperscript{22} Soudien (2007) identifies two main categories of identity formation projects amongst South African youth: \textit{Identities of Challenge} and \textit{Identities of Possibility}. Interestingly, these are not racially defined, although race does determine their context and detail. \textit{Identities of Challenge} are those framed in negativity and lack of hope, expressed and experienced differently by black and white youth. \textit{Identities of Possibility} on the other hand ‘put[s] new relationships, new understandings of self and visions for where one might go within reach of young people’ (pg. 119).
… race is still present in their narrations. It remains in how they see themselves and how they relate to each other and their narrations of themselves often begin with assertions of their race. Their intention behind it is to declare their awareness of the politics around them (Soudien, 2007, p. 119).

In its more radical form it is aware of and concerned with the way in which structural inequalities are perpetuated through race, class and gender. Inside this concerns lies the real potential to ‘build solidarity with others around them – the ‘others’ of their history’ (Soudien, 2007, p. 124). According to Soudien (2007) these youth are:

… exploring the frontiers of their consciousness. In the process they are declaring their own solidarities, which still continue to take a racialised form but they have the potential for crossing that boundary (p. 124).

This section has briefly examined some of the most important shifts in (racial) identity formation that characterise the post-apartheid landscape. Having examined both these identity projects and the context they find expression in, I now turn to the other important and equally contested terrain – that of post-apartheid resistance politics and activism.

3. From Revolution to Rights: The Evolution of Social Movements in Post-apartheid South Africa

*The period of transition [from authoritarianism to democracy] is not politics as usual; it offers new opportunities and different sets of constraints ...* (Jacquette, 1989, p. 13)

*The weapons of the 1980s are no longer appropriate. The government is no longer the enemy of the people.* (Meer, 1999, p.111)

The double transition of democratisation and globalisation, has not only been significant with regards to economic and social landscapes, but also, fairly predictably, political ones. Although expected by many to mean the ‘demobilisation of civil society and the bureaucratisation of political life’ (Robins, 2008a, p. 9), the eighteen-year post-apartheid period has seen a ‘proliferation’ of political struggles in South Africa (Pieterse, 2010, p. 428).

According to Ballard et al. (2006) ‘the post-apartheid moment imparts [social movements] with a particular character’ (p. 398). They identify six main types of popular political post-apartheid struggles. First is activism directed against government with regards to issues of access to basic resources as taken up by for example the
TAC. Second is opposition to the state, banks and landlords to fight against evictions and for land rights. Organisations working in this area are, for example, the Anti-Eviction Campaign. Third are the trade unions, housed mainly within the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which, although part of the ruling alliance, continues to organise mass action. Fourth are environmental activist groups, like the Environmental Justice Networking Forum who direct their activism toward corporations and the government, usually on issues of pollution. Fifth are organisations which take up issues of social prejudice. These organisations include those which tackle issues related to, for example, gender (e.g. Rape Crisis, Sonke Gender Justice), sexual orientation (e.g. Triangle Project), xenophobia (e.g. People against Suffering, Oppression and Poverty) and disability (e.g. Disabled People South Africa). Finally, there are organisations like Jubilee South Africa, who are working on issues like apartheid reparations.

The point that Ballard et al. (2006) make about this range of activist projects, is that ‘unlike their apartheid counterparts they do not share a common counter hegemonic political project’ (p. 400). They identify two directions that these struggles take: rights-based opposition and counter-hegemonic opposition (ibid.). Rights based opposition approaches are those which seek to ensure that government deliver the basic rights enshrined in the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and the problem is usually considered to be one of deficient policy or lack of implementation. Counter-hegemonic opposition on the other hand, is informed more by ‘class-based ideologies’, describing themselves as anti-capitalist, anti-GEAR, anti-market, Trotskyist, etc., and consider rights-based approaches as ‘reformist’ and ‘collaborationist’ (ibid., p. 401). The counter-hegemonic position is that collaboration with the neo-liberal state amounts to serving bourgeois interests, and that rights-based movements are not movements at all but rather simply organisations tasked with implementing policy. Liberal rights based political struggles are considered to inevitably lead to the fragmentation and undermining of potential for collective emancipatory politics (Robins 2008a). However, Ballard et al. (ibid.) suggest that this ‘reform’/‘revolution’ distinction is mostly ‘academic’ as struggles in post-apartheid South Africa respond primarily to very ‘particular manifestations of exclusion, poverty and marginality’ (p. 402). They also suggest that the opposing sides require each other, playing complementary roles, and that in fact many organisations position themselves differently along this continuum at different times.

Robins (2008a) also challenges this binary and argues that political struggle in post-apartheid South Africa has been characterised by a shift from a ‘revolution’ to a ‘rights’ based culture. In this shift he is referring to both the shift in the African National Congress’ (ANC)23 ‘political lexicon’ from ‘radical keywords’ such as socialism and revolution to ‘tamer’ words such as rights and transformation (p. 3) as well as the increasing recognition of the ‘emancipatory potential of rights based approaches’ by post-apartheid NGOs and social movement activists (ibid.). However, he does not associate this shift with the fragmentation, individualisation

23 The African National Congress has been the ruling party in South Africa since 1994.
and demobilisation of collective struggle or bourgeois collaboration. Trade unions for example remain very influential in post-apartheid South Africa, especially in the context of the Zuma presidency, and have posed a powerful challenge to the ANC government’s neoliberal economic policies (Ballard et al., 2006; Gibson, 2006; Robins, 2005, 2008a). The narrative of class struggle is still immensely powerful in post-apartheid South Africa, and still wields the power of large scale mobilisation debunking notions that we are seeing the ‘fragmentation of popular struggles against global capital and its allies’ (Robins, 2008a, p. 10).

Gibson (2006) also calls into question the neat binary that is drawn between ‘old’ and ‘new’ social movements in South Africa. So-called ‘new’ social movements like TAC for example, have a close and cooperative association with COSATU. Furthermore, Gibson (2006) suggests that South Africa has a long tradition of new social movements, which mobilised outside of the master narrative of class and were concerned with questions of identity, most notably the black consciousness movement of the 1970s. In fact, Thörn (2006) points out that the anti-apartheid struggle, which he defines as a social movement, laid the foundation for many present day global, transnational new social movements responding to the challenges of global neoliberalism. Robins (2008a) argues that the new social movements in South Africa have mobilised around both persisting and new axes of inequality and oppression including cultural identity, and they have done so in unique and complex ways, strategically engaging with the ANC government and international civil society.

Robins (2008a) also does not equate the appropriation of this rights based culture with simple neo-colonial enterprise such as scholars like Chaterjee (1991). In fact, he is critical of such binary positions because, as he illustrates, they ‘flatten’ and ‘occlude’ the ‘complexity and situational strategising’ (Robins, 2008a, p. 7) of the pragmatic mobilisation of both South Africa’s legacy of revolutionary based struggle and a new rights based engagement, and argues that social movements in South Africa generate new forms of solidarity to powerful effect. He argues that positions like Hardt and Negri’s (2000) do not take into account the ‘complex and situational ways in which ‘beneficiaries’ engage with NGOs’ (Robins, 2008a, p. 23) and even though:

> NGOs and social movements are indeed often the mediators of liberal modernist ideas and practices relating to rights and citizenship, this need not be at the behest of global capital or at the expense of popular forms of collective mobilization (ibid., p. 24).

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24 For some like Hardt & Negri (2000) globalisation is simply a euphemism for neo-colonialism. Where the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and multinational corporations do the economic work of this colonial enterprise, the *moral* work is done by international aid agencies and NGOs like Oxfam and Amnesty International. According to Hardt & Negri (2000) these organisations ‘conduct ‘just war’ without arms without violence without borders’ and are ‘some of the most powerful pacific weapons of the new world order’ (p. 36). However, most scholars view globalisation as an interaction between global and local contexts.
He uses the appropriation of ‘rights based approaches’ by most South African movements to illustrate how global discourse has in fact opened up powerful new repertoires of political challenge in post-apartheid South Africa and how collaborative relationships between international and local NGOs like Medécins Sans Frontières (MSF) and TAC have opened up important new avenues for political action. Through further illustration of the land claims cases of the Nama people25 he argues that ‘in post-colonial contexts like South Africa it makes eminent sense for social actors to speak in the language of rights and culture’ (p. 6), and argues that ‘rights is increasingly the accepted language of political claims in South Africa’ (ibid.).

Regardless of this cleavage, the post-apartheid context is characterised by one very important difference to apartheid South Africa, and that is that it is underwritten by a Constitution which enshrines certain fundamental rights (Ballard et al., 2006). It also provides a ‘wide range of democratic spaces’ (p. 405) and ‘in-system mechanisms for influencing policy and challenging government’ which movements from across the ideological range can, and have, made use of. The aforementioned Nama land claims are a good example of this. The significance of this difference can also be seen in the evolution of movements which span the political epochs.

For example, although women had always been active in the anti-apartheid struggle, women’s struggles were largely subordinate to and constrained by the larger nationalist struggle. As such women’s roles in the anti-apartheid struggle were largely based in patriarchal notions of women’s roles in society and ‘feminism was delegitimized as a model of liberation’ (Hassim, 2006, p. 160). However, political transition provided the opportunity for the insertion of women’s rights into the formal agendas of the new dispensation. According to Hassim (2006) the context of negotiated settlement in South Africa ‘produced a rights based discourse that opened up a space for women activists to extend feminist conceptions of democracy’ (p. 160). In addition, the ANC’s concern with structural transformation, which found expression in the Constitution and Bill of Rights, provided the women’s movement with a claim to gender equality made on the grounds of democracy itself (ibid., p. 130)26. Similarly, homosexuality was never a ‘significant point of rally’ (Dirsuweit, 2006, p. 329) within the liberation struggle. Like the women’s movements the LGBTI movement established an umbrella organisation in 1994, called the National Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality (NCGLE) to petition for

25 The Nama people are an ethnic and cultural minority resident in the Namaqualand area of South Africa and parts of Namibia. Although denied their cultural identity during apartheid (being classified simply as coloured), the Nama have reclaimed and mobilised this identity in order to demand restitution of the land that they had been dispossessed of under the apartheid government (Robins, 2008a).

26 A cornerstone of the post-apartheid claim to gender equality was the Women’s Charter. Put together by the Women’s National Coalition (WNC) it was, in the same tradition as the Freedom Charter, an expression of the interests of women across all levels of society (Hassim, 2006) which came to inform the negotiation process as well as the Constitution (ibid.). The WNC was founded in April 1992. Comprising seventy organisations and eight regional coalitions it was established to represent the interests of women, independent from the male dominated concerns the ANC (and potentially the ANC Women’s League), in the processes involved in the transition to democracy, including the drafting of the Constitution. (Hassim, 2006)
inclusion of sexual orientation in the equality clause. This was achieved, and the South African Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) clearly supports LGBTI rights.\textsuperscript{27}

Thus the government, unlike during apartheid, is not only the ‘enemy of the people’. Robins (2008a) argues that ‘while the political meanings and resonance of ideas such as civil society, democracy, rights and citizenship appeared to be relatively clear cut to anti-apartheid activists during the 1980s, their meanings have become increasingly ambiguous in recent years’ (p. 13). For example, many key activists and old avenues of opposition [the ANC, United Democratic Front (UDF)\textsuperscript{28} and civic organisations] are now either in or in collaboration with government. Civil society as a whole have had ‘to reposition themselves in relation to the new government – a government elected by the majority of South Africans and in whose machinery are many former comrades and colleagues’ (Meer, 1999, p. 167).

Having said all of this it would be erroneous to suggest what is now is new. Post-apartheid South African political struggle is simultaneously shaped by the threads of as it is by the narrative threads of our situated history. Seekings (2000) suggests that ‘the whole character of the overall post-apartheid political system reflects in some respects, the influence of the UDF’ and that ‘the legacy of the UDF can be seen in the character of South African democracy, the contours of political society and the chequered emergence of civil society’. As Ballard et al. (2006) point out ‘new movements often innovate with existing repertoires’ (p. 3) in a process that Epstein (1996) calls ‘social movement spill-over’, where movements are ‘built on the foundations of other movements or borrowed from their particular strengths and inclinations’ (p. 12).

TAC exemplifies this ‘spillover’. Although a model of the rights based activism afforded by a constitutional democracy, reflected in their active utilisation of in-system mechanisms like the Constitutional Court to compel policy change and implementation, the TAC also draw heavily on the model of mobilisation adopted by the anti-apartheid movement (Robins, 2008a; Mbali, 2004). According to Robins (2008b):

\begin{quote}
TAC’s rights-based politics were profoundly shaped by the experiences of its members who had participated in the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the 1980s. Such an activist legacy also found expression in songs at marches, demonstrations and funerals. This political style was a sophisticated refashioning of the 1980s political rhetoric and modes of activism, drawing on the courts, the media, and local and transnational advocacy networks, along with grassroots mobilisation and skilful negotiations with business and the state (p.188–189).
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{27} Please see Appendix One for a more detailed account of the evolution of the women’s and LGBTI movements in post-apartheid South Africa.

\textsuperscript{28} Launched in 1983, the United Democratic Front was a non-racial coalition of over four hundred anti-apartheid organisations. It is widely considered to have been one of the most important and influential organisations in the anti-apartheid struggle (Seekings, 2000).
This relationship between anti-apartheid and post-apartheid activism is a complex one, however. According to Squire (2007) ‘While it is often expected that the struggle against apartheid provides the foundational legacy for current activism, including HIV activism, there is no simple correspondences between such traditions and effective HIV politics’ (p. 179). For Squire (2007) there is both a translation of and dissociation from this history (p. 179). For example, the TAC draw simultaneously on anti-apartheid traditions (e.g. the Defiance Campaign against the ‘Pass Laws’\(^\text{29}\)) and other international campaigns (e.g. the ACT UP campaigns in New York of the 1980s\(^\text{30}\)) (ibid.). Furthermore, the tradition of the anti-apartheid struggle is not an uncontested, homogenous one. The anti-apartheid struggle was characterised by a number of cleavages including: those who went to jail vs. those who didn’t, those who stayed in South Africa vs. those who were in exile, those who were in exile in Africa vs. those who were in exile in the Soviet bloc, men vs. women (Squire, 2007, p. 180), and, of course, those with different organisational affiliations. Conway (2012) for example, explores how some members of the End Conscription Campaign (ECC)\(^\text{31}\), drew a clear distinction between their participation in the ECC, and participation in the ANC, citing that participation in the former did not equate to participation in the latter.

Thus what is meant by the tradition of resistance as defined by the anti-apartheid struggle is in fact highly contested. This contestation plays out in current political contests where we see ‘competing claims for anti-apartheid legacy’ (Squire, 2007, p. 180) in relation to the struggle against HIV and AIDS; on one side the ANC government as the bearers of the struggle legacy, on the other the ANC government as comparable to the apartheid regime, and the TAC as bearers of the struggle legacy (ibid.). Nowhere is this more powerfully illustrated than in Zapiro’s cartoon of 15 June 2006 called The new struggle which serves as a palimpsest of the iconic image of Hector Pieterson, written over with the struggle against HIV and AIDS (Allen, 2009)\(^\text{32}\). Replicating a TAC poster from the early 2000s, Allen (2009) suggests that the cartoon illustrates not only ‘social movement spillover’, but ‘how the very effective signifying practices of the anti-apartheid movement have also been regrafted onto the battle against HIV/AIDS’ (p. 402). Suggesting that the TAC are literally the bearers of ‘the new struggle’ which is that against HIV and AIDS is a very powerful statement about not only who the antagonists of the new struggle are, but who the legitimate bearers of the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle are.

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\(^\text{29}\) The Defiance Campaign was a campaign of non-compliance with what were called ‘Pass Laws’, which required black South Africans to carry ‘passes’ in order to move into and through white designated areas.

\(^\text{30}\) ACT UP stands for AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power. Still in existence, the organisation advocates for the rights of those living with HIV and AIDS. In the late 1980s ACT UP New York organised a number of highly visible campaigns advocating for various reforms, including the significant reduction in the cost of anti-retroviral drugs. (http://www.actupny.com/)

\(^\text{31}\) The ECC was a campaign of ‘conscientious objection’ run between 1983 and 1988. These were young white men who refused to respond to and petitioned against the apartheid government’s requirement for all young white South African men to participate in compulsory military service on the grounds that the South African Defense Force (SADF) was fighting an unjust and racial civil war (Conway, 2005). According to Philips (2002) the ECC was one the most significant white ‘extra-parliamentary’ groups participating in the anti-apartheid struggle.

\(^\text{32}\) Zapiro, whose real name is Jonathan Shapiro is a South African political cartoonist. Please see Appendix Two for the cartoon.
These competing claims over guardianship of the struggle are an important dynamic in claims to political and moral legitimacy and interestingly not unique to South Africa. In her work on post-Civil Rights activism in the USA, Polletta (2006, 1998a) examines the contest between ‘protest elites’ and ‘electoral elites’, and how each ‘styled themselves as legitimate heirs to that earlier activism’ (p. 152), thereby claiming contemporary political legitimacy. As Polletta (2006) points out ‘the stewardship of an insurgent past can be crucial terrain for fighting out continuing leadership claims between protest elites and electoral ones’ (p. 164). As various contemporary political players in post-apartheid South Africa style themselves as legitimate heirs of the anti-apartheid struggle, this battle over stewardship which the previous example of the TAC/ANC contest embodies, is a crucially important feature of this post-apartheid political landscape.

There are a whole range of movements and political collectives that have not been considered in any depth in this section. These include amongst others the disability movement, trade unions, environmental groups and numerous grassroots movements. It is not possible inside of the limitations of this thesis to address all forms of social movement and political collective as they are evolving in post-apartheid South Africa. This was not the intention. The intention was to illustrate some of the major shifts in the landscape of resistance politics and consider some of the major resulting contestations informing social movements and political collectives in the post-apartheid South African context.

4. Chapter Conclusion

In order to fully locate the generational consciousness of the young activists in this study, this chapter has provided an overview of some of the most important shifts in the political, economic and social context of post-apartheid South Africa. It has examined shifts in the socio-economic landscape, tracing the pernicious legacy of apartheid and emergent neo–liberal formations, which find both economic and social expression. It has also examined shifts in identity formation, especially with regards to race. Finally, it has endeavoured to chart some of the major shifts in our resistance politics. The reason for doing this was to provide a picture of the very complicated landscape these young activists navigate, and in so doing give expression to a generational consciousness that inevitably references the narratives of the past but responds to the imperatives of the present, as they construct their activist identities.

However, this context of transition also points to and raises much larger questions about the very nature of democracy and social justice. According to Jacquette (1989) ‘transitions are political “openings”’ where

33 Polletta (2006, 1998a) defines ‘electoral elites’ as members of the original Civil Rights Movement under Martin Luther King Jr., who have been absorbed into formal electoral politics, and ‘protest elites’ as activists outside the formal system who are often at odds with those within.
‘there is a general willingness to rethink the bases of social consensus and revise the rules of the game’ (p. 13). Post-apartheid South Africa is a context characterised by such a ‘political opening’. As such it requires willingness to rethink and revise our consensus and rules in all areas of life, including political life, and consider the implications of these. Rights and revolution based approaches for example provide very different visions of what social justice looks like, and as such very different imperatives for action. It is a consideration of these consensus and rules to which we now turn.
Chapter 3
Defining the Universe of Political Discourse

*Any adequate understanding of contemporary politics must, then, allow for the way in which the very question of what is to count as political is itself an object of political struggle. (Nash, 2001, p. 85)*

The political context young South African activists are navigating is as the previous chapter illustrated in many ways very different to that of their parents. In response to this changing context young South African activists are engaging a myriad of new repertoires of political action, ‘hybrid of all [their] exposures and experiences’ (Mgxashe, 2000, pg. 11). In order to respond to these engagements we require ‘an intellectual will to rethink politics’ (Gibson, 2006, p. 40). This chapter does exactly that, and in doing so defines what Jenson (1987) has called the ‘universe of political discourse’ for this study. It does so by drawing on the politics of the new social movements, and most specifically feminism, and explores how these expanded understandings of what constitutes the political, allow us to access the full range of the ‘repertoires of political action’ (Norris, 2004) being practiced by young South African activists.

1. Defining the Universe of Political Discourse

*The concept of justice is coextensive with the political. (Young, 2000, p. 9)*

What constitutes activism and by extension who activists are, although often taken for granted, is not necessarily obvious. We are used to, as Fox and Starn (1997) so rightly put it ‘thinking about protest and mobilization by way of a familiar, yet limited, constellation of images: marches, speeches, rallies strikes’(p. 10). However, the notion of activism is like everything discursively produced, and as such deeply contested (Maxey, 1999). It is not a ‘fixed notion whose meaning can be taken for granted’ (ibid., p. 200). Rather it is ‘actively constructed within a range of discourses such as those found in the media, grassroots organisations and academia’ (ibid.) and ‘what counts as positive action and resistance is not fixed once and for all but depends on both the analysis and forms of power’ (Henriques, Hollway Urwin, Venn & Walkerdine (1984, p. 5). In other words, the way in which we define ‘the political’ affects how we define justice, and by extension the activities aimed at achieving it. Jenson (1987) refers to this process of demarcating the ‘political’ as the construction of a ‘universe of political discourse’ which she defines as ‘beliefs about ways politics should be conducted, and the kinds of conflicts resolvable through political processes’ (Jenson, 1987, p. 65). Ultimately the universe of political discourse:
… delineates what is considered to be ‘political’ as opposed to private, religious, or economic. Furthermore, it sets boundaries for political action and identifies which actors in society are considered to be legitimate in particular settings (ibid., p. 17).

This is an important move, not simply because it expands the range of what we might consider as political action, but because in doing so we include repertoires of action and commensurate actors who have been marginalised by mainstream accounts of what political action involves. Polletta (2006), for example, examines how notions of political participation which rely on public deliberation, most notably in the form of ‘rational’ debate, are exclusionary. Such a mode of engagement automatically advantages amongst others native speakers of English and men, ‘unfairly universali[sing] the experience of particular powerful groups’ (p. 86). She suggests that by legitimising diverse modes of participation, and she specifically refers to storytelling as one such mode, there is less risk of marginalizing already marginal groups. This seems to be a particularly pertinent enquiry to engage in in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, as it is a context profoundly shaped by a strong tradition of resistance in the form of anti-apartheid struggle. As the previous chapter showed however, this tradition is highly contested, especially with regards to who holds legitimate guardianship thereof. Secondly, it is characterised by certain biases like a lack of feminism, and even homophobia (Conway, 2012; Kleinbooi, 1994; Nkoli, 1994; Toms, 1994), a point which will be expanded on later. As such, those of us who invoke it in our politics, might very well be guilty of the kinds of marginalisations Polletta (2006) warns against.

It is for this reason that this study is very conscious of how it defines its universe of political discourse. The universe of political discourse for this study draws specifically on the politics and analyses of power of what have been called new social movements (NSMs). The notion of ‘new’ social movements emerged out of the women’s, gay and lesbian and black consciousness struggles of the 1960s and 1970s in the USA and Europe, as well as anti–imperialist struggles, characteristics of which are readily recognisable in current transnational NSMs (Thörn, 2006). Although there is some debate over the ‘newness’ of these NSMs (Melucci, 1994)³⁴, Fox and Starn (1997) argue that the current interest in NSMs ‘reflects a new sensitivity on the part of scholars to the multiple vectors of political activity that always existed in society’ (ibid.).

There are three of these vectors, which stand out as characterising NSMs. First, NSMs reject class as the master category of struggle, and understand oppression as a function of factors beyond only distributional concerns. Identity is an important site, as well as means, of struggle. Second, they understand engagement of the state as simply one of a range of activities required in struggles for social justice. They understand power

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³⁴ There has been some debate about the extent to which the politics of the new social movements is distinct from ‘older’ social movements. Fox & Starn (1997) warn us against equating, for example, struggles over identity with ‘newness’, making the point, that no proletariat struggle was ever simply fought ‘under a common banner of class struggle’ (p. 5).
as operating not only in relation to the state, but as capillaried throughout everyday institutions and relationships. Third, and specifically from the contribution of feminism, they understand the political to extend into the deepest of personal spaces and understand oppression as rooted in subjectivities. As such they recognise the importance of consciousness raising in struggles for social justice. It is these three major characteristics of the NSMs’ analysis and engagement of power that form the contours for this study’s universe of political discourse. They are described in greater detail next.

1.1 Decentring Class: Engaging a Politics of Recognition

NSMs posed a challenge to the dominant sociological notions of political and social change, which remained largely defined in distributional terms. ‘Old’ social movements were those ‘concerned with only labour or working class struggles where class was the central social divide, category of analysis, principle of organisation and political issue’ (Robins, 2008a, p. 10). The politics of these movements have been referred to both as a distributive politics (Young, 2000) or a politics of redistribution (Fraser, 1997). However, these class based distributive models of justice ‘restrict the meaning of social justice to the morally proper distribution of burdens and benefits among society’s members’ (Young, 1990, p. 15). In doing so they fail to recognise the extent of oppressive relationships which encompass ‘all aspects of institutional organization, public action, social practices and habits, and cultural meanings insofar as they are potentially subject to collective evaluation and decision making’ (ibid., p. 9). NSMs, on the other hand, ‘rejected class as the master category and… were more concerned with questions of cultural struggles over meanings and symbols, collective identities and rights to difference’ (Robins, 2008s, p. 10). As such, NSMs are ‘opposed to class based universalizing projects of the “old” or “new” left’ (Duggan, 2006, p. 4) and engage a politics based on recognition (Fraser, 1997). These politics of recognition have become the ‘paradigmatic form of political conflict’ (ibid., p. 11) of the late twentieth century.

It is important to recognise that recognition does not replace distribution as a concern of social justice, but rather that social justice conceptualised in terms of recognition includes distributive concerns. Reflecting on this relationship Melucci (1994) asserts that ‘production cannot be restricted to the economic–material sphere; it embraces the entirety of social relationships and cultural orientations’ (p. 104). Thus the notion of recognition is a wider understanding of social justice, not a completely different one. Struggles for recognition are deeply implicated in struggles for redistribution. Fraser (1997) argues that ‘misrecognition’ is in fact a question of social status, which means not only a devaluing of particular group identities, but their ‘social subordination’ (p. 113) which translate into patterns of ‘distributive injustice’ (p. 119). ‘Social subordination’ mirrors patterns of mis/recognition and thus ‘[integrating] claims for recognition with claims
for redistribution’ (Fraser, 2000, p. 119). A politics of recognition then cannot be understood as simple ‘identity politics’.

1.2 The Personal is Political: The Feminist Challenge

Where there is power, there is politics. (Nash, 2001, p. 90)

The personal is political. (Hanisch, 1970)

Traditionally, politics has been conceived as ‘the activities of government or formal interest-groups’ (Young, 1990, p. 9) and therefore occurring between the state and society (Nash, 2001). However, the emergence of new social movements, especially the anti-corporate global justice movements, has made visible the avenues of power of contemporary society, many of which circumvent those of state control (Juris, 2004). Furthermore, the politics of new social movements direct energy towards transforming social structures and relationships. Many detach themselves from more traditional state directed modes of political engagement and rather move to occupy a more ‘intermediate social space’ (Melucci, 1994, p. 103), engaging the politics of ‘daily life’ and identity. As such of they ‘have looser, more fluid structures and direct activism towards far more diffuse and decentralised forms of power’ (Davis, 2002, p. 4) and the state is displaced as ‘the site of politics’ (Nash, 2001, p. 83).

In particular, feminist theory foregrounds analyses of power and oppression that force us to engage beyond the ‘intellectual blinders’ (Britton & Fish, 2009, p. 15) of much contemporary theory of modern political life which limits politics to the narrow concerns of the public sphere, and which have shaped most scholarship around civil society. According to Meyer (2000) feminist theory:

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35 Importantly, Fraser (2000) makes the distinction between a ‘politics of recognition’ and simple ‘identity politics’, which she concurs can both displace distributional concerns as well as reify problematic group formations. She is not alone in this concern and Marxist feminists like Theresa Ebert (1996) for example have argued that a feminist politics that dabbles only in the intangibility of identity detracts from the reality of women’s ‘real’ material inequality and borders on the ‘ludic’. What Fraser (2000) calls the ‘identity model’ considers misrecognition a ‘free standing cultural harm’ which divorces such cultural harm from its distributional entanglement. Another strand of the identity model acknowledges the links between culture and distribution, but ‘misunderstands’ (ibid., p. 111) them. In this second strand distributive inequalities are seen as ‘simple expressions of cultural hierarchies’ (ibid.), and so redistribution is seen to be a simple matter of shifting those cultural hierarchies. Given that neither of these strands of identity politics have explicit redistributive agendas (for different reasons), both serve to displace redistributive concerns. Fraser’s (2000) other critique of the ‘identity model’ is that it serves to reify identity, leading to ‘repressive forms of communitarianism’ (p. 112). She argues that such modes of identity politics which stress the need for ‘authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity’ (ibid.) actually serve as further misrecognition in that they ‘[obscure] the politics of cultural identification’, masking the power of dominant factions within the group (ibid.).

36 I speak of feminism with a conscious understanding of the heterogeneity of both the ‘analyses’ and ‘forms of politics’ that feminism constitutes. Not least of all I appreciate the racial and post-colonial intersections that constitute the experiences, concerns and politics of women across the world, and how these are constituted in relations of power (Crenshaw, 1995; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Kiguwa (2004) provides a useful breakdown of at least eight different versions of feminist analyses, ranging from ‘Marxist feminism’ to ‘womanism’, making the point that although all versions of feminism agree that women are oppressed where they differ is in what they consider to be the causes of this oppression, and subsequently the most appropriate means by which it must be eradicated.
… encourages us to recognize broader sources and arenas of politics, different and additional sources of political power, and a wider range of significant actors finding power, influence, and general importance generally neglected by more conventional political analyses (p. 36).

Radical feminism of the 1970s declared that the ‘personal was political’ (Hanisch, 1970) and that it was in the private sphere that women’s oppression was most devastatingly enacted through, amongst other things, exploitative domestic labour and sexual violence. Those aspects of women’s lives considered the most intimate, like sexual relationships, were social sites through which relationships of power were constituted and maintained (Artz, 2009; Shulman, 1980; Taylor & Whittier, 1992).

The exclusion of these intimate oppressions from the purview of politics not only obscures and leaves them unchecked, but reinforces the pervasive binary between public and private, which fails to appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of our political worlds. According to feminist scholars with an interest in state and citizenship there is an ‘inherent interconnectedness between the public and private realms’ (Fish, 2009, p. 127), which if we fail to recognise, we run the risk of limiting our explanatory power. The recognition of the interconnectedness of the public and private spheres provides important nuance and explanatory power to our considerations of our political worlds. Not only does it provide us a way of understanding how ‘state processes of democratization are actively resisted in private spaces as a result of ongoing gender, race and class power structures’ (Fish, 2009, p. 127) as Fish examines in the case of the case of domestic work in South Africa, but also how ‘layers of identity may influence organizational behaviours and agendas’ (Britton & Fish, 2009, p. 16). It is inside of this interconnectedness that they provide a definition of civil society which stresses the fluidity of boundaries.

In her autobiography Lynne Segal (2007) says the following about her experience of the women’s movement: ‘social transformation was our goal, but tackling the connections between the personal and the political was our method’ (p. 70). Her reflections on how, for example, ‘alternative’ living arrangements like collective childcare and communal living presented a powerful challenge to hegemonic gendered arrangements and were therefore a crucial element of feminist politics. Taylor & Whittier’s (1995) examination of lesbian feminist activism of the 1980s in the USA, reiterates this point where ‘a complex oppositional culture in which participants politicized the actions of daily life’ (p. 165) formed the basis of mobilisation. This oppositional culture was grounded in a network of alternative institutions and events, like bookstores, film

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37 Dominant analytical lenses not only reinforce the private/public binary but in doing so devalue the ‘feminine’ private (Britton & Fish, 2009) and privilege the ‘dramatic, physical and macho’ (Maxey, 1999, p. 200) public. In failing to recognise the genderedness of these analytical lenses they also fail to recognise the genderedness of political movements and organisations, and particularly how women’s interests can be marginalised inside of other struggles in a dynamic Crenshaw (1995) calls political intersectionality. In national liberation struggles throughout the world, gender justice was secondary to national liberation (Beckwith, 2000), with nationalist and feminist agendas often competing against each other. Women involved in the anti-apartheid struggle were often ‘confronted with the dilemma of “choosing” between race and gender justice’ (Britton & Fish, 2009, p. 13).
festivals, schools, rape crisis centres, etc., all of which served as a decentralised, informal space where lesbian feminist communities not only found protection and comfort, but nourishment for participation in more traditional modes of political protest. It also, served an important socialisation function where members were socialised ‘into a collective oppositional consciousness that channels women into a variety of actions geared toward personal, social and political change’ (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 109). It was impossible to determine a clear line between private, personal endeavours and political ones, the two being inextricably linked. For Taylor & Whittier (1995) what this appreciation of ‘interactive mutuality’ made analytically possible was the recognition of the continued pursuit of social change by radical feminists, through their everyday life and employment. This is an important reflection on how we approach the study of social and political change processes:

In order to understand this challenge, and thus to understand the course of the women’s movement, we find it necessary to view political participation and social movements through a broad lens. Collective efforts for social change occur in the realms of culture, identity, and everyday life as well as direct engagement with the state (Taylor & Whittier, 1995, p. 166).

Qualification is required here, however. Not all forms of feminist analyses (and therefore action) privilege identity in their analysis. Marxist feminism, for example, locates women’s oppression inside of an analysis of capitalist production and class structures. The solution to women’s oppression, is therefore in changing relationships of production through the instruments of the class struggle. Post-modern concerns with identity, performance and the subversion of cultural signifiers have been criticised for not only being Eurocentric and entrenching white middle-class privilege, but also undermining the collective struggle, which should be about material differences like access to resources (Ebert, 1996). These critiques notwithstanding, concerns over identity remain central to the feminist project.

This section has delineated the universe of political discourse as understood in this study. Drawing on a politics of recognition and feminism’s argument that the personal is political it has outlined a range of political action and therefore legitimate political actors, not usually under consideration in South African studies into activist identities. Most studies on activism in South Africa have been conducted within a universe of political discourse defined by participation in a social movement organisation which is involved in protest action directed towards the state. For that reason most studies on activism and identity have been conducted with people who are members of such organisations or movements. However, as the previous section has argued this is a very narrow understanding of political action. Given the complexity of post-apartheid South Africa’s social and political context and the ambiguities embedded in its resistance politics, explored in the previous chapter, it seems that such narrowness provides us with a very limited view of the political landscape in post-apartheid South Africa. More complex understandings of power and politics allow
us to see commensurate, more complex forms of political action. The following section explores these expanded repertoires of political action as they emerge out of our expanded universe of political discourse.

2. Emergent Repertoires of Political Action

*One can also observe a proliferation of sites of political engagement and agency... asserting autonomy and clamouring for self-defined terms of recognition and agency.* (Pieterse, 2010, p. 428)

The universe of political discourse created by a politics of recognition, ‘demand[s] a broader gauge view of politics and social change’ (Meyer, 2000, p. 49) including a recognition of symbolic change. Given that the post-apartheid context is one where the political landscape has shifted so dramatically since democratisation simply identifying activism becomes a theoretical and methodological challenge. The following section provides a set of theoretical lenses to consider what activism in post-apartheid South Africa may look like inside of an expanded universe of political discourse. This is, of course, not an exhaustive list but includes what I believe to be some of the more significant developments in our understandings of what constitutes activism in light of the previous section.

The most basic, and a useful, distinction is that which Pippa Norris (2004) makes between ‘traditional’ and ‘modern’ repertoires of political action. Traditional repertoires are those which work within legislative structures, the traditional paths of democratic engagement. This would include actions like influencing policy through structured channels or using the courts (in South Africa, especially the Constitutional Court) to compel change. However, the diffusion of social power into sites such as private industry, global capital and cultural production and more complex (post-modern) understandings of where and how power operates, has substantially broadened the arena of political struggle. Norris (ibid.) notes that this more complex arrangement and understanding of power combined with new channels for action, like the internet, has resulted in a more complex arrangement of activist activities, which she calls modern repertoires of action. Modern repertoires are less reliant on official structures and bodies (like an official organisations) required to navigate those structures. Responding to more complex arrangements and understandings of power, organisations (where they exist) have more fluid boundaries, and organisational activities often blur into everyday life.

Beyond the emergence of political repertoires which blur the binaries of public and private and state, civil society and household there are those political modes which respond to the more decentralised, cultural understandings of power and oppression offered by a politics of recognition. Lisa Duggan (2006) identifies three major and interconnected ‘arenas of political action’ which include these latter modes: reform,
performative and critical politics. Closely resembling Norris’ (2004) notion of traditional repertoires of political action, reform politics ‘address social inequalities through courts and legislatures and work(s) to influence electoral campaigns and referenda through mainstream media’ (p. 2). Performative politics, on the other hand, are ‘aimed at reshaping the assumption and categories of political life through cultural production and direct action’ (ibid.) and similarly, critical politics mobilise ‘cultural theory and social analysis, circulated through academic writing and journalism’ (ibid.). These three modes constitute interconnected and necessary areas of political action in what (Duggan, 2006) refers to as ‘polymorphous political engagement’ (p. 3). This is a politics which is multi-focused and expressed and because of this polymorphous nature, engages the widest possible spectrum of oppressive relationships.

Post-apartheid South Africa is characterised by a creative and contested burgeoning of political engagement, which both draws on the traditions of the anti-apartheid struggle and more ‘modern repertoires’ made available by the gains of democracy, the emergence of new voices in political struggle, as well as developments in technology. There is no consolidated account of these emergent political modalities as it pertains to post-apartheid South Africa. However, accounts of particular movements and reflections on certain groups’ experiences provide a sense of what some of these modalities might be. This includes, for example, the actioning of the TAC’s right’s model which blurs the large scale politics of mass mobilisation with the very intimate politics of what Robins (2006) calls ‘responsibilized citizenship’. It includes the ‘everyday’ and ‘life’ politics as given expression in feminist and LGBTI communities (Dirsuweit, 2006) what Besteman (2008) calls ‘transformers’. It also includes emergent forms of cultural politics, in particular as expressed in youth culture, especially hip-hop (Battersby, 2003; Haupt, 2008; Pieterse, 2010). Finally, it includes repertoires of political action made possible by technology like the internet and mobile phones.

The following section traces three major constellations of modern repertoires of political action as they emerge out of the previously presented more decentralised, cultural understandings of power and oppression, and explores how they find expression in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.1 Cultural & Critical Activisms

Cultural activisms are not simply repertoires of action, which take on what would commonly be recognised as cultural forms like literary, musical and other artistic expression, although they would, by virtue of the following point, include these. Rather they are repertoires of action, which respond to a more decentralised, diffuse, i.e. cultural reading of power. They are Duggan’s (2006) performative politics, which confront everyday oppressions and challenge everyday assumptions, destabilising meaning, generating new cultural codes and forging new collective identities – that intermediate zone between dissent and direct action, the ‘midways of mobilisation’ that Fox and Starn (1997, p. 2) recognise as prominent in contemporary society.
Traditional cultural productions have always been part of struggles for liberation. South Africa’s anti-apartheid struggle was supported and given expression through art, literature and especially music. In fact, music and song formed an important modality of struggle during the anti-apartheid struggle in the shape of protest and struggle songs (Hirsch, 2002). The Civil Rights movement in the USA was similarly fortified through music, jazz in particular, not only through symbolic challenge, but through the active participation of musicians in ‘explicitly political activities’ (Monson, 1997). Further examples can be found the world over – artists, musicians, writers and poets are often amongst the revolutionary vanguard. Not only do cultural productions and their producers support political struggles, but following an analysis which recognises power as culturally constituted, these cultural productions themselves become political acts. Culture is an ‘important site for the convergence of structural and ideational factors’ (Kuumba & Ajanaku, 1998, p. 228), and thus a challenge to this culture is a challenge to this intersection. Colonialism, for example, was not only a processes of economic exploitation and political subjugation, but one facilitated by cultural domination (Kuumba & Ajanaku, 1998). As such oppositional cultures or cultures of resistance have been key to the survival of those enslaved, dominated and oppressed (ibid.) and post-colonial scholars, like Fanon (1963), Biko (1978) and wa Thiong’o (1986), have emphasised the importance of cultural productions, such as writing and poetry in forging these.

Cultural modalities are taking renewed significance in South Africa’s post-apartheid struggles for social justice (Allen, 2009) and creative expression takes on two major roles. Similar to their role during the anti-apartheid struggle, they are used to support particular distributive causes and movement agendas. For example art activism has been an important element of the struggle against HIV and AIDS. Allen (2009) examines how the Iziko South African National Gallery, in collaboration with organisations like the TAC, commissioned works to respond to the HIV and AIDS crisis. She details the intersection of art and activist worlds through not only the conscientising content of the works, but the way in which galleries were turned into spaces reminiscent of anti-apartheid rallies through the invitation of activists to exhibitions and openings. Cultural modalities also take on the more general role (unrelated to any particular movement or organisation) of providing critical commentary on the inequalities and injustices of post-apartheid South Africa and providing opportunities for empowered identity formation. Although there are numerous examples of these commentaries ranging from photography (e.g. Zanele Muholi’s work with black gay and lesbian communities)38, dance (e.g. Mamela Nyamza’s work challenges constructions of femininity, race and

38 Muholi refers to herself as a ‘visual activist’ photographically documenting the lives of black gay and lesbian communities in an effort to address the virulent homophobia in South African society. Most recently she co-directed a film on her life and work, called *Difficult Love*, as part of her repertoire of activist work. (http://www.zanelemuholi.com/index.html)
sexuality)\textsuperscript{39} and writing (e.g. Chimurenga Magazine’s new vision of Africa and its diaspora)\textsuperscript{40}, the richest of these sites is that of music, especially hip-hop.

hooks (1990) asserts that rap ‘enabled underclass black youth [in the USA] to develop a critical voice’ (p. 9). Referring to it as a ‘politics of recognition and rage’ (p. 429) Pieterse (2010) suggests that (politically conscious) hip-hop ‘offers a coherent ideology’ for resistance to oppressive realities (p. 439) and ‘a vital entry point for young people to exercise agency in larger and multi-layered political and cultural struggles for both recognition and reforms’ (p. 440–441). Rap activism also known as ‘raptivism’ (http://raptivism.org/) also provides a mode for young people to engage critically with and challenge ‘apathy, ignorance and intellectual oppression’ (ibid.). A number of scholars have examined how Cape Town based hip-hop groups like Prophets of da City (POC), Black Noise and Brasse vannie Kaap (BVK)\textsuperscript{41} have provided a means for young coloured/black South Africans to subvert and challenge oppressive relationships in South Africa (Battersby, 2003; Pieterse, 2010; Haupt, 2001, 2008). According to Pieterse (2010) it has done so through providing three things. First through the politically conscious lyrics of artists like Black Noise, BVK, Jitsvinger and Tumi Molekane\textsuperscript{42} it has offered ‘a politics and aesthetics of rage and militant critique of the thinly veiled double standards of mainstream society’ (p. 441). Second it has provided ‘a new political language and symbolic register that is meaningful to poor young people and potentially impenetrable and alienating to elites and middle-classes’ (ibid.). Specifically it has tapped into the common experiences of racial oppression of black Americans and the common language of resistance as it found expression in American hip-hop (Battersby, 2003) in order to do this. Finally, it can also potentially ‘offer poor young people a platform for establishing various kinds of regional, national and international networks of engagement and mutual support’ (Pieterse, 2010, p. 441). In doing all of this hip-hop contributes to the construction of public spaces in which historically marginalised coloured/black youth ‘can express themselves and engage critically with their realities’ (Haupt, 2008, p. xxii) and ‘through its lyrics and projects associated with it, offers a vital site of resistance and means to explore new identities’ (Battersby, 2003, p. 115). Of particular relevance to this study is that, although an important genre across the country, hip-hop has a particular relevance for Cape Town based, and given the demographics of the Western Cape, coloured youth. This is (fairly obviously) due to the fact that the pioneers of conscious politicised hip-hop, like POC and BVK, emerged out of Cape Town generating a particularly lively local scene. However, the adoption of this product of African-American blackness by young coloured people may also be the continuation of previous socio-cultural linkages, like slavery and minstrel groups, the

\textsuperscript{39} Nyamza is the recipient of Standard Bank Young Artist Winner For Dance 2011. Described as a ‘development activist’ her work deals with issues ranging from culture, gender and sexuality to HIV and AIDS, domestic violence and drug abuse (http://news.artsmart.co.za/2010/12/mamela-nyamza.html).
\textsuperscript{40} Chimurenga is a ‘pan African publication of writing, art and politics’ which was founded in 2002. The name, Chimurenga, means ‘struggle for freedom’ and the magazine (and its accompaniments) are aimed at fostering creative and revolutionary dialogue on the African continent and the Diaspora. (http://www.chimurenga.co.za/)
enthusiastic adoption of hip-hop in Cape Town being a further expression of these already existing cultural resonances (Battersby, 2003).

Contemporary cultural activisms take numerous forms, not only through traditional cultural production, but also more ‘postmodern’ tactics such as culture jamming and street art (Özden Firat & Kuryel, 2010). These tactics are aimed primarily at ‘disturbing and re-orientating the cultural and political sphere by attacking narratives of truth in society’ (ibid., p. 10). The practice of culture jamming is a good example. Culture jamming mocks or criticises particular target markets and ‘uncools’ particular corporate products. It also employs the practice of ‘detournement’, which hijacks a message to convey a dissident one. The first Laugh it Off range of t-shirts, and specifically their *Black Labour/White Guilt* shirt which hijacked the *Black Label* brand of beer, to produce a commentary on race relationships in post-apartheid South Africa, is an example of detournement. However, Irzik (2010) questions these practices’ claim to political subversion. He argues that very often culture jamming of this sort is seen as the end rather than a means to an end. He argues that:

… cultural activism would be – and in various successful tactics, already is – much more productive when grounded in concrete struggle carried out on the ground against a specific target rather than in a fragmented manner against amorphous targets such as the ‘consumer economy’. Cultural activism works best as integral part of a whole, that is a mass social movement, not as a substitution for it. (p. 139)

An example of such a integrated function of detournement, might be TAC’s *HIV Positive* t-shirts, where once again a particular idea is being hijacked in order to disrupt a dominant narrative. However, unlike the *Black Labour/White Guilt* t-shirt, it is part of a larger movement. Irzik (2010) also questions some of the assumptions behind such a modality of political action. Resisting consumption, which is what the ‘uncooling’ of certain brands aims to achieve, assumes that one can consume in the first place, suggesting that this political subject is middle-class and relatively affluent. Just as post-modern feminisms, which focus their energies on questions of identity, performance, subjectivity, etc. have been accused of being ‘bourgeois’, distracting from real struggles of social inequality, so cultural activisms, like culture jamming face similar critique.

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41 In fact Battersby (2003) goes on to argue that the cultural resonances between African American and coloured culture were stronger than that between coloured and black African culture, observing that many early hip-hop tracks sampled American civil rights leaders but rarely black South African struggle leaders. She attributes this to both apartheid constructions of colouredness which created distinctions between black Africans and coloured people, and the urbanised nature of Cape Town’s coloured population which ‘promoted an apparent link with the African American experience over the experiences of black Africans’ (Battersby, p. 117).

44 Laugh it Off are a South African company who make t-shirts that satirise local South Africa brands. (http://www.laughitoff.co.za/)

45 Please see Appendix Three for images of the *Black Labour/White Guilt* t-shirt and *Black Label* beer.

46 Please see Appendix Three for images of the *HIV Positive* t-shirt.
2.2 The Advent of Cyberactivisms

One of the major features of contemporary activism is the emergence of global justice movements which operate as ‘transnational fields of meaning, where actions images, discourses and tactics flow from one continent to another via worldwide communication networks in real time’ (Juris, 2004, p. 345). Today social protest and action takes place in spaces ‘once unused or non-existent’ (Fox & Starn, 1997, p. 10). Although transnational movements are not new, advances in new information technologies, like cell phones and the internet, specifically social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter, have made real time communication and more intense and interactive engagement possible (Fox & Starn, 1997; McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). They also allow for more multilateral participation, providing a modality that can include more participants from many different groups (ibid.). However, these technologies not only allow for greater contact and communication, they also allow for modes of organisation that do not rely on hierarchical, centralised structures. They allow for ‘diverse, locally rooted struggles’ to ‘directly link up and communicate ‘around common objectives without compromising their autonomy or specificity’ (Juris, 2004, p. 347) – a form of relationship which most social justice activists would consider an end in itself. Media analysis of the recent uprisings in the Middle East have made a lot of the use of these information technologies and especially social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter, as a powerful medium for political and social organisation.

As in the rest of the world information technologies like the internet and mobile phones are changing the way in which Africans, and especially South Africans, go about their activism. African, and in particular South African social movements are increasingly using the internet for spreading information and mobilisation and many are producing their own internet based media including newsletters, Facebook groups, blogs, etc. to these ends (Wasserman, 2005). Beyond facilitating mobilisation, however, the internet is proving to be a powerful tool in creating transnational networks, promoting solidarity and skill/idea sharing between groups who previously would not have been able to communicate with each other (ibid.). More than ever South African activists are part of a global civil society, connected to transnational and specifically pan–African networks (Kuumba, 2009).

Wasserman (2009) examines the TAC as a case in point. Internet technologies have facilitated the establishment of global communities on particular issues, the provision of AIDS treatment drugs being one. TAC is a member of this community, and through its website and extensive mailing lists generates and maintains extensive regional, continental and global solidarity networks. Its website, for example, serves as a hub for international organisations like MSF and other international action and protests (Wasserman, 2005). TAC’s intensive use of the internet in this way does not preclude other more traditional forms of network and solidarity building. Especially at local level face–to–face interactions, community based meetings,
pamphleteering, phone calls, etc. remain key in building the organisation’s presences and influence. As Wasserman (2009) observes, internet and mobile technology does not replace these more traditional modalities, it simply ‘amplifies existing structures and forces’ (Wasserman, 2005, p. 170). Interestingly, however, he points out that this multimodal approach has been possible for TAC, because of the way in which it has mobilised middle-class participation, i.e. the participation of those people more likely to have internet connections and for whom internet based activity is a more ‘comfortable’ form of engagement. In fact, Wasserman (2005) goes so far as to argue that a ‘support base among a more affluent group with access to internet and mobile technology might be instrumental in establishing and maintaining a global solidarity network via the Internet and email’ (p. 168).

Given the deep poverty which characterises most of the continent, the ways in which internet and mobile technology are utilised in Africa will be different to contexts where they more readily available. Most obviously are the levels of access available to the average citizen. Much has been said about the ‘digital divide’, especially between the more affluent and poorer classes, both within and across regions. Although South Africa is the most connected country in sub-Saharan Africa (Sokari, 2009), that connectedness is very unevenly spread between rich and poor (Conradie, Morris & Jacobs 2003). This not only influences how South Africans use these technologies, but also who uses what.

Having said that even in the poorest areas of the country technology has transformed South Africans’ ability to communicate, and mobile phones have been particularly instrumental in this. Mobile phone technologies are cheaper and rely on less infrastructure than the internet and even where the internet is used, the challenge is to provide mobile functionality (Banks, 2009). Sokari (2009) and de Bruijn, Nyamnjoh and Brinkman (2009) both present edited books full of the localised and innovative ways in which mobile phone technologies are being taken up by African activists. These include SMS for providing information on human rights and as a mechanism for reporting domestic violence in South Africa (Naidoo, 2009), the use of mobile phones for election monitoring as well as creating interactive radio style programming in Zimbabwe (Atwood, 2009) and to report human rights abuses in the Congo (Waruzi, 2009). Although Walton (2011) argues that the significance of mobile phone technologies in Africa are woefully under-theorised, it is clear from the case studies that mobile technologies provide a wide range of new functionalities which can be applied in localised contexts in numerous ways – ‘People decide why and how a particular technology will be used and, depending on the political and socio-economic environment in which they live, adapt it accordingly’ (Sokari, 2009, p. xi).

These expanded modes of organisation have another implication and that is that they potentially provide the opportunity for new forms of collective identity formation; if social networks are no longer geographically defined is the same true for collective identities? Can collective identities exist virtually? Based on his
comparative study of two feminist activist groups, Ayers (2003) suggests that they can but that this is not inevitable. Diani (2001) concurs, making the point that virtual interactions usually expand on, and reinforce face-to-face relationships, rather than generating new ones, and that the real value of online modalities is the maintenance of scattered face-to-face networks and technical support of group activities. Interestingly, he makes the point that the politics of virtual communities are usually much less radical than those of face–to–face collectivities (ibid.), usually appealing to the sympathies of public opinion. Ayers (2003) makes a similar point when he observes that that where collective identities do seem to exist online, that this need not translate into action for social change.

The internet has not simply allowed for the emergence of differently constituted, more diverse collectives and more democratic modes of organisation, it has provided a new repertoires of political action in itself (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003; Özden Firat & Kuryel, 2010). With this new medium have emerged new forms of protest, mostly notably, hackitivism, which includes the defacement of web pages and online sit–ins (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003). Thus technology and the currents of global counter cultures becomes a way for young artists and activists to challenge economic and cultural hegemony. Haupt’s (2008) work, for example, has explored ‘the agency that counter–cultural and digital technologies offer [young South African] subjects’ (p. xx). He includes ‘P2P’, ‘culture jamming’ and ‘hacktivism’ in his analysis, and according to him, all ‘react against the operation of iniquities produced by large corporations’ domination of the production and distribution of cultural and technological products’ (p. xxi). Thus technology and the currents of global counter cultures become ways for young South African artists and activists to challenge global economic and cultural hegemony.

However, sometimes included in the range of cyberactivisms is the signing and circulation of online petitions, which starts to raise important questions for social movement scholars. Even though people may ‘feel like they are doing something useful when they push the send button’ (McCaughey & Ayers, 2003, p. 6), can signing and circulating an e–petition really qualify as political engagement? Can we really ‘share’, ‘like’ and ‘comment’ our way into social justice? Just like contests within cultural and feminist activism, what constitutes ‘real’ action for social change is contested. The contributors of McCaughey and Ayers (2003) seem to concur that the internet and mobile technologies will not bring about progressive social change as an inevitability or cause, but rather ‘as a means of change available alongside other forces’ (p. 2).

2.3 Life Politics & Intimate Citizenship

Feminist and post-modern analyses of power and resistance recognise that ‘activists can find connections between the day to day business of living and larger concerns about peace and social justice’ (Meyer, 2000, p.

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47 Peer-to-peer platforms, the original being Napster, where people share music, film, games online for free.
Following Giddens, Plummer (1995) calls these connections, ‘life politics’. ‘Life politics’ have been given a range of names and labels by different scholars including ‘a politics of difference, a radical and plural democracy, radical pluralism, communitarianism, new liberalism, ironic liberalism, cultural politics, life politics, civic liberalism’ (Plummer, 1995, p. 147). All of these conceptualisations share a similar stance: ‘a radical pluralistic, democratic, contingent, participatory politics of human life choices and difference is in the making’ (ibid.).

Plummer (1995) makes the point that ‘old communities of rights spoke of political rights, legal rights or welfare rights of citizenship’ (p. 23) making use of traditional or reform orientated repertoires of action. Although new feminist and LGBTI politics draws on those repertoires and in fact build on the political gains made under the banner of rights base’ struggles, the notion of life politics ‘takes it further’ (Plummer, 1995, p. 151). What he calls the ‘new field of life politics’ leads to a new realm of ‘intimate citizenship’. Intimate citizenship is a new and fourth realm of citizenship as predicated on the extension of the political from civil, political and social realms of citizenship, into life politics. As Plummer (1995) points out, the distinction between these realms has been critiqued, most simply because it is problematic to try to separate the arenas of action. However, he also makes the point that these ‘loose conglomerations’ (p. 151) of ‘spheres of action’ are useful to think about the ‘ways in which communities are developed which contribute certain rights and responsibilities’ (ibid.). Intimate citizenship as a fourth realm, extends notions of rights and responsibilities into the realm of ‘our most intimate desire, pleasures, and ways of being in the world’ (ibid.), which although linked to ‘traditional’ zones of citizenship serves to open up into ‘new spheres, new debates and new stories’(ibid.). Inside of these new spheres, debates and stories ‘is the creation of these new communities of discourse and dialogue championing rival languages, stories and identities...’ (p. 150).


‘Responsibilized citizenship’ (Robins, 2006) is subjectively focused and expands the realm of political action in post-apartheid South Africa, into subjective and behavioural transformation as mediated by

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48 Italics in the original.
49 Plummer (1995) identifies five characteristics of ‘life politics’. First, is the recognition of the complexity of identities and claims to truth, which negates the existence of any ‘foundationality or wisdom which transcends all practical solutions’ (p. 147). Second, is greater recognition of differences to be found between experiences, rather than the co-opting or banishing the ‘other’. Third, is the renewed emphasis on active and local participation in shaping politics. In an old politics democracy is given from high. However, new politics is built from the ground up. Fourth, is the renewed recognition of ‘the sign’ (Plummer, 1995, p. 148), which entails the recognition that ‘Language and signs are not simply vehicles for conveying political wisdoms, but are themselves constitutive of the political process’ (ibid.) and an ‘... increased awareness of the role of language, argumentation, discourses, meanings, claims and, of course, stories in assembling political debates and constituting discursive democracies’ (Plummer, 1995, p. 149). Finally, there is a new engagement of space and time. New politics takes into account increased ‘rapidity of movements across time and space, and hence the greater interconnectedness both of social orders and political actions’ (ibid.).
participation in a particular political community. Here activism is about, not only creating the conditions for the formation of ‘responsibilized citizens’, i.e. citizens as desired by public health practitioners, but by embodying this subjectivity oneself. According to Jungari and Oinas (2010) the way in which TAC’s politics politicises the ‘private’ in this way, demanding subjective transformation, enabling the generation of a positive self through mobilisation, is the rendering of a deeply feminist politics on a massive scale.

Subjective transformation is also at the heart of what Corrine Squire (2007) has called ‘speaking out’. According to Squire (2007) ‘speaking out’ is a ‘new form of political activism, the most distinct within the HIV field and the latest move in South Africa’s political trajectory’ (p. 183). Although most powerfully exemplified in the ‘public storytelling’ of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)50, it has origins in the ‘powerful histories of struggle autobiographies’ and ‘the discourses of “coming out” as enacted by TAC’s interpretation of US gay and lesbian activism (ibid.). This has all resulted in the construction of “speaking out” as a form of political action’ (ibid.). Squire (2007) makes the point that the new rights–based and situation specific political language is particularly useful for ‘younger people who are proxy speakers of South Africa’s older political language, and for whom the older political languages do not seem compelling’ (p. 188). She goes on to say that this ‘newer language may also allow a new form of subjectively-focussed, “conscientising dialogue”’(ibid.) which she suggests is already recognised as important in South African youth media. Echoing Hassim’s (2006) point about the marginality of women in the anti-apartheid struggle, she also suggests that this language might be more relevant and accessible for women, whose relationship with ‘older political languages’ she describes as often having been ‘ambiguous’ (ibid.)

Finally, Besteman (2008) expresses concern that most studies on transformation in South Africa occur at the level of political institutions, government structures, corporations and large social projects like the TRC. Her interest, however, is in ‘ordinary people who grapple with questions about love, family and community’ (Besteman, 2008, p. 4) in their everyday lives. She calls these people ‘transformers’ and defines them as ‘people who have taken the imperative of social change to heart in very personal ways’ (p. 25). They have chosen to embark on projects with transformative agendas that demand lifestyle changes, ideological investment, and the creation of new social worlds’ (ibid., p. 192). Closely mirroring Plummer’s (1995) life politics, these are the kinds of actions which lead not only impact on lifestyles (what they do), but demand deep personal transformation (who they are). These ‘life politics’ are probably most obviously expressed in South Africa’s LGBTI communities where gay and lesbian communities first came together in clubs and other social settings, to meet social needs. These social spaces, however, were precursors to political organisation (Gevisser, 1994). LGBTI politics in South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, have

50 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a commission set up by South Africa’s Government of National Unity to enable South Africans to share their experiences of living under the apartheid regime in an attempt to come to terms with some of the horrors that had entailed and foster reconciliation. (http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/)
involved a radical ‘politics of human life choice’\textsuperscript{51} (Plummer, 1997, p. 147), where in some cases just being gay in South Africa can be considered activism (Cameron & Gevisser, 1994).

This section has explored the repertoires of political action, which emerge out of a universe of political discourse defined by the politics of the new social movements, specifically feminism. In a context where oppressive and unequal relationships are expressed in contexts well beyond the purview of a repressive state, manifesting in everyday interactions and relationships, these emergent repertoires of action form an important element of post-apartheid South Africa’s political world. Not only does this provide a wider view of the political landscape, but in doing so it provides an expanded view of the range of political actors populating this landscape, who may be hip-hop artists and photographers, rather than simply members of any particular social movement organisation. This is an important move, not simply because it expands the range of what we might consider as political action, but because in doing so we include repertoires of action and commensurate actors who have been marginalised by mainstream accounts of what political action involves. However, this raises the question of whether this expanded definition of political actors means that everyone is an activist? The following section addresses this question.

3 Defining Activism/Activists

It is hard to say whether these extended repertoires of action will change the world. Critics of these more diffuse notions of power and their commensurate politics might suggest that we overestimate the extent to which ‘small scale and stealthy acts of opposition’ (Fox & Starn, 1997, p. 3) can result in meaningful social and political change. Some might even argue that it detracts from the ‘real’ work of petitioning the state and mobilising workers (for example Ebert, 1996). But as Özden Firat and Kuryel (2010) put it, ‘it’s even harder to say that it will not’ (p. 12) and like Fox and Starn (1997) I ‘assert a less predetermined, more nuanced view of political struggle’ (p. 11). Similarly, I understand that these expanded notions of what constitutes politics and political action, renders visible those aspects of protest and mobilisation that are usually concealed (Melucci, 1994).

However, there is an important distinction to be made in all of this. Although this study includes these everyday resistances in its understanding of political activity, it is primarily interested in activism. Not all resistance translates into activism. Resistance can be understood simply as a ‘response to power’ (Vinthagen & Lilja, 2009). Thus:

\textsuperscript{51} Italics in the original.
If power is understood as the creation of subordination through discourses that structure performance, label and rank identities, create boundaries, reduce complexity, and then promote power–loaded images of identities to be invested in, then resistance might be performed by the usages of identities, images, and discourses in order to alter stereotypes and hierarchies (ibid.).

If power is understood, as it is in this study, as ‘embedded in the everyday, then resistance is, as power, a part of social life, not exceptional or asocial’ (ibid.).

Activism, on the other hand, ‘goes beyond what is conventional or routine’ (Martin, 2007), although ‘what counts as activism depends on what is conventional’ (ibid.). For example, Kuumba and Ajanaku (1998) examine how wearing dreadlocks can be a symbolic enactment of an oppositional African liberation identity and as such considered a form of everyday resistance. However, simply wearing dreadlocks is not activism, unless it extends beyond the conventional or routine, which in that case, it might be. There is an indistinguishable overlap between expanded repertoires of activism, which extend into notions of life politics and responsibilised citizenship and simple resistance, which is bound up in a complex relationship with context. For this study, it is only necessary to make this distinction in so far as we need to identify the political action of the respondents as activism. Fortunately, although the range of political action recognised in this study goes well beyond previous studies on South African activism’s definitions, it does not reach the a point where it can be considered ‘not exceptional’ in some way. All respondents’ political action ‘goes beyond what is conventional or routine’ (ibid.).

4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has delineated the universe of political discourse for this study. In doing so it has reflected on repertoires of political action which have long been neglected in South African studies on activism, which tend to show a bias toward more ‘large scale interests’ and ‘more visible forms of power’ (Melucci, 1994, p. 108). Not only has this neglect restricted us to a narrowed view of the political landscape in post-apartheid South Africa, but as a result it has also restricted us to a narrowed range of activists. As this chapter has also shown young South Africans are responding politically to the complexities of this post-apartheid context in powerful and creative ways, which this study includes in its definition of what activism in post-apartheid South Africa looks like, and who young South African activists are. This is not to minimise the value of these aforementioned studies, as they provide valuable insights into activist identities in South Africa and an important foundation for this study. The following chapter examines these studies, and reflects on what they suggest about the relationship between activism and identity in South Africa. It also reflects on this relationship more broadly, as presented by the international literature.
There is a profound sense in which the personal is political, and the political is personal. It is through the minutiae of everyday life that human beings access the political ripples of, and the tidal waves, of their times. (Andrews, 2007, p. 2)

Chapter Two examined the shifting nature of the socio-political landscape of post-apartheid South Africa and what this has meant for our resistance politics. Chapter Three explored how these shifts in our resistance politics are not only related to a simple historical trajectory, but the resultant ‘political opening’ (Jacquette, 1989), which has provided the space to rethink the very nature of the political with lenses provided by other traditions of struggle, like feminism. This chapter examines more closely the theoretical relationship between social/political activism and identity.

To make sense of this relationship, this study draws specifically on social constructionist accounts of the notion of collective identity, as espoused by social movement scholars like Melucci (1985, 1989, 1994, 1995, 1996) and Polletta (1998a, 1998b, 2002, 2005, 2006). It also draws on narrative accounts of activist identities as advocated by scholars like Andrews (1991, 1998, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2008) and Squire (2004, 2007, 2008). Although the social movement scholars are more interested in social movements than individual activists, and the narrative theorists tend to focus their attention on individual activists rather than collectives, at the core of both of approaches lies an understanding of activism and identity as inextricably linked. Furthermore they understand this relationship as collectively and discursively rendered in narrative form. Most importantly it understands these identities as being intimately linked to socio-historical context. To provide insight to this relationship as it has played out in the South African context, I start with an overview of studies of activists conducted in South Africa.

1. Locating Identity in South African Studies on Activism: An Overview

Identities are the names we give the different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall, 1990, p. 394)

Despite the fact that South Africa has a significant history of political struggle, there have been surprisingly few academic studies conducted on activist identity. Predictably where studies have been conducted, these have been about anti-apartheid activists. There have been far fewer studies into activist identity in post-
apartheid South Africa. Enquiries into activism in post-apartheid South Africa have been dominated by sociological accounts of the emergence, organisation and mobilisation of social movements especially the TAC (e.g. Ballard et. al., 2006), with only a handful of studies focussing in on activists’ identities.

This pattern of engagement reveals some major gaps in the scholarship on activist identity in South Africa. First is the large hole that exists where studies on activist identity in post-apartheid should be. Given the complexity of the post-apartheid context and its resistance politics, it is not unreasonable to assume that the identity formation projects of young people becoming politically active must then also be fairly complex and therefore an important area of enquiry. Second and related to this, given the more issue–based nature of political organisation in post-apartheid South Africa, the few post-apartheid studies on activist identity that have been conducted, have been constrained within issue based organisations, thus narrowing the scope of the enquiry. Squire (2007) and Robins (2006), for example, focus specifically on members of the TAC which narrows experiences of activists to HIV and AIDS activism. There has been no attempt to locate activist identity formation in the larger context of generational consciousness, and relatedly, no specific attempt to consider young South African activists’ identity projects in relation the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle. Finally although all studies on anti-apartheid activists have been interested in the intersection of race and activist identity (e.g. Louw-Potgieter, 1988; Conway, 2006, 2012), none of the post-apartheid studies consider this relationship. Given the persistence of race in South African society this seems like an important direction of enquiry. However, even though patchy this body of work provides a necessary foundation to build this study on. The following section will provide a summary of each of the bodies of work relating to activist identity in South Africa, providing the major insights from each. It will also link these insights to some major studies and themes in the international literature.

1.1 Anti-apartheid Activist Studies

Studies on anti-apartheid activists range from those with English speaking white liberal students, to black students, to coloured teacher-activists to white Afrikaner ‘dissidents’ and anti-conscription campaigners. Interestingly, most of the studies on anti-apartheid activists have been conducted with white, and to a lesser extent coloured, activists. For this reason this section also draws on some accounts of black activists’ (mostly women), lives as told through literary reviews of autobiographical texts.52

The only studies conducted with activists pre-1994 were conducted by Nkomo (1984), Louw-Potgieter (1988) and Gelman (1990). Nkomo (1984) conducted a study of black student culture and activism in the early 1980s. His study was followed by Louw-Potgieter (1988) who collected the life stories of twenty-four middle-

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52 To conduct a thorough review of activist auto/biographies is well beyond the scope of this thesis. The social-political histories of activists’ serves as useful contextual information for the interpretation of the stories of the young activists in this study, but it is not the primary focus of this thesis. To conduct the kind of analysis being suggested is a research project in itself. It is one that would add much value to the literature.
class white Afrikaners, mostly intellectuals, who were politically active in opposition to the apartheid system and government in the 1980s. Finally, Gelman (1990) examined the ‘life course development’ of white former student activists who had been active in the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), a predominantly English speaking white liberal student organisation, in the 1960s and 1970s.

Post-apartheid studies on anti-apartheid activists have been equally sparse. Early into our democracy Gevisser and Cameron (1994) published an account of gay and lesbian lives in South Africa. The volume includes accounts by gay activists which detail their experiences of being gay in the anti-apartheid struggle (Kleinbooi, 1994; Nkoli, 1994; Toms, 1994). In 1999 Wieder (2001, 2002, 2003) conducted oral history interviews with forty teacher-activists who were active during the anti-apartheid struggle. Although he interviewed teachers of all racial groups, the majority of people interviewed were coloured. Around a similar time, Price (2002) conducted a study with a group of twenty-two anti-apartheid activists of various races and with various organisational affiliations (including active involvement in Umkhonto we Sizwe). Price (2002) was particularly interested in aging and so her respondents were a little older, their ages ranging from sixty-three to sixty-nine years. A few years later Swartz (2007) conducted a similar study with seven members of the Mass Democratic Movement, also of various races, who were active in the liberation movement in the 1950s and 60s. Finally, in the early 2000s, Conway (2006, 2012) conducted a study with thirteen men and one woman who had been members of the End Conscription Campaign during the anti-apartheid struggle.

1.1.1. Clusters of Experience: Patterns in Activist Experiences

Although all the groups studied were active in the anti-apartheid struggle, the nature of their participation and their stories thereof are remarkably heterogeneous, giving credence to the argument that the anti-apartheid struggle was a deeply heterogeneous one. In fact, Conway (2012) points out that even within particular campaigns and organisations, members were not ‘unitary actors, adopting homogenous subjectivities’ (p. 4), a point Wieder (2001) makes about the teacher activists he interviewed. On commencing his study, he presumed that ‘that the enormity of the struggle did not allow for individuality’ (p. 87). However, what struck him was the ‘uniqueness and diversity of the individual teacher stories’, each person ‘very much individuals in their commitment to the struggle’ (ibid.). However, with that said, the studies also all identified similar ‘clusters of common experience’ (Price, 2002, p. 199), which relate to the relationship of activism to identity.

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53 Price’s (2002) sample of twenty-two consisted of seventeen white, one coloured and one indian person, and nine men and thirteen women.
54 Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) translates directly as ‘the Spear of the Nation’ and was the armed wing of the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.
55 The Mass Democratic Movement was a loose alliance between COSATU and the UDF formed in 1989.
56 Swartz’s (2007) sample consisted of six coloured people and one white person; two women and five men.
The first of these clusters highlights the socialisation processes of radicalisation. Gelman (1990) concluded that political consciousness and subsequent participation was primarily a function of familial socialisation and the extent to which participants shared the political views of their parents. The influence of family is a feature of black women’s activist autobiography also. Struggle activists like Pregs Govender, Zubeida Jaffer, (Lewis, 2008), Winnie Mandela (Gocker, 1986) and Vivienne Carelse (Wieder, 2002, 2003) all credit their families with much of their political education. However, whereas Pregs Govender and Winnie Mandela learned and subscribed to the politics of their fathers, Zubeida Jaffer recounts how she learnt from her grandmother, mother and other female relatives. These were women who refused to conform to the dominant gendered norms of their society, but who also defied apartheid and racism (Lewis, 2008). Jaffer’s anti-apartheid politics was thus one grown through her experience of gendered oppression, and it was one she learnt specifically from the women in her family.

Price (2002) and Swartz (2007) suggested that radicalisation is a function of factors beyond just family, including education, literature and social relationships. Pregs Govender, for example, although already politicised at home though her relationship with her father, credits an expansion of her political awareness to attending university (Lewis, 2008). However, university was particularly significant for those activists who did not have activist families or who had politically conservative families. For them tertiary education was seen as a ‘stepping stone to their political immersion, signalling independent thought and increased control of their lives’ (Price, 2002, p. 200). Louw-Potgieter’s (1988) Afrikaner ‘dissidents’, for example, all had parents were politically conservative, and their responses to their children’s anti-apartheid activism ranged from ‘mild disapproval’ to outright ‘rejection’ (Louw-Potgieter, 1988, p. 43). For them the main liberalising influences came from school and especially university. This was also true for Conway’s (2004, 2012) ECC activists. For most of Conway’s (2012) objectors, the decision to object was very threatening to their parents, and for many parents this decision ‘invited the prospect of shame and the isolation of their sons in wider white society’ (p. 99). Given the politically conservative views of their parents, the source of their political education was rarely their home lives. Many sites of breach from the dominant values of white South African society at the time were cited, including church, experience of the military itself, and importantly, university.

Education was of vital importance in the politicisation of black and coloured activists. In particular certain high schools in Cape Town played an important role in the politicisation of young coloured people (Wieder, 2001, 2002, 2003). These were home to coloured teacher-activists who used their platform as teachers to politically educate their students. Most famous amongst these were Neville Alexander, Sedick Isacs, Mandy Sanger, Vivienne Carelse and Jean September (ibid.). Not only did they present students with alternative knowledges than those prescribed by the apartheid education system, but they served as role models and

57 Being used here to encompass black African, coloured and indian.
58 Trafalgar High School and Livingstone High School in particular.
mentors. Says a student of Neville Alexander’s in a study by Chisholm (cited in Wieder, 2001, p. 89): ‘When I looked at Dr Alexander he was completely different to anybody I had ever seen. He was, he just looked so free’. Interestingly, all of these teacher-activists attribute their own political education to their teachers at high school, all of whom were members of the Teacher’s League of South Africa (TLSA)59. According to Neville Alexander it was because of his mentor, Ronnie Brittan, that he became a teacher in the first place. Both Alexander and Isaacs were such strong advocates for the role of education in political engagement that, during their time there, they became actively involved in developing education on Robben Island. Not only did prisoners study politics and earn formal degrees, but they also learnt from each other. ‘The Island’ was in fact such a hub of learning that it became known by prisoners as ‘the University’ (Wieder, 2001, 2003). The importance of the political education they received on Robben Island is reflected in the autobiographical accounts of a number of prominent struggle activists including Ahmed Kathrada and Nelson Mandela (ibid.).

This emphasis on political socialisation has precedent in international studies also. Scholars like Keniston (1968) and Ichilov (1988) have long emphasised the primary role of the family in explaining political behaviour. However, scholars like Keniston’s (1968) have also asserted that universities foster political activism through opening up areas of study, introducing students to novel idea in books, facilitating new friendships and exposing them to lecturers with ‘radical’ ideas. In the mid-1980s, Andrews (1991, 2007) interviewed fifteen lifelong socialist activists (i.e. those who had been politically active for over fifty years) in the United Kingdom. Her enquiry traced their stories of their political education, and although it included family, this education in fact took place through a ‘range of sources’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 60) including friends, films and books.

The second cluster of experience that is suggested by these anti-apartheid activist studies is the way in which the movement acted as a safe, educational and legitimising space. Consider Nelson Mandela’s experience of the community of struggle activists interned on Robben Island as detailed in his autobiography Long walk to freedom:

In the Struggle, Robben Island was known as the University. This is not only because of what we learned from books, or because prisoners studied English, Afrikaans, art, geography, and mathematics, or because so many of our men, such as Billy Nair, Ahmed Kathrada, Mike Dingake, and Eddie Daniels, earned multiple degrees. Robben Island was known as the University because of

59 Formed in 1913 the Teacher’s League of South Africa was an association of coloured teachers. The establishment of the TLSA was a response to ever increasing segregation of schooling by the apartheid government and had the intention of ‘form[ing] a racially exclusive Coloured teachers’ organisation which focused on the Coloured teaching profession and education’. The organisation became very influential in coloured politics and is credited with producing some of the coloured community’s leading intellectuals. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/teachers%E2%80%99-league-south-africa-tlsa-conference-1925)
what we learned from each other. We became our own faculty, with our own professors, our own curriculum, our own courses (p. 467 cited in Weider, 2001, p. 88).

Robben Island’s ‘University’ status was the result not only of the formal education afforded prisoners through the activities of people like Neville Alexander, but the informal education gleaned from a community and network of fellow prisoners. However, this educational function of the community of the movement was augmented by a social one. For respondents in Price’s (2002) study, organisational membership (to the ANC) was related to a growth and intensification of activism and through this a deepened relationship with, and commitment to, the collective: ‘Their political work bound them to one another and this shared commitment paved the way for intimacy that further intensified the strength of the collective’ (p. 201). This, according to Price (2002) was especially true for white participants, who had been ostracised by their own communities. It is not surprising then that this is also a prominent feature of Louw-Potgieter (1988) and Conway’s (2012) studies. Although Louw-Potgieter’s (1988) respondents were not linked through organisational affiliation, but rather an informal social and professional network, this social network operated in similar ways to the organisational membership of Swartz (2007), Price (2002) and Conway’s (2012) participants. This network became the safe, educational and legitimising community, provided in the other studies by an organisational space. Interestingly, in some cases respondents reported the de–peopling of friendship circles of other Afrikaners and re–peopling with English speakers, Jews, black people, etc. where ‘attitude similarity was a key determinant of friendship for this sample’ (Louw-Potgieter, 1988, p. 44). Conway (2012) also refers to the way in which the ECC provided a safe haven from the dominant norms of white South African society, and ‘served as a social environment where people could develop relationships and identities’ (p. 109). The significance of these relationships is evident in the fact that ‘membership of the ECC continues to be relevant to the identities of many former objectors today, whose friendship groups, relationships and self–narratives continue to be defined to a greater or lesser extent, by participation in the ECC’ (Conway, 2012, p. 110).

This is another cluster of experience which echoes international studies. Andrews (1991, 2007), for example, noted the ‘very marked social nature’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 54) of her British activists’ identities, in that their bond to the political collective was a function of their bond to each other, and vice versa. Furthermore, although none of the above studies interpret their respondents’ experience this way, the functioning of the collective as safe, educational and legitimising, references social movement scholars concern with collective identity (Melucci, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Taylor & Whittier, 1992; 1995) which is a theoretical keystone of this study and will be discussed in more detail later on.

The third cluster emerging from these studies was the way in which the intense sense of self as generated through collective struggle and identity was disrupted and thrown into turmoil during the political transition of the early 1990s. Chapter Two examined the shifts in the political landscapes of anti-apartheid to post-
apartheid South Africa, and the changing roles of the liberation movement and what became civil society. Within this shifting context were individuals whose identities where intimately tied up with those structures, collectives and roles that were being redefined. It is no surprise then that for some anti-apartheid activists the political transition signaled a huge crisis of identity. For Price’s (2002) respondents ‘the capitulation of the apartheid government meant a fundamental change to their identities as political activists’ (p. 204). All participants in Price’s (2002) study remained engaged in activism but the nature of their work had changed from ‘politics of resistance’ to ‘creating a political agenda that meaningfully reflected their new found position of power’ (p. 205). Interestingly, within this shift, there was less investment in a ‘collective’ and a much more critical view of the organisations, like the ANC, which had been the containers for their activism and identities during apartheid. Conway’s (2012) participants also experienced altering relationships, especially with the ANC, about whom they had become more critical of since 1994. Reporting from an ECC Anniversary event in 2009, Conway (2012) suggests that many ex–members of the ECC now felt ‘disaffected with South Africa’s democracy and that the “non–racialism” of the liberation struggle had been sidelined for a more racially based (and anti-white) political platform’ (p. 13). For respondents in Swartz’s (2007) study these experiences of South Africa’s political transition resulted in ‘role and identity flux’ (p. 132) and identity ambiguities, which were accompanied by the continued definition of themselves as activists, but within a ‘redefined definition of activism’ (ibid).

This was a similar role and identity flux as experienced by respondents in another of Andrews’ (2003, 2007) studies conducted in East Berlin, after the opening of the Stasi files in East Germany in 1992. She interviewed forty people who had been leading critics of East Germany and founding members of Neus Forum, and was interested in how they made sense of themselves and their politics in the context of this ‘acute social change and transition’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 116). Like Price (2002) and Swartz’s (2007) respondents they were also required to profoundly renegotiate their relationship to social and political institutions, especially the state, which for most of their adult lives had occupied particular positions and significance in their activism and, therefore their identities. A similar dissonance was experienced by Civil Rights activists in the USA who were absorbed into electoral politics and in the face of little substantive change, struggled to come to terms with the fact that they now represented ‘the system’ (Polletta, 1998a, 2006).

What all these studies of role and identity flux, most powerfully illustrate, is the ways in which ‘societal breakdowns, dislocations, and upheaval’ (Braungart & Braungart, 1990, p. 250) impact on political identities, and that where we are located in history is significant to who we are politically. They highlight the importance of locating activist identities in the context of generational consciousness, that ‘identity is related to the consciousness of history’ and that ‘one’s consciousness of history, in turn, is influenced by one’s standpoint in relation to historical events.’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 136).

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60 A leading organisation in the German transition of the late 1980s.
1.1.2. The Importance of Positionality: Race, Gender & Sexuality

In the context of anti-apartheid activism, a crucial dimension of that standpoint in history was positionality. This was especially true for race and gender, both of which were central in informing the identity projects of activists in the anti-apartheid movement. This was an insight most notably dealt with by Nkomo (1984), Louw-Potgieter (1988), and Conway (2004, 2012) and also emerges powerfully in the autobiographical work of black woman struggle activists (Gocker, 1986; Wells, 1986; Lewis, 1999, Lewis, 2001).

According to Nkomo (1984), in his study of black student culture and activism in the 1980s, the stifling racial caste system of apartheid South Africa made black students politically conscious, and much more so than their white counterparts. He argues that the politics of black student activists in the 1980s was profoundly influenced by their life experiences as black people in apartheid South Africa prior to university. He also explains that the particular type of resistance culture emergent on black university campuses in the eighties was a function of this general background of deprivation and humiliation combined with the lack of meaningful opportunity after graduation and a generally inadequate education which contradicted these students’ critical consciousness (ibid., p. 152). Although an earlier generation than Nkomo is writing about this experience is reflected in the autobiographical work of Ellen Kuzwayo, who largely credits her politicisation to the circumstances of her life as a black person. These included the experience of her father losing their family farm to the Group Areas Act in 1974 (Gocker, 1986) and the difficulties of negotiating family life in the context of the Pass Laws (Wells, 1986). Reflecting on this experience in her autobiography, she asserts ‘It is a change forced on me... In the South African situation, I have often had cause to halt and reflect: Who is robbing whom in this country?’ (Gocker, 1986, p. 17) These findings square with more conventional attitudinal survey research conducted by Applegryn (1991) on ‘relative deprivation’ and ‘militancy’ amongst different racial groups under apartheid. Given the prevailing social and political conditions, and their resultant experiences of injustice, black and coloured people were far more likely to become politically active. Similarly Bundy (1989), writing on the Western Cape Schools boycott of 1985, argues that prevailing inequalities and injustices, especially in the form of the sub-standard Bantu Education system, were instrumental in politicising black and, especially coloured youth. This was in large part to the alternative and informal education that sprung up as, especially coloured, teachers resisted the injustice of the system, turning classrooms into ‘zones of liberation’ (Bundy, 1989, p. 213), as mentioned earlier.

There is an important distinction to be made between black and coloured activist experiences, who although both on the wrong end of apartheid were differently positioned politically and socially by colonial and apartheid racial logics. According to Adhikari (1994) by the late nineteenth century ‘the Coloured petty bourgeoisie had developed a group political consciousness and separatist political strategy’ (p. 105). This was
largely a function of frustration at their growing exclusion from Western bourgeois culture and society, as policed by colonial racism, forcing them to mobilise in terms of racial identity. However, this political separatism also served the purpose of securing racial privilege relative to black Africans. According to Adhikari (ibid.) the first organisation established to advocate for coloured people’s political and social rights, the African Political Organisation (APO), not only excluded black Africans but, carefully distanced themselves from them, making it clear that the APO was ‘an organization for the Coloured people only... as distinguished from the native races’ (p. 107). Interestingly, the TLSA which was so instrumental in the politicisation of coloured anti-apartheid activists like Neville Alexander, was a direct offshoot of the APO. However, although the TLSA remained a largely coloured organisation, it ‘vociferously rejected the process of official racialization introduced by the new apartheid government’ (Soudien, 2003, p. 2). This rejection plays out quite clearly in contests over racial identity in some of the teacher-activist’s narratives. For example, Jean September, Vivienne Carelse and Mandy Sanger all reject the identification of coloured and through the embrace of black consciousness, identify as black (Wieder, 2001). According to Sanger:

> We are not Coloured. All three of us in agreement about this. To understand you need to understand the period we learnt our politics and within which our sense of identity was forged, yes forged! I started high school in 1976 – Black consciousness was a dominant political discourse with a popular following in high schools. From birth I was taught to reject the notions of racial classifications, particularly the misnomer ‘Coloured’. Black is okay as a political construct. I’m Black (Wieder, 2001, p. 146).

Although, in contemporary South Africa this rejection of coloured identity (and its relative social and political positioning) might be considered a form of colour-blindness, Erasmus (2001) notes that for coloured people progressive politics demands the ‘acknowledgment of complicity on the part of those historically classified as coloured in the exclusion and disrespect for black Africans’ (p. 16). The rejection of colouredness for blackness, as informed by black consciousness, may be a way of enacting this acknowledgement.

Racial positioning and its resultant identifications are well documented as a galvanising force for political participation in struggles for racial justice, and Nkomo’s conclusions about black African students in South Africa during apartheid find support in studies ranging from the USA (Friedman & McAdam, 1992; Polletta, 2006; Sturm, 2002), Britain (Sudbury, 2001) and even Nepal (Hangen, 2010). Polletta (2006), for example, argues that normative expectations of black students in the southern states of the USA to join the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, was as a result of more than the efforts of local movements, but related to a larger cultural and historical context in which, under the umbrella of black consciousness, students identified themselves as black, and as such part of larger struggles for racial justice as they were playing out in nationalist struggles in Africa.
For white people on the other hand, positioning generally serves as an obvious barrier to participation in struggles for racial justice (Eichstedt, 2001). Thus for white South Africans, participation in the anti-apartheid movement was a far less obvious choice. This was especially true for Afrikaners whose whiteness ‘has historically been rolled into ethnic/nationalistic discourse’ (Steyn, 2004, p. 143). Louw-Potgieter (1988) was particularly interested in how her respondents’ identities as Afrikaners interfaced with their anti-apartheid stance, a stance considered dissident in a society characterised by high levels of political conformity. This was of particular interest as loyalty to the apartheid project, characterised by particular political (Nationalist) and religious (Dutch Reformed Church) affiliations, as well as racial ideology, was inextricably entangled in definitions of Afrikanerness. Respondents in the study make the distinction between themselves and ‘Ware Afrikaners’61, whom one respondent defines as a ‘group of Afrikaners… who have claimed the right for themselves that they have followed and maintained the right way, and that those who do not agree with them, have abandoned this direction and have thus, in a sense forfeited the right to be Afrikaners’ (Louw-Potgieter, 1988, p. 55). Inside this discourse, to be dissident was to no longer be an Afrikaner. This was something many dissidents themselves believed and many attempted to escape their Afrikaner identities in order to pursue more progressive politics and lives by, amongst other things, no longer speaking Afrikaans and no longer associating with other Afrikaners. On the other hand some dissidents saw their Afrikanerness as inescapable, and considered themselves as expanding the boundaries of, and thereby redefining, Afrikanerness. Thus for white Afrikaners, identity was central in their anti-apartheid activism, so much so that one could negate or redefine the other.

Even though white English speakers benefitted equally from apartheid’s race based distribution of social, economic and political resources, Afrikaner’s relationship to their anti-apartheid activism was different to that of white English speaking liberals, in that ‘the apartheid system was put in place in their name62’ (Steyn, 2004, p. 150). This changed the nature of their relationship to the anti-apartheid struggle. For example, one respondent in Louw-Potgieter’s (1988) study asserted that Afrikaner dissidents were more easily accepted by black people than English speakers in that ‘you are anti-apartheid the moment you become a dissident, you reject the power aspect of Afrikanerhood that is always linked to apartheid’, a rejection which signals a clear choosing of one side over the other. In contrast, ‘… with the English speaker it is not like this. You have in a sense chosen against the conservative, or even the liberal, English speaker’ (Louw-Potgieter, 1988, p. 64). This, combined with what her respondents refer to as English liberals sense of superiority, generated a general distrust of white English liberals amongst Afrikaners. Not only does this dynamic illustrate a powerful relationship of activist and racial/cultural identity in the context of anti-apartheid activism, but it alerts us to an important cleavage between Afrikaners and English speakers.

61 Translates directly as ‘true Afrikaners’
62 Italics in the original.
We have already mentioned how the young white men who joined the ECC were in danger of isolation and rejection from white society. Joining the ECC required a ‘breach and renunciation’ of the norms of white society (Conway, 2012, p. 109) and ‘white men who refused to serve in the apartheid army were challenging one of the fundamental bases of white identity formation and status accumulation’ (Conway, 2012, p. 11). More than a breach with whiteness it was a breach with white masculinity. In a society where conscription was considered a rite of passage into manhood for young white men, not doing it and, in fact rejecting it, was a serious gendered transgression, and according to Conway (2012) ‘objection to military service for moral or political reasons is also a politics of gender’ (p. 3). Furthermore, given the highly heteronormative policing of masculinities in this context, it was also deemed to be a reflection of objectors’ sexuality, with objectors regularly been referred to as ‘queers’ and ‘moffies’ (Toms, 1994; Conway, 2004). However, according to Morrell (2001) the ECC provided a means to ‘challenge violent masculinities and, in doing so, develop new models of how to be men’ and ‘offered a non-violent, anti-authoritarian vision of masculinity for young white men’ (p. 31). Being part of the ECC provided young men the opportunity of exercising these alternative ways of being. Over fifty per cent of members of the ECC were, in fact, women who provided an ongoing critique of hierarchical, authoritarian and patriarchal ways of working and stimulated intense feminist debate. In spite of this the organisation was plagued by sexism and the continued relegation of women to traditionally conservative gender roles ‘as wives and mothers, sisters and sweethearts of conscripts’ (Conway, 2012, p. 122). As Conway (2012) points out, the critiques imply that the ‘ECC was not the alternative and transgressive cultural space’ (p. 111) that some of his respondents suggested.

It was not only the ECC that exhibited an ‘absence of feminism’ Price (2002). The ECC simply mirrored the trend of the broader liberation struggle. In fact, the ECC’s strategic appeal to white women as mothers of potential conscripts closely resembled the ANC’s ‘motherism’ which had always been a key basis for black women’s political activism in the broader liberation struggle (Beall, Hassim & Todes, 1989). This domestication of, especially black women, is particularly apparent in the autobiography of Ellen Kuzwayo. According to Lewis (1999):

Much of Kuzwayo’s representation of women’s roles in political struggles and their recourse to familial identities reveals how subjects are interpolated into domestic gendered spaces even when their political activity appears to be emphatically communal or national. The persistence of the family and home as metaphoric sites for women’s self-realisation is a mark of the inevitable entanglement of a domestic gender hierarchy with broader public roles and spaces for women as citizens (p. 42).

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63 In South African vernacular, ‘moffie’ is a derogatory word for a gay man. It is also used to refer to a man who is effeminate.
However, not all women were similarly positioned to this expression of activist identity. Unlike Kuzwayo, Mamphela Ramphela, shifted ‘her own and other women’s experiences beyond the realms of familial relationships or prescribed social contributions to the more inclusive realm of participation’ (ibid., p. 42), thereby implying a broader basis for the recognition of women as active citizens. Nevertheless, as the autobiographical work of many black women activists attest to\(^\text{64}\), they often experienced a tension between ‘women actively making their mark on the world’, i.e. women as activists and ‘women as dependent, caring wives and mothers’ (Beall, Hassim & Todes, 1989, p. 202). This subsumption of feminist concerns by the nationalist struggle in this manner, resulted in an uneasy and ambivalent coexistence narratives of activism and mothering (Hassim, 2006). It also resulted in the active continued oppression of women in the interests of the nationalist struggle where, for example, raising issues such as sexual violence was seen as betrayal (Lewis, 1999; 2008).

This absence of feminism was of course true for most of the struggles for national liberation across the globe, including Africa (Beall et al., 1989) and India (Banerjee, 2006), and within the black nationalist struggle in the USA (Perkins, 2000). More recently Conway (2011) has commented on the dominance of hegemonic masculinities in the anti-globalisation movements and suggests that any enquiry into political participation must be located in an analysis of how factors such as race, gender and class intersect. Jaramillo (2010) adds that understanding how ethnic and gendered identities intersect at the level of individual activists, is essential to understanding political participation and activist identities in any context.

Given the absence of feminism in the broader liberation struggle, it is not surprising that it was not only women, and the interests of women, who were marginalised in the anti-apartheid movement, but gay men as well (Gevisser, 1994). In fact, Nkoli (1994) and Kleinbooi’s (1994) accounts of their participation in various student organisations, expose the high levels of homophobia within the broader movement. Nkoli (1994) refers to an incident where other prominent members of the organisation he was part of ‘did not want to be tried with homosexuals’ (p. 255)\(^\text{65}\). He also shares how his being gay affected his work in the organisation and he was often not taken seriously and even mocked. Kleinbooi (1994) didn’t experience the blatant homophobia that Nkoli did. However, he was very wary of coming out to his colleagues and when he finally did, was often chastised for ‘hijacking the struggle’ (p. 264) whenever he brought up the issue of gay rights.

\(^{64}\) Including Pregs Govender and Emma Mashinini (Lewis, 2008).

\(^{65}\) In the mid-1980s, a group of twenty-two activists, including Nkoli, were on trial for high treason, in what became known as the Delmas Treason Trial. As Nkoli (1994) describes it, the trial was ‘the showpiece of PW Botha’s State of Emergency repression’ (p. 257).
1.2 Post-apartheid Activist Studies

A mentioned previously, the most significant body of work relating to activist identity in South Africa has taken the form of auto/biographical productions. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to provide an in-depth analysis of all of these biographies, as they are numerous and the range of experiences that they cover is vast and varied. However, a meta-consideration of this body of work provides some useful insights into activist identity in South Africa, especially with regards to the transition from the anti-apartheid to post-apartheid struggles.

One of the most prominent themes of South African post-apartheid auto/biographical writing has been that of political repression and activism (Coullie, Meyer, Ngewna & Olver, 2006). According to Couille et al (2006) since 1994 ‘three broad categories of auto/biographical production’ (p. 30) have emerged in South African literature. First are ‘apolitical’ ‘personal memoirs’; second ‘auto/biographical accounts which recover portions of history or experiences suppressed by the apartheid regime’; and third ‘auto/biographical subject attempts to adjust to a new political dispensation’ (p. 30). Predictably, most of the stories told within the second category are the life stories of anti-apartheid activists.

Couille et al. (2006) mark an interesting shift in post-apartheid activist auto/biography which echoes the previous chapter’s theoretical discussions of shifting political concerns, actions and identities in post-apartheid South Africa. They identify ‘changes to auto/biography in the resistance tradition’ in the form of an ‘upsurge in identity politics’ and observe that ‘disputes or areas of protest and emancipation have multiplied’ (p. 19). They add that the ‘broadening of emancipation and resistance can be seen in accounts which have further diversified an area pioneered by feminist concerns with gender and reconceptualisations of masculinity’ (p. 19). This can be seen in explorations of sexuality and sexual identity, and personal accounts of living with HIV and AIDS. They provide examples like Mark Gevisser and Edwin Cameron’s Defiant desire: Gay and lesbian lives in South Africa and Edwin Cameron’s Witness to AIDS.

Echoing the trends in auto/biography, the academic work on the post-apartheid activist identities has, given the proliferation of sites of activist engagement, been spread across many more and different sites of political struggle. These include, most notably, HIV and AIDS activism, gender and LGBTI activism. The studies are also very different to those conducted with anti-apartheid activists, and tend to focus more on subjectivities in relation to activism, rather than the stories of political socialisation which were so prominent in the anti-apartheid activist studies.

Most notable have been the studies into HIV and AIDS activism, especially as mediated by participation in the TAC, and emergent identity formation. Based on the illness and treatment narratives of fifteen HIV
positive people between 2004 and 2005, Robin’s (2006) examines how ‘activist mediations’ (p. 313) have contributed to the creation of a form of ‘responsibilized citizen’ desired by public health practitioners. The nature of these mediations has been not only through the creation of a caring community for those isolated and stigmatised by HIV and AIDS, but also importantly the provision of interpretive frames for illness that facilitate the making of new HIV positive identities and ‘responsibilized’ subjects (p. 321). It is these meaning making frames that Robins (2006) is concerned with, this ‘dimension of TAC activism – namely, its capacity to create the conditions for the production of new subjectivities and identities out of the traumatic experiences of illness and stigmatization of individual HIV/AIDS sufferers’ (p. 314).

In 2001, Squire (2007) conducted thirty-seven interviews with twenty-nine women and eight men who were HIV positive, in and around Cape Town’s townships. All her respondents were black, Xhosa speakers with ages ranging from the late teens to early forties. Her intention wasn’t really to investigate HIV and AIDS activism, but rather to gather people’s assessments of the HIV and AIDS support structures they accessed. What she found was not only that activist organisations like the TAC were amongst these support structures, but that they were enormously important. Similar to Robins (2006) she examined how the TAC’s ‘politicised mode of talking about HIV’ or ‘speaking out’, lead not only to the formation of ‘new social and virtual communities of HIV support’ (ibid.), but to the establishment of a form of ‘intimate citizenship’ (Plummer, 1995), through what she calls ‘conversion stories’. These stories were told by people who had come to accept their HIV status in a way that empowered them to live their lives in what they constructed to be more ethical ways. Interviewees ‘borrowed the ethical force of a [religious] conversion genre and gave it to living with HIV’ (Squire, 2007, p. 165). These ‘conversion pathways mapped out difficult but achievable journeys towards ethical citizenship [with HIV]’ (ibid., p. 164). Thus, she argues that the ‘assumption to moral HIV subjecthood might work to establish social and political citizenship’ (Squire, 2007, p. 166).

A similar expansion of discursive possibility in identity formation was explored in a study with a volunteer from Rape Crisis in Cape Town. Chadwick and Foster (2005) analysed the story of a twenty-five year old, gay-identified, coloured woman, called ‘Vicky’ who recounted her experiences of being a Rape Crisis volunteer, and the impact it had on her. Chadwick and Foster (2005) examined how Vicky exercised new forms of agency by taking up different identity positionings during her volunteer work at Rape Crisis. The analysis showed that participation in Rape Crisis made available new discourses, discursive positions and defensive patterns which ‘all interconnect dynamically to produce a psychosocial subject who positions herself in unique and changing ways’ (Chadwick & Foster, 2005, p. 126).

Interestingly, ‘Vicky’s’ story resembles many feminist and LGBTI activist accounts of shifts that occur in their identities through participation in feminist and LGBTI collectives (e.g. Taylor & Whitter, 1992). Ginsburg (1997), for example, examined how feminism provided pro-choice activists in the USA with ‘new
resources with which to understand and frame their lives’ (Ginsburg, 1997, p. 428), and in so doing ‘operate(s) to mediate the construction of self’ (ibid., p. 427). Segal (2007) talks of her first encounters with feminist voices, ‘drawing me into identifications and belongings that would give me the most lasting sense of who I was’ (p. 1–2).

What the above review of studies on South Africa activists has illustrated is that who we are in relation to what we do politically matters, i.e. identity matters. Identity is, and always has been, a key dimension of South Africa’s resistance politics; not only as informing our resistance politics, but as a site of resistance itself. The failure to recognise this relationship not only results in the failure to appreciate the complexity of our political identities, but also in the reduction of the ‘ideological potential’ of our change projects. For example, reflecting on the ECC Conway (2004) argues that the ‘true ideological potential’ of the organisation was never realised due to ‘the failure to acknowledge the importance of identity to the creation of democratic citizenship’ (p. 42). Given the complexity of post-apartheid identity formation and the proliferation of political projects in post-apartheid South Africa (as discussed in Chapter Two), the interface of identity and our political projects is a crucial site of enquiry. It is important not only for understanding the complexity of political landscapes and identity formation projects, but also in the realisation of the full potential of our change projects.

These studies cited above are located in a much larger body of scholarship on activism and identity. It is a scholarship that spans across disciplines and theoretical traditions, and one, which has as many theories of identity and activism as there are scholars interested in it. The following section maps out some of the major co–ordinates of this landscape, so as to locate this study. It then focuses in on two major concepts, which provide the theoretical foundation for this study’s conceptualisation of this relationship; collective identity and narrative.

2. Theorising the Relationship between Activism & Identity: An Overview

   Personal identity emerges as a ‘figure’ against the ‘ground’ of culturally given images of the self. (Parker, 2007, p. 69–70)

The political uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s, in the USA and Europe saw social psychologists develop an interest in how people became radicalised (e.g. Flacks, 1967, 1971; Ingelhart, 1971; Keniston, 1968), etc. They were interested in why and to a lesser extent how people become social/political activists, and concluded that radicalisation was as a result of political socialisation, involving parenting and schooling. These political socialisation approaches were followed by the emergence of key concepts in social movement studies, which linked collective behaviours with concepts like ‘cognitive liberation’ (McAdam, 1982) and ‘frame alignment’
(Snow, Rochford, Worden & Benford, 1986) and which emerged out of this rekindling of the link between social movement and psychological analyses.

Until these scholars, the interface between the social and the psychological had been neglected in the discussions on social movements and political action. The occlusion of psychosocial factors up to that point was largely as a result of research into collective behaviour by social psychology (Stryker et al., 2000), which emphasised ‘the role of shared beliefs and identity’ (Gibson 2006, p. 16). However, it did so by hinting at the ‘irrational politics of the mob’ (ibid.), the ‘irrationality of crowd behaviour’ (Stryker et al., 2000, p. 2) and ‘the politics of unreason’ (Lipset & Raab, 1970). It was also influenced by the work of Olson (1965), an economist who suggested that collective action was, in fact, irrational in the logic of personal gain. This was most readily expressed in what he called the ‘free rider’ problem, which simply stated, is the fact that people will benefit from the outcomes of collective action (e.g. a cleaner environment, access to anti–retroviral treatment) whether they participate in the movement or not, making actual participation irrational. Inside of this apparently irrational impulse emerged psychosocial theories around social deviance, emotional co–dependence and brainwashing (Stryker et al., 2000) all suggesting the pathological psychology of people involved in social movement politics.

Within social movement studies the suggestion of the irrationality and pathology of collective behaviour as suggested by this paradigm resulted in an almost knee-jerk response to reframe political actors as rational, deliberately mobilising resources and taking advantage of political opportunities, as in the emergent resource mobilization and political opportunities paradigms of the early 1960s. The resource mobilisation perspective of (McCarthy & Zald, 1977), for example, views social movements as structures of normal and rational political challenge by aggrieved groups, and movement participants as ‘rational actors, who are recruited and who choose involvement based on straightforward cost–calculus’ (Davis, 2002, p. 5).

The ‘cultural turn’ in social movement analyses, ushered in by shifting understandings of power and political action as explored in the previous chapter, as well as more social constructionist notions of personhood, emerged as a reaction to what they saw as a (resultant) overemphasis on structural or macro factors, like organisational structures, recruitment strategies, etc. (Snow et al., 1986) emphasised by the now dominant resource mobilisation and political opportunity approaches. Their emphasis shifted the enquiry away from macro factors of mass mobilisation to more psychological, social and cultural considerations, which has lead to social movement studies’ new concern with identity. As a result, within social movement studies and the social psychologies since the 1980s ‘there [has been] growing recognition that a thoroughgoing understanding
of this issue [collective political action] requires consideration of both social psychological and structural/organizational factors’ (Snow et al., 1986, p. 248).

From the moment social movement scholars identified the relationship between social/political activism and identity they started theorising the nature of it. Unfortunately, these theorisations are as diverse as the number of scholars doing so, and as complex as the definitions of both identity and activism they bring to their theorisation. According to Stryker (2000) ‘Conceptualisations of identity – when offered – in these [social movement] literatures are diverse, confusing discussions of its applicability to social movements’ (p. 22). Snow and McAdam (2000) concur and point out that some ‘troublesome tendencies’ (Snow & McAdam, 2000, p. 41) in social movement literature which include poor theorisation, has led to the situation where ‘the growing literature that focuses on the identity/movement connection is characterised by conceptual ambiguity, empirical looseness, and sometimes questionable claims’ (p. 41).

However, there have been a few attempts to untangle the unruly threads of thinking around identity in the context of social movements which are useful in laying out the topography of the area. Snow and McAdam (2000) identify the main distinctions to be between dispositional, structuralist and constructionist perspectives. A dispositional perspective ‘posits a psychofunctional linkage between various personality types or traits and behavioural possibilities or prospects’ (p. 42) whereas, a structuralist perspective sees ‘individual identities as embedded in elements of social structure – specifically in roles, networks and groups’ (p. 44). However, they make the point that the interface between group and individual identity is more complex than either of these perspectives can attend to and it is this that has been the foundation for the development of the constructionist perspective. Because this constructionist perspective considers the relationship between identities and personality or social structure to be largely ‘indeterminate’ (ibid., p. 46), ‘attention is shifted from the dispositional correlates or structural moorings of identities to their construction and maintenance through joint action, negotiation and interpretive work’ (ibid.).

Echoing Snow and McAdam (2000) Owens, Robinson and Smith–Lovin (2010) identify ‘three faces of identity’ in social movement literature. First, they identify theories that emphasise internalised role identity meanings. These theories focus on ‘on how stable, internalized aspects of social identities are formed and how they affect behavior as the social actor moves from one situation to the next’ (Owens et al., 2010, p. 478). This view of identity is based on the assumption of an internal (self)/external (social) dualism, whereby through processes of socialisation the social becomes internalised into the self. Like Snow and McAdam’s (2000) dispositional perspective, primary to this conceptualisation is the notion of a coherent and stable self,

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66 My addition
which although influenced by context, remains fairly discrete. Second, they identify theories that focus more heavily on culture and situational context. These theories focus on how consensual cultural meanings associated with identities are imported by actors into local interactions and how situational environments shape the localized meanings of the situationally relevant identities’ (Owens et al., 2010, p. 478). Similar to Snow and McAdam’s (2000) structuralist perspectives the external is emphasised over the internal, and the notion of a stable internal self is considered figment of an overzealous psychological imagination. Finally, they identify theories that ‘place the concept of individual identity at a group level’ (Owens et al., 2010, p. 278), that is theories that consider individual identity to be mutually constitutive, and therefore inseparable, from the collective, or group. Although they do not speculate on the nature of the relationship so much, like Snow and McAdam’s (2000) constructionist perspective this conceptualisation of individual identity occurs in relation to a collective or group and requires us to focus on the negotiation of shared action and meaning making.

This study is positioned within an understanding of (individual) identity as constituted through collectivity (Owens et al., 2010) and as constructed (Snow and McAdam, 2000). However, within these overarching understandings of the relationship between identity and activism a greater discernment is necessary. Within an understanding of identity as collectively constituted, I draw on the notion of collective identity as conceptualised by social constructionist theorists like Melucci (1995), Taylor and Whittier (1992) and Polletta & Jasper (2001). I then draw on a narrative understanding of this construction, as proposed by narrative theorists such as Andrews (2007) and Squire (2007). The integration of these provides the theoretical foundation for this study.

3. Collective Identity & Narrative: An Integrated Theoretical Foundation

A community exists wherever a narrative account exists of a ‘we’ which has continuous existence through its experiences and activities. (Carr, 1991, p. 163)

Collective identity is a key concept for understanding how structural inequality becomes subjectively experienced (Taylor & Whittier, 1992; 1995), and can be thought of as ‘the shared definition of a group that

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67 In this category they place role identity theory, identity theory, identity accumulation theory and identity control theory (Owens et al., 2012).
68 In this category they place situated identity theory, affect control theory, social identity theory and status characteristics theory (Owens et al., 2012).
69 Social movement scholars have turned to it to answer four questions emerging out of the gaps left by the dominant resource mobilisation and rational actor paradigms (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). The first question has to do with why political collectivities emerge when and where they do. Even though a certain issue may not be new, political mobilisation around that issue may be, and what is it that catalyses that mobilisation? The second question is about what motivates people to act often without incentive or coercion. It’s the old puzzle of what’s in it for whomever, especially when what’s in it is not obvious. The third question has to do with the movement’s modes of engagement: ‘If people choose to participate because doing so accords with who they are, the forms of protest they choose are also influenced by collective identities’ (p. 284). The argument is that the strategic choices movements or social movement organisations (SMOs) make around modality may be inherently more attractive to some people.
derives from members’ common interests, experiences and solidarity’ (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 105). For the purposes of this study I use Polletta and Jasper’s (2001) definition:

... an individual’s cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution. It is a perception of a shared status or relation, which may be imagined rather than experienced directly, and it is distinct from personal identities, although it may form part of a personal identity. A collective identity may have been first constructed by outsiders (for example, as in the case of ‘Hispanics’ in this country), who may still enforce it, but it depends on some acceptance by those to whom it is applied. Collective identities are expressed in cultural materials – names, narratives, symbols, verbal styles, rituals, clothing, and so on – but not all cultural materials express collective identities. Collective identity does not imply the rational calculus for evaluating choices that ‘interest’ does. And unlike ideology, collective identity carries with it positive feelings for other members of the group (p. 285).

What a definition like this does is provide key points around which to orientate ourselves in considering the nature of the relationship between the individual and the collective in the context of political/social action. It hints at what might constitute the collective to which the personal identity, as per Polletta and Jasper’s (2001) distinction above, is connected, it alludes to what might mediate the experiences of shared status or relations, and it suggests how these experiences may be rendered. First is that collective identity is not only a cognitive connection, but an emotional and moral one, which has positive connotations. Second is that this experience of connection can be direct or ‘imagined’. This is important in the context of the previous chapter’s discussion about expanded repertoires for political action as provided through technology as well as the more amorphous political formation as generated by feminist and other ‘life politics’. Third is that collective identity is also a function of positionality. Experiences of race, gender, culture, sexual orientation, etc. are what a politics of recognition respond to and emerge out of. The previously cited South African studies have shown that race, gender and sexuality are important mediators of political participation. Fourth, and finally, is that collective identities are cultural productions, taking shape through cultural expression. Given the significance of cultural modalities of struggle in the expansion of the political arena especially in post-apartheid South Africa, as explored in the previous two chapters, this cultural dimension of collective identity provides an important lens into the shapes transformative action can take, especially when this action involves subjective transformation.
generated through collective ways of being.

This study is not interested in collective identity per se. Rather it is interested in how individual activists construct their identities and the relationship of this with their activism. It recognises that activist identity formation projects do not occur in isolation, but in relation to collectivity. Given the fragmentation and general ambiguity of political projects in post-apartheid South Africa explored in Chapter Two, the questions become: what are the collectives that these young activists construct themselves in relation to; how do they construct their activist identities in relation to these collectives and; how do aspects of positionality that inform collective identifications, especially race, intervene with the nature of the identifications made?

With this all said, it is important to recognise that like identity there are varying accounts of collective identity, and for greater epistemological clarity, social constructionist accounts of this ‘collective identity’ are explored in greater depth further.

3.1 Collective Identity: A Social Constructionist Account

Melucci’s (1995) concept of collective identity emerged out of a constructionist critique of structural and rationalist approaches to social movement/identity analysis, characterised by what he called the ‘widespread ‘realistic’ attitude toward the object, as if collective actors existed in themselves were unified ontological essences’ (p. 42). Constructionist accounts of social movements have placed new emphasis on the ‘cultural and symbolic processes’ that underlie collective action and ‘stress on the role of identity, the symbolic and expressive, in the analysis of social movements’ (Davis, 2002, p. 6). Rather than ‘unified empirical datum which, supposedly, can be perceived and interpreted by observers’ and that ‘exist as a thing’ (Melucci, 1989) social movements are understood as ‘fragile and heterogenous social constructions’ (Keane & Mier, 1989, p.4).

This conceptualisation suggests a relationship between the movement (collective) and the activist (individual) which is epistemologically distinct from the cognitivist psychological and deterministic structural approaches (Billig, 1995). For us to better understand the interface of movements and individual actors, it is necessary to ‘confront the dualism between structure and meaning’ (Melucci, 1995) that many approaches to identity in social movement analyses employ. Rather than seeing identity as either a psychological mechanism located in the ‘black box’ of the brain or an inescapable socio-cultural role, constructionist approaches conceive of identity as a process of recognition of the self as a social actor in relation to social groupings, constructed in socio-historical context (as per Owens et al., 2010 and Snow & McAdam, 2000). It is on the basis of this recognition and allegiance that social actors give meaning to their own experiences and ‘through the

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My italics.
production, maintenance and revitalisation of identities, individuals define and redefine individual projects, and possibilities for [political] action open and close’ (Della Porta & Diani, 1999, p. 85).

Thus constructionist approaches locate individuals’ political action inside the ongoing process of identity formation. This process is understood as iterative and reinforcing where ‘the evolution of political action produces and encourages continuous redefinitions of [individual] identity’ (ibid.). But rather than as individual process, it is understood as collective. As Melucci (1995) puts it:

‘... by asking how individuals and groups make sense of their actions and how we can understand this process, we are obliged to shift from a monolithic and metaphysical idea of collective actors towards the processes through which the collective becomes the collective (p. 43).

For Melucci (1995) collective identity is thus ‘an interactive and shared definition’, but one ‘that must be conceived as a process because it is constructed and negotiated through repeated activation of the relationships that link individuals (or groups)’ (p. 44). He identifies three elements of such a process, which are similar to Polletta & Jasper’s (2001) definition. First are ‘cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means and field of action’ (Melucci, 1995, p. 44). These are constructed through language reinforced through practice, ritual and artifacts. Importantly, Melucci (1995) makes the point that when he refers to the ‘cognitive level’ he is not implying coherent, unified internalised cognitive frameworks but rather definitions constructed in interaction and therefore always contested. Secondly, there is ‘emotional investment, which enables individuals to feel like part of a common unity’ (ibid.). The extension of the affective into conceptualisations of collective identity is significant in that it engages political identifications beyond the more commonly explored cognitive definitions and into relationships of emotional investment. Finally Melucci (1995) conceives of collective identity as a process, which occurs along a ‘network of active relationships between actors who interact, communicate, influence each other, and make decisions’ (ibid.). This final point is particularly important for the purposes of this study as it evokes feminist epistemologies of

71 My addition.
72 My addition.
73 Emphasis in the original.
74 My emphasis.
75 This cognitive understanding of collective identity is one taken up by the proponents of the highly influential ‘frame alignment’ theories. Coined by Snow et al. (1986) ‘framing’ or ‘frame alignment’ examines the alignment of individual cognitive orientations with those of political organisations or social movements. Their concept of ‘frame alignment’ refers specifically to ‘the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary.’ (ibid., p. 464). For Snow et al. (ibid.) this process is a precondition for any kind of collective action. Drawing on Goffman (1974) they define frames as ‘schemata of interpretation’ that enable individuals “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” occurrences within their life space and the world at large. ’ (Snow et al., 1986, p. 464). Thus they are ‘a form of mental organization that organizes perception and interpretation’ (Fine, 2002, p. 231). However, although Melucci (1995) refers to ‘cognitive definitions’ in the collective identity process he is not, according to Billig (1995) referring to cognitive processes ‘static, reified entities, which are assumed to determine the ways that atomized process information’ (p. 65). He argues that such a model of the cognitive will miss the very processes that Melucci (1989, 1995) is trying to study and thus, that orthodox social psychology that employs such a model ‘would not satisfactorily fill Melucci’s gap’ (Billig, 1995, p. 65).
76 My emphasis.
the political and its concerns with more expanded repertoires of political action that this study is located in, drawing into question the constitution and shape of our political collectivities.

3.2 Collective Identity, Social Movement Community & Social Networks

It was during their research into lesbian feminist activism in the USA the 1960s and 1970s that Taylor and Whittier (1992) realised that to limit their research to the activities of formal interest groups would be to overlook a significant proportion of the political activity being engaged in by these activist communities. Although the public presence of radical feminism had diminished by the late 1970s, they encountered ‘new cycles of feminist activism sustained by lesbian feminist communities’ (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 109). These communities functioned to ‘socialise members into a collective oppositional consciousness that channel[ed] women into a variety of actions geared towards personal, social and political change.’ (ibid.) Because of their recognition of power as operating at multiple levels of society, their activism was ‘propelled by constantly shifting forms of resistance that include[ed] alternative symbolic systems as well as new forms of political struggle and participation’ (ibid., p. 107).

It was based on this observation that Taylor and Whittier (1992) adopted Beuchler’s (1990) concept of a ‘social movement community’ to incorporate expanded notions of collective political action and community into their analysis. A social movement community can be defined as ‘network of individuals and groups loosely linked through an institutional base, multiple goals and actions, and a collective identity that affirms members’ common interests in opposition to dominant groups (Taylor & Whittier, 1992, p. 107). American lesbian feminism represented one such social movement community, which ‘operate[d] at the national level through connections among local communities in decentralised, segmented, and reticulated structure’ (ibid.) and did not necessarily mobilise through formal social movement organisations (SMOs), but through ‘submerged’ networks rooted in everyday life’ (Melucci, 1989, p .41). For Melucci (1989) the reduction of a movement’s ‘political effects and organisational tactics’ to only the visible and ‘collective forms of mobilisation which develop around specific issues’ (p. 71) is one of the greatest limitations of most discussions about political action and identities. For Melucci (1989) ‘movements live in another dimension: in the everyday network of social relations, in the capacity and will to re–appropriate space and time, and in the attempt to practice alternative lifestyles’ (p. 71). This dimension is what Melucci (1989, p. 70) calls the ‘latent movement’, as opposed to the ‘visible’ face of mobilisation.

Although lesbian feminism represented a fairly obvious social movement community, consisting of informal networks, these informal networks which extend way beyond the border of official SMO membership, have
become understood as the basic building blocks of social movements in general. According to Passy (2001) these informal networks have two major functions in the context of movement participation. First they mediate access to participation. Informal networks make participation opportunities available and shape individuals’ decisions to participate. In fact, one of the most commonly cited truths in social movement analyses is that pre-existing ties ‘render [individuals] ‘structurally available’’ (McAdam, 1994, p. 254; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993) to political participation. Second they function to socialise individuals into particular political identities and traditions, through collective meaning making (Passy, 2001). Political collectives all have ‘a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and which they can employ on the basis of further interaction’ (Fine, 2002, p. 233), what Fine (2002) calls idioculture. Beyond formal SMOs, informal networks function to constantly weave idioculture through ‘webs of shared meaning’ (Brown, 2002, p. 104), and these are a major part of what constitutes collective identity.

The ‘submerged networks of political culture are interwoven with everyday life and provide new expressions of identity that challenge dominant representations’ (Melucci, 1989, p. 35). In so doing networks provide collective action with nourishment ‘by the daily production of alternative frameworks of meaning’ (p. 70). In a sense, they act as ‘cultural laboratories’ (Melucci, 1989, p. 60), which ‘create new cultural codes and enable individuals to put them into practice’ (ibid.) and in so doing embody ‘a symbolic challenge to the dominant code’ (ibid.). Plummer’s (1995) notion of ‘interpretive communities’ is a useful articulation of these cultural laboratories and their relationship to collective identities. According to Plummer (ibid.) discourses or narratives are ‘consumed’ differently by different ‘social worlds’ and ‘interpretive communities’ who can hear the story in certain ways and hence not others and who may come to produce their own shared memories.’ (p. 22). Importantly, he makes the point that these are not only ‘cognitive or symbolic units’ but ‘emotional worlds’ (ibid.) which generate relationship of investment amongst fellow ‘members’. Furthermore, they represent concentrations of cognitive, symbolic and emotional formation within ‘wider habitual or recurring networks of collective activity’ (ibid.) because, as he points out, ‘stories do not float around abstractly but are grounded in historically evolving communities of memory’ (ibid.).

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77 In fact, the ‘network approach’ finds currency in both structuralist and cultural accounts of social movement formation.
78 Through what Passy (2001) refers to as structural-connection and decision-shaping functions.
79 Italics in the original.
80 Italics in the original.
81 Italics in the original.
82 This notion of cultural laboratories and interpretive communities, like all these conversations is relevant to conservative as well as more progressive directions of political action. However, Watkins & Shulman (2009) suggest that such meaning making spaces have a particularly important role in progressive activism. They suggest that it is important to learn from ‘cases where communities and individuals have found local, creative, participatory solutions to problematic conditions and institutions by transforming their psychological relationships to self and other’ (p. 16). Although it would be naïve to assume that all networks of even progressively directed groups necessarily exhibit these characteristics, it is fair to suggest that they may or in fact are likely to do so. When they do Watkins & Shulman (2009) call these ‘cultural laboratories’, ‘communities of resistance’. They define these as ‘social spaces that support the development of critical consciousness, the strengthening of dialogue, and the nurturing of imaginative practices of representing history and conceiving the future’ (Watkins & Shulman, 2009, p. 210). It is here that alternative meanings are made and sustained, and through that process different ways of being made possible.
This study understands the construction of activist identities not as individual projects, but as mediated by the interpretive communities of social movement communities. How young activists position themselves in the narratives of the past, how they navigate the complexities of the present, how their positionalities interface these narratives and complexities, and how this all renders activist identity, is a process mediated by collectivity, through processes of socialisation and collective meaning making. Therefore it is this process that will provide the raw material of the activist identity construction projects of these activists and that this study will focus on. However, we are still left with the question of how this process happens. This is where we turn to narrative understandings of identity formation processes.

### 3.3 (Collective) Identity & Narrative

Social and cognitive psychology has documented ‘how storytelling helps to make sense of the anomalous, how it elicits and channels emotions, and how it sustains individual and group identities’ (Polletta, 2006, p. 7). Polletta (2006) suggests that these processes are crucial to collective action and identity formation and that their exploration can contribute to the development of a ‘microfoundation’ (p. 7) so lacking in social movement analyses. Andrews (2007) and Squire (2007) have also argued convincingly for a narrative enquiry into activist identities. According to Andrews (2007) ‘Narratives provide a very rich basis from which to explore political identities…’ and that ‘…what an individual or a community choose to tell about themselves is intricately tied to how they construct their political identities’ (p. 11). She is interested in the relationship between ‘individual’ political/activist identities and the cultural/political resources people draw on in order to construct them, and asks one main question to theorise this relationship: ‘How do people place themselves in the political world that they identify’ (p. 8)? This question opens up two lines of enquiry, namely ‘how people view struggles for power and attempts to resolve such struggles’ and most importantly, ‘how they locate themselves within this process’ (ibid.). The way in which she accesses this process is through narrative. According to Andrews (2007), ‘the kinds of stories people tell about how the world works, how they explain the engine of political change, the role they see themselves, and those whom they regard as being part of their group, as playing in this ongoing struggle’ (p. 8), provide us with insight into how individuals construct their activist/political identities. Exactly how it does this, will be explored in the following chapter.

### 4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter examined the relationship between activism and identity. The first half chapter examined some of the major ‘clusters of experience’ emerging from South African studies, locating them in relation to international studies and trends. These included a concern with political socialisation, the way in which
political collectives served as spaces of learning and belonging, and the negotiation of South Africa’s political transition. It also examined the centrality of positioning, especially, race, gender and class in the rendering of political collectives and identities in South Africa during and post-apartheid. The second half of the chapter provided the theoretical foundation for this study. It explored the theory of activism and identity, providing an overview of the very large and varied terrain it covers. It then located this study firmly in social constructionist accounts of collective identity, and drew on narrative accounts of activism and identity to conceptualise the nature of that construction.

The next chapter expands on this foundation, providing a more comprehensive theoretical framework, in the form of narrative enquiry.
Chapter Five
Narrative & Activist Identity: A Theoretical Framework

Chapter Four provided an overview of social movement studies’ engagement of the relationship between activism and identity. It located this study firmly inside a social constructionist account of identity formation, and introduced an understanding of this process as rendered collectively through narrative. Building on this, Chapter Five consolidates the theoretical framework for this study. It endeavours to link the previous theoretical discussions on activism and identity in post-apartheid South Africa to an epistemological foundation and commensurate methodological and analytical practice. It does so through engaging with what has broadly been referred to as ‘narrative inquiry’ (Chase, 2006).

There is a strong precedent for the examination of activism and identity through a narrative lens. In fact, Polletta (2006) argues for the explicit conceptualisation of social movements as rendered through narrative. Her rationale is that narrative has particular features and that these features can help us answer some of the questions left unaddressed by current social movement analyses. These features include the fact that narrative can be fairly easily identified in discourse. It can therefore be used to ‘trace the careers of political stories’ (Polletta, 2006, p. 7) which may for example, illustrate how new stories lead to new modes of action. It also orders characters and events in space and time and because of this it is a particularly useful format for ‘revealing character transformations’ (Bamberg, 2004, p. 354). Furthermore, there is a literature (across disciplines including social psychology) which shows how narrative operates rhetorically through, for example how plot structures suggest causality, which in turn may allow us to comment on why certain narratives gain force in particular contexts. Finally, the stories people tell ‘indicate both the specificity of their location as well as their position within a wider historical perspective’ (Andrews, 2002, p. 82), providing a means for analysts to conduct enquiries into identity that are interested in identities as contingent on social and historical context.

The field of narrative inquiry is highly contested. As Riessman (2008) puts it ‘there is no single way to do narrative research, just as there is no single definition of narrative’ (p. 151). These debates are important in that how narrative is theorised will determine the methodologies employed to generate and/or collect ‘it’ and of course the analytical tools employed to analyse ‘it’. To avoid what Riesmann (ibid.) calls ‘loose talk’ (p. 153) about narrative I will attend to these theoretical debates with care, thereby providing a secure theoretical framing to construct the methodology and analysis within. This chapter will provide a brief overview of some
of the major cleavages in the field of narrative inquiry, locating this study accordingly. It will then explore positioning theory, as means to provide further analytical acuity.

1. The Field of Narrative Inquiry: Major Cleavages

*How the analysis is done depends once more on researchers’ idea of what narrative is.* (Squire, 2008, p. 50)

Chase (2005) presents narrative inquiry as a particular ‘subtype of qualitative inquiry’ (p. 651) and characterises its contemporary expression as ‘an amalgam of interdisciplinary analytic lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them’ (ibid.). Thus as a number of authors (Andrews, Sclater, Squire & Treacher, 2000; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou, 2008) point out, the field of narrative inquiry is multiple and diverse origins and therefore vast and contested. As such Riessman (2008) suggests that narrative analysis should be seen as ‘family of analytical approaches to text’ (p. 151), rather than one coherent theory or practice because ‘as in all families, there is conflict in and disagreement among those holding different theoretical perspectives’ (ibid.) Different theorisations of narrative with regards to identity formation provide different theoretical tools to the analyst. Inside a constructionist framework it is, for example, the ‘additional rhetorical work in order to be heard “correctly”’ (Bamberg, 2004, p. 359) that is the data of personal narratives. Inside a modernist frame it is an inner hidden truth that is revealed through speaking. The question arising for the analyst is: what, given the theoretical direction we choose to take, are the structures that become available for our examination?

It is beyond the scope of this project to enter into the greater breadth and depth of these debates around narrative, what it is and how it can be used. Rather it is appropriate to narrow the discussion to the relevant debates in order to engage the task at hand. As such this section will examine the two major cleavages in the field of narrative inquiry that are relevant to this study. The first is the distinction between ‘event-’ and ‘experience-centered’ (Squire, 2008) understandings of narrative structure. This is also sometimes referred to as the distinction between ‘big’ and ‘small’ stories (Bamberg, 2004; 2006). Here the debate focuses largely around questions of narrative structure and what they mean. The second cleavage is that between humanist and post-structuralist accounts of narrative, the latter also being referred to as culturally-orientated approaches (Squire, 2008). Here the focus of the debate focuses more on the nature of subjectivity and the relationship of the individual to the social. Each will explored in turn.
1.1. Event vs. Experience Centered Approaches

One of the most significant cleavages in narrative inquiry is that between ‘event-’ versus ‘experience-centered’ understandings of narrative formation (Squire et al., 2008). ‘Traditional’ event-centered inquiry focuses its attention on spoken accounts of past events. It is these events that give shape to the narrative. On the other hand, experience-centered inquiry, expands what constitutes narrative beyond the ‘syntax of storied events’ (Squire, 2008, p. 41) to the ‘semantics of narrated “experience”’ (ibid.). According to Squire (ibid.) this approach ‘rests on a phenomenological assumption that experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness’ and ‘takes a hermeneutic approach to analyzing stories, aiming at full understanding, rather than as in William Labov’s case, structural analysis’ (ibid.). It assumes that narratives have four distinct features. First it assumes that narratives are ‘sequential and meaningful’ and that ‘personal narrative includes all sequential and meaningful stories that people produce’ (Squire, 2008, p. 42). Thus although a narration may be about an event in time, this temporality is less significant a defining factor of the narrative than theme. Second it assumes that narratives are ‘definitively human’ (ibid.), in that they are the primary way in which humans make sense of their worlds. Third, it assumes that they ‘re-present’ experience, reconstituting, it as well as expressing it’ (ibid.), i.e. narratives construct reality rather than merely mirror it and that this is done in relation to other people and different contexts. The idea that identity is ‘performed’ through narrative rests in this feature. Finally it assumes that narratives ‘display transformation and change’ (ibid.) in that they ‘represent personal changes that go beyond the formal ‘resolutions’ of Labovian event narratives’ (p. 45).

Another way of thinking about how narrative presents is in the distinction between what Bamberg (2004, 2006) has called ‘big’ and ‘small’ stories. Big stories are those autobiographical event-centered narratives, which have been the traditional unit of analysis for narrative analysts. Small stories, on the other hand, resemble Squire’s (2008) idea of experience-centered formations and include not so much autobiographical accounts, but the stories we tell in everyday interactions. Focusing on small stories means paying attention to ‘underrepresented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to tellings, deferrels to tellings, and refusals to tell’ (Georgakopoulou, 2006, p. 123). It also means paying attention to the ‘doing of narrative’ (Bamberg, 2006), i.e. ‘how narrative is performed and accomplishes particular tasks, including identity’ (Phoenix, 2008, p. 64). There are three major advantages of attending to the ‘doing’ of narrative in this way. First is that it facilitates a study of identity as it is located in ‘local practices through which it is produced in particular times and places’ (ibid., p. 54). The production of identity in a particular time and place is of course, an important consideration for this study. Second is that it can attend to both event-centered type autobiographical accounts as well as ‘material that is not neatly storied into beginning, middle and end’ (ibid.). In this way, the scope of what becomes possible to analyse as narrative opens up, as it is not necessary to limit oneself simply to structured autobiographical accounts. Third is that it emphasises the context of narrative production, which includes both
the immediate relational context (interviewer-participant) of the interview as well as the wider societal and cultural context. This squares with this study’s understanding of identity as collectively constructed and inextricable with historical, social and cultural context.

Although it draws on larger autobiographical accounts of activist lives, this study follows Squire (2008) and Bamberg (2004, 2006) in that it recognises the value of small stories as ‘units of analysis’ and places experience at the centre of the analysis. Here it is the ‘life experiences that infuse the data’ (Squire et al., 2008, p. 5) whatever shape or from that centre narrative and it is this that remains the interest of all narrative inquiry. However, for the purposes of this study I draw on another theorist to conceptually slice the pie of life experience as it is rendered through narrative. Although experience-centered and small story approaches are not really concerned with where narratives start and end, for the purposes of this study, it is useful to discern which biographical experiences respondents considered relevant to their activism, and which they do not. As such I draw on Parker’s (2005) concept of a ‘moral career’. Parker (2005) defines a moral career as a biographical narrative which is constructed in relation to a specific context, and that that might have a quite a short duration (p. 80). He gives the example of a moral career constructed in relation to membership of a student society at university, which might commence at attendance of the first meeting and end when one leaves university. This is a useful concept for this study, which is essentially about the moral careers of young activists, and how their identities have been implicated and shaped through the course of these careers. However, in the case of this study the moral career is not staked around membership to a group (although of course it may be), but around the respondents’ activism, and all experience constructed in relation to this. It is not the big, event-centered story that I am interested in. It is the aspects of this big story that respondents credit as being precursors to, and consequences of, their decisions to become socially and politically active. These may take the shape of both big and small stories. Through biographical accounts, which constitute these moral careers, it is possible to examine how identity is constructed in relation to emergent collective identifications and broader social and cultural stories.

Having examined the rift between event- and experience-centered approaches to narrative structure, the focus turns to that between humanist and post-structuralist (Squire, 2008) accounts of narrative, and through that a deeper exploration of this study’s understanding of identity and subjectivity.

1.2 Humanist vs. Post-structuralist Accounts

_All narrative hints at the production of identity and how it is performed._ (Parker, 2005, p. 78)

Mirroring the broader cleavage in social sciences between more positivist and post-structuralist accounts of human subjectivity we encountered in social movement scholars’ engagement of identity, narrative research
presents roughly two major ways of thinking about human subjectivity: humanism and post-structuralism (Squire, Andrews & Tamboukou, 2008). The former posits a ‘singular unified subject’ (Squire et al., 2008, p. 4) whilst the latter assumes a ‘multiple, disunified subject’ (ibid., p. 3). Although the humanist approach’s need for a ‘subjective continuity’ which underpins ‘moral and political personhood’ (Squire, 2008, p. 54) can be associated with human agency, it can also lead to the assumption of some kind of ‘authorial subjectivity “behind” the material’ (ibid.). This, according to Parker (2005), can lead down a path where ‘narrative “is there all along, inside the mind” and that it is a “psychological structure”’ (p. 75). At the other end of the spectrum post-structuralism’s ‘entirely fragmented and socially determined’ (Squire, 2008, p. 54) subject renders human agency all but impossible, a move which has been criticised for being ‘elitist, relativist and non-political’ (ibid.).

Squire et al. (2008) point out that most researchers attempt to work across this theoretical divide rather than try and resolve what are essentially conflicting positions. They suggest that a synthesis of the two is possible and often involves ‘maintenance of a humanist conception of a unified, singular subject, at the same time as the promotion of the idea of narrative as always multiple, socially constructed and constructing, reinterpreted and reinterpretable.’ (p. 4). For many scholars the way in which to work with this dichotomy is to locate the personal inside the social and cultural (e.g. Bamberg, 2004; Parker, 2007; Polletta, 2006; Squire, 2008). Drawing on more anthropological modes, these approaches theorise the nature of human subjectivity and narrative, in ways which reconfigure the humanist/post-structuralist tension and express two fundamental theoretical concerns. The first of these relates to the relationship between personal and cultural narratives. The second, a function of the first, is about the relationship between subjectivity and narrative.

This study is firmly located in this culturally-orientated approach to identity and its relationship to activism. It provides a general discussion and specific conceptual tools, which elucidate this relationship further. These tools include the notions of ‘master’ and ‘counter narratives’ (Andrews, 2004; Bamberg, 2004) and ‘morality plays’ (Andrews, 2007).

2. Culturally-Orientated Approach to Narrative Inquiry

Personal standpoints are built from often deeply contradictory and fragmented patchworks of cultural resources. (Wetherell, 2005, p. 170)

Culturally-orientated approaches build on post-structuralist understandings of subjectivity. They espouse that ‘the [political] identity of an individual is inextricably tied to the narratives which are culturally available to that person’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 12) and that every individual story is ‘derived from a cultural stock of plots’ (Polletta, 2002, p. 34). There is no line where one stops and the other starts, as narrative becomes ‘the
performance of self as a story of identity’ (Parker, 2005, p. 69). This approach ‘recognises that in performing narratives we draw on cultural resources, histories and social formations, being storied by them at the same time as being active and effective story tellers.’ (Squire, 2007, p. 119).

Parker (2005) refers to those cultural resources as identity scripts. According to Parker (2005) identity scripts have two aspects which are held in constant tension in the process of identity performance: that which is perceived to be the identity of, for example, a ‘woman’, a ‘mother’, or an ‘activist’, and how that image is ‘taken up and lived out’ (ibid., p. 80). It is in the ‘repetition of the elements of the identity script’ that it takes on substance and ‘the improvisation of it’, ‘that allows a little ironic distance from it’ (ibid.). This approach to narrative is heavily indebted to Butler’s (1990) notion of the ‘performativity’ of identity. For Butler (ibid.) identity is not a social or psychological reality that is in the former case, taken up or the latter, expressed. For Butler (ibid.) (gender) identity is a more complex and dynamic process. She defines it as ‘an act which has been rehearsed, much as a script survives the particular actors who make use of it, but which requires individual actors in order to be actualized and reproduced as reality once again’ (Butler, 1990, p. 272.) She argues further that this act ‘constructs the social fiction of its own psychological interiority’ (ibid. p. 279). In other words that the experience of our subjectivity as the source of our actions is part of the fiction of the unified self, generated though the enactment of identity.

In this reading identity is surely not the modernist–humanist notion of ‘the continuous self sufficient, developmental, unfolding inner dialectic of selfhood’ (Hall, 1997b, p. 42). Rather identities are a ‘doing’, and specifically a ‘doing’ in the context of social, cultural and historical narratives. Identities are ‘a matter of becoming as well as being ... [cultural] identities come from somewhere, have histories’ (ibid.). However, there is a ‘limited stock of possible story lines’ (Polletta, 1998b) and according to Bruner (1987, p. 15) ‘all of us create our narratives from the “toolkit” which is culturally available to us’. In this sense individual narratives are not so much ‘literal stories’ but rather each is a means through which:

… respondents organise their memories, make sense of recent events, imagine the motives of others as they create coherent plot lines, to explain racial [and other, e.g. political]83 relationships, engage in impression management, and use the cultural resources available to them to fashion identities under changing circumstances (Steyn, 2001, p.xxxvii).

We now turn to the notions of master and counter narratives, and morality plays to examine the content of this toolkit, these resources, in more detail.

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83 My addition
2.1. Master & Counter Narratives

The “‘play’ of history, culture and power’ (Hall, 1990, p. 225) does not result in a random arrangement of identities. Certain narratives and the identities they are implicated in, have greater social and cultural legitimacy and gravitas. Personal narratives rely on cultural narratives for their ‘tell-ability’, i.e. their coherence and intelligibility in relation to a ‘cultural framework of meaning’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 33). Furthermore, a legitimate story is constructed through mediation with what Bruner (1990) has called canonical narratives; stories which have social legitimacy and weight. Canons are, in a sense, like ‘master narratives’ which ‘define rights and duties and incorporate the values of dominant social and political groups’ and thereby ‘conceal patterns of domination and submission’ (Mishler, 1995, p.115). However, people do not position themselves analogously to these master narratives. Master narratives function to provide us with ways of discerning what is ‘normal’ and thereby be the blueprints by which we read our own and other people’s stories (Andrews, 2004), but they do not dictate the positions we take up in relation to them. They are also not the only stories available.

‘Counter narratives’ are ‘the stories people tell and live which offer resistance, either implicitly or explicitly, to dominant cultural narratives’ (Andrews, 2004, p. 1). This distinction is similar to the one Bauman (1996) makes between dominant and demotic discourse. Essentially, dominant discourse is that which keeps dominant power dynamics intact and demotic is that which disrupts these dynamics and creates opportunity for change (p. 22). Frankenberg (1993) also makes this distinction by way of reference to ‘dominant and counter hegemonic discourses’ (p.22). For Andrews (2004) counter narratives are ‘meaning outside of the emplotments which are ordinarily available’ (p. 1), usually encountered when our personal experiences do not ‘square up with the master narrative’, and in so doing ‘we become aware of new possibilities’ (ibid.). Not only do new possibilities become available but they complicate our stories about ourselves and others. Counter narratives, according to Freeman (2004), are those aspects of our history which have not yet become part of our identities, which when they do, require us to rewrite not only our past but ourselves (ibid., p. 301).

Rather than oppose master-narratives, counter-narratives insert uncertainty, thereby undermining the stability and seeming unified nature of the master narrative (Squire, 2004). Thus the inquiry is not so much whether identities are being formulated in counter positions or complicit with master narratives but rather, how we:

… create a sense of self and identity that manoeuvres simultaneously in between being complicit and countering established narratives that give guidance to one’s actions but at the same time constrain and delineate one’s agency (Bamberg, 2004, p. 363).
The notion of master and counter narratives are important to this study, in that they give us access to the contestation of identity as it plays out inside social relationships of power. Given the extraordinary complexity of the post-apartheid South African context, characterised by a burgeoning of identity projects, expanded areas of political activity and repertoires of action, all in the historical flow of the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle, a means to examine how identities are contested is particularly useful. The notion of master and counter narratives provides this ‘how’. Andrews, however, (2007) provides us with another related means to examine this contestation; cannons or master narratives she calls ‘morality plays’.

2.2. Morality Plays

*All liberation struggles have their saints, martyrs and their heroes – and their corresponding villains.*

(Cherry, 2000, p. 140)

According to Morgan (2004) ‘Narrative weaves the experiences of persons into moral orders…’ (p. 336). Narratives and our positions in them are never neutral, but rather convey a sense of rightness and wrongness, thereby positioning characters relative to ideas and each other (Bamberg, 2004). ‘Morality plays’ are the quintessential ‘goodie’ versus ‘baddie’ genre, a story where ‘we are never in doubt as to who is good, and who is bad, what constitutes the conflict between these opposing forces, and how it should be resolved’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 179). These are master narratives, which not only provide us ways of making sense of events and people, but provide us clear moral positions.

According to Fine (2002) the narratively constituted idiocultures of political collectives have ‘explicit plot lines, and morals are often particularly central’ (p. 233). Similarly Benford (2002) argues that political groups have ‘movement myths’, which he defines as ‘sacred narratives’ which ‘operate in various combinations to inspire action and constrain individual and collective behaviour’ (p. 57). These myths have a similar function to morality plays in that they mediate the moral terrain which movements, their participants and their opponents navigate. Political collectives provide their membership with cultural resources in the shape of both intellectual resources to make sense of the world and clear moral positions to position themselves in. These intellectual resources and moral positions can be thought of as the cognitive definitions and emotional and moral connections that scholars of collective identity like Melucci (1989, 1995) and Polletta (2006) refer to, and morality plays and movement myths are the narrative structures that convey them.

The ‘blunt clarity’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 183) of the morality play, ‘marked by unambiguous plot and caricature’ (ibid., p. 178), obscures complexity, giving momentum and cogency to the narrative. Complexity significantly diminishes the power of the morality play. Significantly, Andrews (2007) makes this point in reference to the narratives emerging out of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)
hearings. The original morality tale of the struggle against and eventual fall of apartheid was that ‘the villains were the rulers of the past, the heroes those of the present’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 184). However, Andrews (2007) argues that the TRC hearings through the presentation of more complex truths (or counter narratives), complicated these stories and therefore these hero and villain characters. As Cherry (2000) expresses it:

… the valiant youth who defied the police becomes merely a drunken thug; the brave freedom fighter is revealed as a traitor. The villain can even be revealed as a ‘decent man’ who had little room in which to move (p. 140).

The ambiguities of post-apartheid resistance politics are in a sense the complication our morality plays. The lines between the good guys and bad guys are much less clearly drawn and the sacred narrative of the anti-apartheid struggle, so central in our political imagination is under serious contestation. This is epitomised in the discussion in Chapter Two about ‘competing claims for anti-apartheid legacy’ (Squire, 2007, p. 180). It is in the context of these ambiguities and contests that young political identities are being forged, where potentially competing morality plays, providing potentially competing identity scripts, require young activists to choose from a greater range of less obviously good and bad guys. Thus an enquiry into how individuals draw on different morality plays, who the characters that populate these morality plays are, and how individuals position themselves relative to these characters can potentially provide very useful insight into political identity projects. Furthermore, to examine how these morality plays square with the sacred narrative of the anti-apartheid struggle can provide useful insight into this generational (political) consciousness, allowing us to examine both the continuities with the past and the particularities of the present.

There is one final theoretical lens that can be brought to bear on the relationship between individuals and the way in which they inhabit cultural narratives. Positioning theory augments the theoretical tools provided by narrative theories, in that it provides further theoretical acuity to examine identity formation processes within narrative structures. It allows us to examine how the respondents position themselves inside of, for example, identity scripts and morality plays, and importantly, allows us to consider more fully how agency is enacted.

3. Positioning Theory

Subject positions offered and taken up within conversations both enable and constrain personhood: they confer rights and specify obligations and duties. They locate persons within moral orders. (Morgan, 2004, p. 337).
Identities are, as Hall (1990) so iconically puts it, ‘the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narratives of the past’ (p.225). But the question remains; how? How do we position ourselves in narratives of the past in the ways that we do?

According to Bamberg (2004) in positioning theory “‘positions’ are typically conceptualized as grounded in master narratives (and morality plays) but opening up and conserving some territory for individual agency’ (p. 366). For Bamberg (2004, 2003) it is important to distinguish between ‘being positioned’ and ‘positioning oneself’ as the two ‘construct(s) two very different agent-world relationships’ (ibid.). In the former positioning is more deterministic with a world to agent flow. In the latter agent acts on the world. This seeming rift is for Bamberg (2004) easily overcome through positioning theory. Here, world and agent ‘operate concurrently in a kind of dialectic as subjects engage in narratives-in-interaction and make sense of self and others in their stories’ (p. 366), rather than one determining the other. ‘In positioning theory positioning is construed as the social process through which conversing participants offer, accept or refuse “subject positions” that are made available through their own and other’s discourse’ (Morgan, 2004, p. 337). Positioning theory provides distinction between ‘roles’, the lines already written for actors in the story they find themselves in, and ‘positions’, which introduces the ‘choosing subject’ (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 50) that is a subject with agency, into the story.

Positioning theory is a useful lens into the narrative structures of plots, story lines, scripts and roles, as it is the discursive practice ‘whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and intersubjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines’ (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 48). As such, positioning theory is an important lens into the relationships between people that those ‘roles’ define, because it is through these positionings that we “produce” one another... situationally as “social beings” (Bamberg, 1997, p. 336). Furthermore, meaning about the self and social world is constructed through active and strategic positioning of the self in relation to others (Taylor, Bougie & Caouette, 2003). Benson (2003) conceptualises this positioning of self in relation to others through the notion of ‘identity boundaries’. These are the points where selves and others start and end, and although forever shifting, are ‘stabilized as continuities’ (Benson, 2003, p. 62). They constituted through what she refers to as ‘psychological boundaries of extension’, which translate into ‘what belongs to me’ and ‘ways in which I belong to others’ (p. 62). This second aspect specifically speaks to group solidarities, obligations, and the extent to which they have claims on the individual. This conceptualisation of identity as being defined by boundaries is particularly redolent of Taylor and Whittier’s (1992) conceptualisation of collective identities as involving boundary creation. Positioning theory can provide insight into how individual and collective identity boundaries interact, through thinking about how boundary markers delimit belonging for example. It can provide a way of thinking in terms of

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84 This concern with agency resembles the rift between humanist and post-structuralist accounts of narrative and identity discussed in an earlier part of this chapter. Positioning theory provides a useful navigation of that rift.
position when examining boundary construction processes, which could be as simple as asking ‘Who is in?’ and ‘Who is out?’ and ‘Why?’ Finally, positioning theory can provide a means to examine how individuals encounter boundaries of self in relation to others, during processes of political socialisation, and in so doing ‘find new locations from which to speak’ (bell hooks, 1990, p. 153).

Positioning theory is therefore, an obviously powerful tool for the examination of identity formation in the context of collectivities like social movement communities, where these collectivities are delineated through actively co–constructed boundary markers (ibid.). It is also powerful in examining the way in which shared narratives implicate moral ordering and ascendency by paying attention to where the good guys and bad guys are positioned in relation to each other, and how individuals position themselves in relation to that, i.e. where the characters are positioned in collectively generated identity scripts. As Morgan (2004) reminds us these relationships between self and other are not neutral, as ‘a narrative speaks a subject into a position within a moral order’ (ibid., p. 336). Positions then, provide individuals and groups (self and other) with sets of rights and duties which supply meaning to actions (Harré & Moghaddam, 2003), i.e. morality plays with identity scripts which construct not just relative positions, but moral relationships.

4. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has built on the previous ones to complete the theoretical framework for this study. It has provided an overview of the major debates in the field of narrative inquiry, specifically exploring the cleavages between event- and experience-centered, big and small story approaches, and the humanist/post-structuralist divide. Located in a post-structuralist, culturally-orientated approach to narrative, it has provided conceptual tools useful for negotiating both the generalities of identity formation, as well as the specificities of identity formation in the context of social/political activism. Specifically, it has suggested that these tools, like master and counter narratives and morality plays, would be useful in examining activist identities as mediated by collectivity. Finally, in positioning theory, it has provided a theory of how identity is constructed inside of narrative. This conceptual framework laid out in the last five chapters, but specifically this final Chapter Five, lays the foundation for the methodology of this study. The question now emerges; how does one translate this research question, these abstract theoretical discussions and epistemological assertions into a research practice? This is a question examined in more detail in Chapter Six.
Chapter 6
Methodology

There is no such thing as atheoretical research. Methodology – the way in which you conduct the research, the design you decide on, the tools you employ, the analytic process you engage in – are all inextricably linked to how you theorise the world. (Macleod, 2004, p. 525)

Following the theoretical framework laid out in the previous chapters, this chapter traces the process of operationalising this framework into theoretically commensurate research acts. This will involve two main activities. The first will be to describe the methodological process of this study, weaving in the means of engaging the ‘ethical dilemmas’ generated by this study throughout. The second will be to describe the analytical process, once again weaving an engagement with the emergent ethical dilemmas through the description. As a point of departure it is necessary to set the co-ordinates for the engagement of the ethical dilemmas faced by this study, that of a ‘relational ethics’ (Ellis, 2007) and ‘friendship as method’ (Tillmann-Healy, 2003). This, along with the theoretical framework described before, form the foundation for this study’s methodology.

1. Setting the Ethical Co-ordinates

The ethical dilemmas that often surface in qualitative research are not put to rest by scrupulous adherence to the standard procedures for informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. (Maracek, Fine & Kidder, 1997, p. 641)

For critical scholars research is a moral-political activity, and research ethics are the sets of practices that bridge the anticipation (means) to the reflection (ends) of research process in a way that is morally and politically responsible (Parker, 2005). Being responsible in this way involves asking questions well beyond official requirements. Guillemen and Gillam (2004) identify two kinds of ethics when it comes to qualitative research. First they identify, procedural ethics which are those covered by the official requirements of institutional review boards, including informed consent, confidentiality and not doing harm to human subjects. Beyond that they identify practice or situational ethics, which are those which are those ethical dilemmas which emerge out of ‘ethically important moments’. These might include moments where a participant asks for help, is not comfortable talking about a certain subject or confesses something harmful or even illegal. In these moments researchers are forced to ask questions like ‘How can we act in a humane, non-
exploitative way, while being mindful of our role as researchers?’ (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 264). We are forced to be more than just researchers, but to consider ourselves as human beings in relationship with other human beings. Expanding on this notion of practice ethics, other scholars have identified *relational* ethics (Craig & Huber, 2008; Ellis, 2007). This is an ethics that ‘recognizes and values mutual respect, dignity and connectedness between researcher and researched’ (Ellis, 2007, p. 4). Furthermore, it recognises that ‘the relational deeply informs our reflections, conversations and actions as researchers’ (Craig & Huber, 2008, p. 263).

This project faces all the usual ethical concerns as governed by procedural mandates, and these will be discussed throughout the formulation of the methodology. It also faces two major areas of challenge with regards to *relational* ethics. The first is that the participants all come from what Damianakis and Woodford (2012) call a ‘small connected community’

85 Defined as small geographic communities, but also professional or online networks (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012).

This is inevitable as the research is interested in members of a particular community, a submerged network of people who are politically interested and active. The second ethical challenge is that many members of this small connected community of them are my friends. Although many researchers become friends with the people they research throughout the course of their studies, to interview people whom one is close with presents its own ethical dilemmas. Unfortunately for both these challenges there are no ‘definitive rules’ or ‘universal principles’ (Ellis, 2007, p. 5) that can navigate one though these ethical quagmires, just as there is no way to definitively predict what these ethical quagmires might be. The best we can do is be guided by other people’s experiences and by a methodological ethos that takes these ethical challenges seriously. I will address the issues of researching a small community and friends, in turn, expounding how they were navigated in this study.

### 1.1. Researching Small Connected Communities

The greatest ethical dilemmas related to researching small connected communities emerge around questions of anonymity. Anonymity is usually standard practice under basic procedural ethical guidelines, but as Damianakis and Woodford (2012) point out when working with small connected communities, the smaller or more connected the community is, the more likely it is that participants will be recognised by at least other members of that community through either their participant description, or by what they say. If this information potentially discredits them, this dilemma becomes particularly serious, especially in professional networks where this may result in potential harm.

This is a very real dilemma for this project where people are both personally and professionally connected in a very small geographic area. Damianakis and Woodford (2012) suggest that you know you’re working with a
small connected community when (when using snowballing as a sampling technique) participants recommend other potential participants over and over again, these recommendations overlap with the researcher’s original pool and when participants refer to each other in interviews. This was exactly the case with this study. In social movement communities where the personal and political overlap in such profound and deliberate ways and where personal morality/integrity/ethics inform one’s credibility as an activist, sharing potentially incriminating personal stories told by respondents about themselves or about others in the network, might have negative consequences, not only for participants’ personal relationships but for their careers. How then does one provide the necessary specificity and particularity required for contextual and collective considerations of activist lives and identity, without divulging the details of these lives and identities?

Damianakis and Woodford (2012) list a number of ways in which this dilemma can be addressed. They suggest granting the participants the right to refuse to answer all questions and to withdraw at any time. These conditions were included in the interview agreement.\(^{86}\) They also suggest not collecting or sharing demographic information, removing all identifying information and anonymising the transcripts. Given that this study understands activist identities as informed by positionality, excluding demographic information was not an option. Neither was removing all identifying information, as this would severely compromise the contextual information. Anonymity was created through the use of pseudonyms for participants, and the use of ‘Friend’, ‘Organisation’, ‘School’, etc. to denote friends’ names, organisations, schools, university and company names, as well as city and town names. However, this was not a blanket strategy. A number of critical scholars consider blanket anonymity to be problematic, very often implemented to protect the researcher rather than participant (Parker, 2005; Watkins & Shulman, 2009) and that sometimes participants may want to be represented by name. Rather they suggest a strategy whereby participants choose whether they will be named or not, which is exactly the option the participants in this study were granted. Participants could choose to either ‘be named’, ‘remain anonymous’ or ‘decide at a later stage’.\(^{87}\) The ‘later stage’ was defined as after the analysis had been done. I provided participants with the extracts of their interviews that I had used and my interpretation of them. They were asked to comment on the actual interpretation (which will be discussed in Section 2.3.4 – Step 4 – Consultation), but they were also specifically asked to decide whether they wanted to be anonymous or not based on the material I has used. If they chose the ‘anonymous’ option, I asked them how I could represent their stories in a way they would be comfortable with the level of anonymity. This process was negotiated largely via email and telephone calls, but in some cases face-to-face. I also asked participants to comment on the participant profiles which provide a brief biographical description of each participant, and negotiated what they would be comfortable with here.

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\(^{86}\) See Appendix 4 – Interview Agreement.

\(^{87}\) See Appendix 4 – Interview Agreement.
This ongoing and negotiated engagement with participants around representation was not accidental. It was guided quite specifically by the ethical concerns laid out in this section and a related methodological ethos, the notion of ‘friendship as method’ (Tillmann-Healy, 2003), which I will examine in more detail in the next section.

1.2. Friendship as Method

*Friendship as method requires that ethics remain at the forefront of our research and our research relationships. Confidentiality and informed consent become ongoing negotiations. Researchers and participants reflexively consider and discuss power dynamics at every turn and constantly strive to balance the need to advance the social justice agenda of their projects and the need to protect one another from harm.* (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 745)

There is much warning against researching the self rather than the ‘other’. Geertz (1983) famously referred to it as ‘an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch’ (p. 57) and it is often considered too close to yield any insight. Watkins and Shulman (2009) warn against the dangers of idiosyncrasy, especially when the research question has in large part emerged from the experiences of the researcher, as is the case with this study. Furthermore, if this is the case the researcher must be wary of gathering participants who mirror rather than challenge their experiences. I will address these concerns in the Section 2.1 (Phase 1 – Formulation Phase).

However, if these challenges are well managed, closeness and intimacy with participants can be a powerful asset to the research process. According to Tillmann-Healy (2003) it provides a ‘unique perspective on social life’ and ‘brings us to a level of understanding and depth of experience we may be unable to reach using only traditional methods’ (p. 736). For the participants it may be ‘safer’ in that they will more comfortable that a friend will ‘will honor their disclosures’ (p. 739). In fact, she argues that the levels of safety, intimacy and sharing that we have in friendship relationships are exactly what we are trying to replicate when we develop research relationships with participants! According to Tillmann-Healy (2003) ‘friendship and fieldwork are similar endeavors’ as:

*Both involve being in the world with others. To friendship and fieldwork communities, we must gain entrée. We negotiate roles (e.g., student, confidant, and advocate), shifting from one to another as the relational context warrants… We navigate membership, participating, observing, and observing our participation. We learn insider argot and new codes for behavior. As we deepen our ties, we face challenges, conflicts, and losses. We cope with relational dialectics, negotiating how private and how candid we will be, how separate and how together, how stable and how influx* (p. 732).
On this basis she advocates for a research method, which is developed inside of relational concerns, what she calls ‘friendship as method’. She defines friendship as method as ‘the practices, the pace, the contexts, and the ethics of friendship’ (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 734). What this means for practice is that although data gathering takes the same form (e.g. interviews, note taking, etc.) ‘our primary procedures are those we use to build and sustain friendship: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability’ (ibid.). Here relational ethics, or an ethics of friendship are primary in our methodological decisions. It involves simple practices like invoking the contexts and media of friendship, ‘natural’ contexts like homes, coffee shops and ‘natural’ engagement in the form of conversations rather than one–way interviews. But it also involves more complex practices; shifts in researcher and friend roles from centre to periphery and back again, and a continual stepping back from experiences and relationships in order to examine them analytically and critically (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 735). Furthermore, it involves asking difficult questions about ‘what to tell’ (Ellis, 2007, p. 24) and what not to tell in order to not only protect participants, but to protect one’s relationship with them.

Most scholars concerned with relational ethics of this kind, suggest that the only way to navigate these dilemmas is through the constant engagement of participants through the research process from research question formulation to analysis to dissemination (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; Parker, 2005; Ellis, 2007; Watkins & Shulman, 2009); a radical democratisation of the research process. This may take the form of having participants contribute to formulating the research question, with varying levels of contribution. It always involves a collective analytical process of some kind; ranging from the participants’ right to veto the researcher’s interpretations, to including participant responses to the researcher’s interpretation, to the researcher simply taking participant comments into account in writing the final analysis. It may also take the ongoing negotiation of consent as the research progresses. However, none of these methodological decisions are obvious. Do we really want to not include something because it makes someone feel it casts them in a negative light or makes them uncomfortable? ‘What are our ethical responsibilities toward intimate others who are implicated in the stories we write about ourselves?’ (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004, p. 264). And what about our role as critical scholars? As one of Adams’ (2006) reviewers observed in their review of his paper which dealt with his relationship with his father, ‘I’m uncomfortable with the author not getting his father’s permission, but I’m equally uncomfortable with the idea that the author’s father could veto this manuscript’ (p. 720). Thus the navigation of these dilemmas is the navigation of our ‘dual mission’ towards producing new knowledges and remaining ethically sound (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012, p. 1).

The ways in which I navigated these questions are woven into the research methodology and will be described in detail as the methodology is formulated throughout the rest of the chapter. Suffice to say that given that many of the participants were friends, friendship as method was not difficult to do. In fact, in most cases, it
Beyond the concerns for anonymity discussed in the previous section, the most difficult thing was ensuring that I remained constantly critical and analytically vigilant to how my relationships were shaping the way in which the research process was evolving, and although there were particular practices introduced in order to facilitate the navigation of a relational ethics, the single most important was to engage in a radical self-reflexive practice (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012; Ellis, 2007; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004).

1.3. Developing an Ethical Reflexive Practice

*The negotiations that are part of the research process are not fully knowable.* (Rose, 1997, p. 317)

It was feminist engagements with the knowledges being produced about women (by men) and then specifically knowledges being produced about black women (by white women), that led to the idea that knowledges are positioned or situated (Haraway, 1988). The concern was that researchers’ blindspots to the way in which their positionality (for example white, middle-class, university educated, and of course as researcher) and the socio-cultural power associated with that positionality would influence the kinds of knowledges we produce about ‘other’ women, and therefore not only potentially perpetuate problematic representations of these ‘other’ women, but that the act of research and representation would then itself be an oppressive act, perpetuating broader societal relationships of power. Once positioned, not only is there an indication of the kind of power that enabled the researcher to generate that knowledge, but that knowledge can also no longer claim universality through what feminists have referred to as the ‘god-trick’ (Rose, 1997). The means of addressing this concern was that of reflexivity as a research practice.

The idea of reflexivity is to ‘make visible our own critical positioning within structures of power’ (McDowell, 1992, p. 413) so that knowledges we produce can be ‘read’ within context. Rose (1997) refers to this idea that we as researchers can see and make visible to our audiences the ‘landscapes of power’ we navigate as researchers, using the technique of ‘transparent reflexivity’. However, she argues that it is in fact not possible to see this entire landscape, and that claiming to do so amounts to a ‘goddess-trick’, not unlike the ‘god-trick’ (p. 311). Given that we are inseparable elements of the research process saturated in power relations (Gibson–Graham, 1994) and in the same way that we theorise our respondents’, our identities are constructed through discourse, narrative and performance. Therefore there can be no ‘clear landscape of positions to be charted’ (Rose, 1997, p. 316) and ‘there is no transparent self waiting to be revealed’ (ibid., p. 313). Rather than ‘a process of self discovery’ most reflexive practice is in fact, ‘self construction’ (ibid.).

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88 As such it is important to note that ‘friendship as method’ was not decided on before the research began and then doggedly adhered to. Rather the research process began with a set of ethical concerns and a related set of ‘natural’ relational practices informed by the work of feminist scholars like Hollway (1989). This ethically informed practice found a name, i.e. ‘friendship as method’ about halfway through the research process, thus allowing me to refine and deepen my methodological engagement.
This does not mean that we simply give up on the idea that we need to practice reflexivity in the research process. On the contrary, vigilance and careful consideration become more important than ever. It means that we are required to be with the ‘messiness’ of it all (Rose, 1997). It means engaging a landscape of power which is ‘a much more fragmented space, webbed across gaps in understanding, saturated with power, but also, paradoxically, with uncertainty: a fragile and fluid net of connections and gulfs’ (ibid., p. 317).

In practicing this necessary self-reflexivity I can account for the aspects I could see. First as I did in the previous section, I can account for the fact that I have varying levels of personal relationship with my participants. Some are current colleagues, others ex-colleagues. Some are acquaintances, some close friends and other are not friends at all. As such I needed to navigate the relational ethics of these varying degrees of intimacy very carefully, especially with regards to what I chose to tell (Ellis, 2007). Also as I did in the previous section, it was necessary to ask questions about the protection the rights of individuals, especially in relation to questions of anonymity. Furthermore I needed to account for questions about whose interpretation counted and the extent to which participants’ could veto these interpretations (this will be addressed in this chapter, Section 2.3 – Phase 3 – Transcription and Data Analysis). Finally it is necessary to make visible what I believe to be some important aspects of my positioning inside what I understand to be structures of power. I can, for example, account for my positionality in terms of being thirty-six years old, South African, white, English speaking, of Irish–Anglo descent, middle-class, a woman, straight, engaged, agnostic who was raised Christian, from a small town in KwaZulu-Natal, reluctantly resident in Cape Town, PhD student at the University of Cape Town, lecturer, researcher, activist and member of the community of people who are the focus of this study. This act of accounting positions me in relation to the respondents in this study as both ‘other’ and ‘insider’. The respondents are not a homogenous group of people, they are gay and straight, black, white, Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Buddhist and undecided, men and women, English and Afrikaans. Some are academics, like myself, some are not. What we all have in common is that we all grew up in South Africa and identify, to a greater or lesser degree as South African, we are all between the ages of twenty and forty, we all identify as middle-class, we are all politically and socially interested and active and we all form part of a submerged network of socially interested and active people in Cape Town. It was these, to my mind significant, points of ‘otherness’ and ‘insideness’ that I needed to remain vigilant of as I designed the methodology and conducted the analysis. However, there is no account of the research process and my position in it, that can account for all the ways in which power will operate to construct this knowledge as it finds expression through this dissertation. Within this landscape of power there are some things I can, and must account for, but ‘we cannot know everything, nor can we survey power as if we can fully understand, control or redistribute it’ (Rose, 1997, p. 319).

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89 At the time of the interviews in 2009.
The instruments of ethical self-reflexive practice are built into much of the research methodology and analysis, and these will be explored throughout their formulation. In addition, my personal practice was to keep a research journal and to make extensive personal reflection as part of my note taking. I did not do all of this consistently over the whole five years of the research process, but rather intensified activity during more active periods. For example, I completed a summary of my experience after each interview. In particular I reflected on aspects of the content which evoked an emotional response or that struck a personal chord with me. I continued a similar process during the first listenings and transcription, using my extensive notes as a space for personal reflection. I did the same thing during my analysis. Given that the research spanned over the course of five years and that during this time a number of both political and personal events which gave context and form to my own identity formation processes occurred, part of my journaling and note taking was to track my position to the research and the participants. This not insignificant movement in relation to the data is what Andrews (2008) is referring to when she says that we can read data differently depending on where we are in life and history when we do so. These reflections are woven into the analysis to contextualise analytical decisions.

Having set the major ethical coordinates of this study and highlighted some of the major ethical dilemmas faced, the ways in which these dilemmas were navigated can be addressed. These considerations along with the theoretical framework laid out in the previous chapters form the foundation on which the following methodological process was built.

2. The Methodological Process

The research process is dangerous. It demands vigilance, a careful consideration of the research process.
(Rose, 1997, p. 317)

The research process consisted of three major Phases. The first was the Formulation Phase which was started in mid-2007 and which involved writing the proposal and conducting discussion groups to inform that proposal. The second was the Data Collection Phase, which was conducted in early 2009. This Phase consisted of conducting in-depth interview conversation with individual participants. It is the material from these interviews, which are the analysable data for this study. The third phase was the Transcription and Analysis phase, which lasted from early 2010 to late 2011. Each of these will be elucidated in detail below.

2.1. Phase 1 – Formulation Phase: Proposal Stage Discussions

Inside of a relational ethics, participants should participate not only in the analytical process, but they should also be part of the formulation of the research question and design (Parker, 2005; Tillmann-Healy, 2003;
Watkins & Shulman, 2009). This is especially true when the research question has been generated out of one’s own experience, as is the case with this study. It is important to confirm that one’s observations are not simply idiosyncratic but that you are, in fact, on to something (Watkins & Shulman, 2009). Although I had had numerous informal conversations with friends and colleagues, that confirmed that I was indeed on to something, I felt it was important to formalise that confirmation through discussion groups. Furthermore, although the participants of this study did not generate the research question themselves, it was important for me to consider potential participants’ contribution on how to direct the enquiry. It was for these two reasons that in late 2007 I conducted three more formal discussion groups (Phase 1) with friends and colleagues, who were also potential participants.

The first discussion group consisted of three friends/colleagues, the second group consisted of two friends/colleagues and the third with three members of my book club. All people I spoke to were politically interested and active in various ways. All participants answered my request to participate in a discussion through personal communication and requests. The purpose of the discussion groups was to guide my formulation of the research question and proposed methodology. At the time I was particularly concerned with confirming the viability of the research project with potential participants and it was an opportunity to examine assumptions and to expose my blindspots. Through these processes it was an opportunity to refine the research question and proposed methodologies. The conversations lasted about an hour to an hour and a half and were recorded and transcribed by a transcriber. After the conversation I asked the participants to recommend people I should be speaking to, and I asked them if they would be interested in participating in the in-depth interviews that would make up Phase Two. Of the eight people that participated in the discussion groups, four participated in the in-depth interviews.

The discussion groups were instrumental in refining and confirming aspects of the research questions. These included the explicit focus on more privileged groups, the broad definition of that privilege in terms of class and the validity of examining more modern repertoires of activism (Discussion 1). Importantly, they also confirmed that they had stories of how they became politically interested and active, and that that was (to varying degrees) an interesting enquiry for them to be in (Discussion Group 1; Discussion Group 2; Discussion Group 3). With regards to methodology they confirmed the value of exploring these stories through one–on–one interviews and the value of the collective focus group space as other people’s stories were not only interesting but contributed to their own remembering (Discussion Group 3).

The discussion groups also created the space to raise the issues of risk and benefit for potential participants. All the participants in these Phase One discussion groups agreed that their participation was beneficial because it gave them a space to reflect on their personal narratives and theoretical questions around political action they had not considered for a while or at all. They all found this interesting and useful to their own
development. They agreed that there were no risks involved in this process for them (Discussion Group 1; Discussion Group 2; Discussion Group 3). However, as discussed in the previous Section there are risks involved in relation to participating in research focused on such a small connected community, and as such questions of representation and anonymity have been addressed.

The question of benefits arose in the conversation around grassroots activism (Discussion Group 1, Discussion Group 2; Discussion Group 3). Participants agreed that if I were to include activists involved in grassroots struggles, especially in impoverished contexts (an example was given of the members of the Landless People’s Movement), the research process would have to contribute to direct and tangible benefits for the individual or the organisations. Given that this project’s focus was on relatively socio–economically privileged people this issue became less applicable. The benefits of participation for the participants was seen to be limited to their own self–reflective process, interests and growth.

2.2. Phase 2 – Data Collection Phase: Interview Conversations

An interview is not, in any simple sense, the telling of a life so much as it is an incomplete story angled toward my questions and each [person’s] ever–changing sense of self and of how the world works. (Frankenberg 1993, p. 41)

Data collection for this study consisted of two rounds of in-depth interview conversations. The first round consisted of in-depth interview conversations with friends and colleagues who met the selection criteria (see Section 2.3.1 – Step 1 – Selection of Participants), whilst the second round was with people who had been recommended by the people in the first round, and who also met the criteria. Further to the interviews themselves I also collected contextual data in the form of a record of relationships between participants and a record of organisations, projects and events that participants were involved in over the course of the study. These were tracked through Facebook, online newspapers (as many participants and their associated organisations have a media profile) and word of mouth from the time of the interviews in 2009 to the final analytical stages in 2012. This data was not analysed but was useful for contextual interpretation in places.

Interviews are the methode quotidienne of qualitative inquiry. Even though most qualitative researchers recognise the limits of interviews, they remain the way in which qualitative researchers, and especially narrative researchers, engage participants and generate data for analysis. Within narrative inquiry, interviews can be seen as a ‘generative method’ in that they ‘produce narratives as data (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2008, p. 150). According to Sarbin (1986, p. xvi) in-depth interviews serve as ‘an instrument for story making and story telling’ thus rendering them useful tools for eliciting autobiographical narratives and they have been standard practice for narrative scholars of identity in the context of social movements (e.g. Polletta, 2006;
Squire, 2007; Andrews, 2007). The use of in-depth interviews as a data collection tool in this study emerged out of the theoretical imperative to provide the space for the generation of accounts of participants’ moral careers as activists (Parker, 2005) including all biographical accounts constructed in relation to this activism.

Although the humble interview is so commonplace it is a highly contested practice. Depending on one’s epistemological location interviews ‘do’ different things, and depending on what we think they ‘do’ we develop different practices. From a social constructionist perspective interviews are not simply question and answer sessions where the participant generates transparent knowledge that can be objectively recorded by the interviewer (Mishler, 1986), rather they are socio-cultural interactions that generate co-constructed knowledges inside complex relationships of power. Thus the data they generate cannot be considered the truth, but rather a series of complex constructions that are powerfully shaped by the fact of the interview situation, especially the relationship between interviewer and participant. If, as the theoretical framing of this study suggests, ‘conversations in relationship with others influence identity construction’ (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2008, p. 159), then the knowledge and identities being constructed in the space of the interview are co-constructed between interviewer and participant (Mishler, 1986).

Conceptualising the interview as co-construction has implications for how it is conducted. As it foregrounds the relationship of the researcher and participant, it animates the relational concerns of the research process. These have been addressed in the discussion on relational ethics. Relatedly, there are epistemological considerations. If the interview is a co-construction, it becomes impossible to erase the researcher from the material it generates and this has major implications for practice. Firstly, as discussed in an earlier section, it necessitates a robust self-reflexive practice as part of a process of discerning how the relationship of the researcher to the participant, especially with regards to relationships of power, shapes the data. Secondly, it necessitates rethinking how the interview is conducted. Rather than one-way interviews, two-way dialogues or conversations become possible, and even desirable.

The possibility of a ‘radical reciprocity’ (Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 7) in the form of a interview conversation is both epistemologically and ethically expressive of friendship as method. As Hollingsworth and Dybdahl (2008) point out most narrative enquiry involves conversation, but with varying levels of structure. What Tillmann-Healy (2003) calls more ‘natural’ modes of engagement are more unstructured conversations, which more closely mirror those we have in everyday life with our friends. Rogan and de Kock (2005) found that this ‘more conversational style of interview’ (p. 632) was far less intrusive and was useful in mediating researcher/participant tensions in their interviews with postgraduate students at a South African university. Hollway (1989) used this conversational modality in her 1984 study, where she was interviewing people who, as she puts it, ‘were like me’ (p. 11), and where a number of the participants were her friends. Because she was interviewing members of her feminist subculture where consciousness raising conversations were part of
everyday political practice, when it came to interviewing participants, ‘we were continuing an activity that was a vibrant part of our subculture’ (Hollway, 1989, p.11). Naturally this activity was reciprocal in nature. What she succeeded in doing was ‘forging a valuable method: that is to talk to people in such a manner that they felt they could explore material about themselves and their relationships, past and present, in a searching and insightful way’ (ibid.).

This was the lead I followed. Most interviews were held in, the natural contexts of our relationships (Tillmann-Healy, 2003), i.e. my or the participants’ homes or coffee shops. Nearly all of them involved being curled up on a couch under blanket, with tea or red wine. However, I did not take a fully reciprocal approach. It was clear from the start that most participants enjoyed being able to speak in long, reflexive narrative turns. For some I simply asked one question. For others, more prompting was necessary. What was clear to me was that this was their space, not mine and that to interrupt in conversational turns would have been somehow inappropriate. Nevertheless, the interviews were still conversations in that reciprocity was exercised. Although not recorded, all interviews started with the social chatter, usually in the case of people I knew enquiries after well-being and a little gossip, and in the case of people I didn’t know a conversation about how we both know the person who recommended them to me. I started all of the recorded interviews with my story, providing my reasons for doing this project and some of the theoretical and ethical dilemmas I was facing. I ended all interviews with the opportunity for participants to ask me questions, if they had not done so already. Most participants did ask me questions during the interviews, to which I responded. I also responded to some of what they had said during the interviews, although I left these responses to the end, so that I would not interrupt the flow of their narratives whilst speaking. Very often these post interview conversations were as important as the official interviews. Most of them were recorded, although in some cases the recorder had already been turned off. Although I was using this conversational method, I did not, like Hollway (1989) completely abandon structure.

I conducted two interviews of between forty-five and ninety minutes with each participant. The first interview was guided by interview questions, although rather than questions per se, they were more like conversation guides, which were used to guide the conversation when participants were not sure where to go or when I felt the conversation was going off-track. Before conducting the second interview, I listened to the first interview and made extensive notes. From these notes I pulled out major points for clarification or of interest. Of most interest were ‘episodes’ (Rogan & de Kock, 2005, p. 633), that that participants had named as significant and influential in their moral careers what have been referred to elsewhere as ‘nodal moments’ (Bullough & Pinnegar, 2001), ‘critical incidents’ (Kelchtermans, 1993) and ‘critical episodes’ (Elbaz, 1991). Each second interview started with me asking participants if they’d had any thought or reflections since we’d last met. If they had, they spent some time talking about these. If not, I provided them

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90 See Appendix 5 – Conversation Guide.
with a brief summary of how I had understood what they had said last time and my own reflection on the points that I had found of interest, i.e. those significant and influential episodes. Participants responded to my reading of, and reflection on, their interviews, and I asked them to tell me more about these significant moments, all of which launched the conversation from that point into a dialogical exchange.

2.2.1. Selection of Participants

*I would like to think of myself as part of this community, I would like think of myself on the list of people you’re gonna interview. It feels nice to say Oh I’m one of these people who’s made a good moral choice you know, who think about things.* (Ms B)

Melucci’s (1989) assertion that the meaning and community making structures of activist identities are subterranean everyday networks, and the morphological challenge that poses to the study of activist identities, is a defining element of this methodology. This morphological challenge produces methodological ones, most notably in the area of sampling. To know that such networks exist in theory is a one thing; to identify such a network in one’s lived experience is quite another.

Damianakis (2007) faced a similar morphological challenge in her in her study into what she called a ‘small connected arts–identified community’ (Damianakis & Woodford, 2012, p. 710). Just as with activist communities, she found no standard or unified definition of artists, or a community of artists, and so was forced to ask questions like: ‘How does one gain access to an “arts community” of creative writers? Who is an artist? Who is a creative writer? What, aesthetically and philosophically speaking, is art? Who may define these terms?’ (ibid.) Her solution was to formulate a working definition of an artist or community of artists which then evolved as she engaged the participants. This strategy reflects what Diani (2002) calls nominalist and realist strategies. According to Diani (2002) ‘the researcher identifies a set of criteria defining group membership in a given network, selects the network nodes on this basis, and then proceeds to look at the interaction between those nodes’ (p. 176). He identifies two ways of sampling when conducting research where community is conceptualised in terms of social networks. A nominalist strategy is where ‘network closure is imposed by the researcher’s theoretical framework and serves an analytical purpose’ (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982) where the researcher defines a particular community from the beginning and samples from inside this definition. A realist approach is where ‘the network analyst adopts the presumed subjective perceptions of system actors themselves, defining the boundaries of a social entity as the limits that are consciously experienced by all or most of the actors that are members of the entity’ (ibid.). According to Diani (2002) this boundary may be specified in different ways including by actors’ identities, that is ‘the process through which individuals or organizations recognize each other as part of a specific type of
community’ (p. 176). I used a combination of both nominalist and realist techniques, as Diani (2002) points out most researchers do.

Given the similar challenge I faced to Damianakis (2007), I followed her sampling methodology using purposive, snowballing and maximum variation sampling. I formulated a definition of this community as having certain characteristics. These were theoretically gleaned from the research question. They included: have an interest in questions of social justice; are politically interested and active in some capacity; mostly grew up in South Africa, and identify as South African; were not involved in the anti-apartheid struggle; and would consider self middle-class.

These characteristics were included in an email to potential participants asking them if felt the description in the email described them and if so, if they would be interested in participating. This provided a measure of self definition to the sampling process. My sampling consisted of two layers of participants (see Figure 1 – Participant Layers). The first layer consisted of friends and acquaintances that self identified as having these characteristics and were willing to participate. The second layer consisted of people recommended to me by the first layer, through snowballing. These were people who I did not know personally, but that participants in the first layer considered them to be appropriate participants in this research project. In these recommendations lay a further measure of ‘self definition’ of this community. My intuition about the closely connected nature of this community was soon confirmed by the way in which participants identified other potential participants, with many being recommended more than once, and in many cases I already knew them. It also confirmed my intuition about the raced character of the network, because although there was good variation with regards to areas of political interest and activity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, as well as language and cultural backgrounds, there was less so in relation to race. Only two of twenty-seven participants were black and only seven were coloured. The only demographic constraint imposed on the sampling was around class (which was a result of my formulation discussions). Given the relationship between class and race in South Africa it should not be surprising that sampling for class has an effect on the sampling for race. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that snowballing did not yield more middle-class black participants, even when, being mindful of the racial diversity of the group, I specifically asked for more black participants.

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92 See Appendix 6 – Invitation to Participate Email.
There were moments when I as researcher needed to make active sampling decisions in which I needed to close the network in order to remain focused on the research question and address the concerns mapped out in the Introduction and Literature Review. For example, I excluded a woman in her fifties from my sample on the basis that, although she had not been affiliated to any official anti-apartheid organisation or movement, she had certainly been actively critical of the apartheid regime, which put her outside of my research interest. Her exclusion means that none of the participants have any anti-apartheid activist experience to draw on, their activism is squarely located in the post-apartheid context. This was an important delimitation as the research question is interested in the construction of activist identity inside a particular time and place characterised by its own particular complexities, i.e., post-apartheid South Africa.

Further to the delimitation in terms of historical period, the very notion of what activism is and by extension who activists are, was contested in the sampling process. I excluded two young women in their twenties whose activities I did not consider ‘activist’ enough. The major criteria in the first case was that although she had been the chairperson of a university branch of a major SMO in the previous year, she was no longer active in any form of social justice project and did not foresee herself being so in the future. In the second case the young woman was making a film about anti-apartheid activism and was an organising member of a community based cultural organisation, but further than those two activities, had no interest in issues of social justice of any kind. The thing that set these two respondents apart from the others is that neither had a story of how they came to social and political activism. They also did not identify as activists. Although this was also true for some of the other respondents, their disavowal of their activism was related more with their struggle over the meaning of the word, and even though they may have quibbled over the word, all agreed that they were ‘politically interested and active in some capacity’. Given that I was specifically interested in people
who considered themselves to be ‘politically interested and active in some capacity’, these exclusions seemed appropriate.

Although these exclusions might be considered by some as idiosyncratic, they speak very powerfully to the ways in which all researchers, and indeed all communities participate in the ‘dirty work of boundary maintenance’ (Crowley, 1999, p. 30), which is after all what sampling is about. However, this ‘dirty work’ was not done without careful reflection. All three these eliminations were done after I had conducted interviews with the participants in question. I followed up all participant suggestions for further participants, and made my decisions regarding inclusion based on the imperatives set by the research question.

Thus the community was defined both by me (nominalist/purposive) and its members (realist/snowballing). The self-definition of the network was not only methodologically important but it also speaks to questions around the policing of community/network boundaries, claims to legitimacy and highlights the inevitable tension in this ‘fragile and heterogeneous social construction’ (Keane & Mier, 1989). Fundamentally, how the participants define others like themselves is a crucial element of the identity construction process and forms part of the analysis.

The final sample reflects an integration of the participant characteristics from my original list and those generated by participants through direct input and recommendations. It consists of a heterogenous group of twenty-six people with whom I did a total of forty-nine, approximately ninety minute long, interviews. At the time of the interviews they ranged from their early twenties to forty years old. All were living in Cape Town, although most did not originate from there. All but two were South African. The two Zimbabweans were included because they also identified as South African. Most were university educated, and all but one self-identified as middle-class. Of the twenty-five participants thirteen were women and thirteen were men; seventeen were white, seven were coloured and two were black; one person spoke Sepedi as a first language, three spoke Afrikaans and the rest spoke English; seven identified as Christian although of that five had renounced their faith, four identified as Jewish although of that all four had renounced their Jewish faith, three as Muslim although of that one had renounced her Islamic faith, one as Buddhist and one as Spiritual. All were engaged in ongoing social and political action which may or may not have been associated with participation in traditional structures of political action like social movements or activist organisations. All were people who lived their lives in ways that are commensurate with their political beliefs, i.e. it wasn’t not just a job. Some had parents who had been active during the anti-apartheid struggle93.

93 See Appendix 7 for full Participant Profiles.
2.3. Phase 3 – Transcription & Data Analysis

How the analysis is done depends on the researcher’s idea of what narrative is. (Squire, 2008, p. 50)

The process of conducting narrative analysis will be wholly determined by where ‘the researcher thinks the narratives “live”’ (Squire, 2008, p. 48). If I thought narrative ‘lived’ in structure and autobiographical events sequences, that is what I’d be analysing. However, as discussed in Chapter Five, this study takes an experience-centred approach (Squire, 2008) which is concerned with the ‘doing of narrative’ though ‘big’ and ‘small’ stories (Bamberg, 2006), i.e. how participants make sense of their world and themselves in it. The unstructured interviewing style resulted in ‘an abundance of anecdotal and episodic ‘little stories’’ (Rogan & de Kock, 2005, p. 642), and it is the role of the analysis to contextualise these little stories, which constitute our data, within larger cultural, political and historical frames, in relation to other people’s stories and all in relation to the research questions we are asking. As such the analysis is interested in ‘accounts that construct emotions, worldviews, characters of events in ways that illuminate why particular accounts are produced in particular ways’ (Phoenix, 2008, p. 67). It operationalises the theoretical toolkit provided by the strands of narrative inquiry presented in Chapter Five, into a hybrid analytical framework, which functions as a scaffolding to construct my story of the participants’ stories. As such it does not draw on one theorist or theoretical tool, but many.

In terms of procedure data analysis consisted of three stages. First was the selection of excerpts for transcription. Conversational interviewing style generates a lot of talk which can be unrelated to the research question and as a researcher it is important to discern what is important. This constitutes an analytical decision (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this case the analytical decision was made around the identification of moral careers (Parker, 2005). Second was the thematic coding of the texts for characters, settings, events and plots, using a classic hermeneutic circle approach (Squire, 2008). This was done using QSR Nvivo. Third, and finally, was the mobilisation of the theoretical toolkit, laid out in Chapter Five. This involved the identification of master narratives (Andrews, 2007; Bamberg 2004) and morality plays (Andrews, 2007). It also involved an examination the available identity scripts (Parker, 2005) provided by these narratives. It then involved exploring how the characters, including the narrator, are positioned and position themselves (Bamberg, 2004; Davies & Harré, 1990; Harré & Moghaddam, 2003), in these narratives and scripts. Finally it involved examining how identity boundaries (Benson, 2003) were implicated in these positionings.

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94 QSR Nvivo is a qualitative data analysis software package which allows for the systematic coding and cross-referencing of large amounts of texts. I did not use QSR NVIVO to analyse the data. I used it to organise and manage it. The software simply allows one to label certain areas of interview with codes, and then electronically (rather than manually) cross-reference these with other codes. It does not produce any analysis.
2.3.1. Step 1 – Selection & Transcription: Identifying ‘Moral Careers’

I began by listening to all interviews from start to finish. While I was listening I took detailed notes. These notes assisted me in selecting the segments of interview that would become final data for analysis. The segments of interview that were selected are my delineation of the moral careers. This delineation was made by including conversations about:

- when and how they came to be interested in issues of social justice especially their rationale for their interest
- when and how they became involved in particular forms of activism and/or organisations
- how they have changed since being involved in these forms of activism and/or organisations
- significant moments/events/processes of change that signal a shift in consciousness for them
- significant people involved in these shifts of consciousness
- the nature of their current activism and how this has changed over time
- and although not directly related to the discerning of a moral career
- stories that resonated emotionally with me.

The selected segments were then transcribed. Transcription can be understood as another layer of analysis in that it is a theoretically driven interpretation of the interview rendered into text (Riessman, 1993; Kvale, 1996). As such it should ideally be completed by the researcher. However, in this case it was not logistically possible. Transcription was completed in two stages. I transcribed eleven of the participants’ interviews. Due to time constraints, two professionals were hired to transcribe the other fourteen participants. Because there was no way to make participant names and detail anonymous to transcribers, I signed confidentiality agreements with them. The transcribers used my transcribed texts as a protocol for transcription. I thoroughly checked the transcriptions they produced by listening to each interview whilst reading the transcriptions, and made changes where I felt the transcribers had misheard the participant. I also clarified sections that transcribers were unable to hear or understand, which I was able to do given my contextual embeddedness. Where I conducted the transcription I took further notes during transcription. Where interviews were professionally transcribed, I took notes whilst checking the texts.

The following transcription conventions were observed. Data is not cleaned up, but presented in raw form. This means that all ‘ums’, repetitions and grammatical irregularities are included verbatim. I did this in order to stay as close as possible to the original words expressed by the participants. Pauses are indicated by ‘…’ and where myself and participants speak over each other it is indicated by ‘=’. Where words are drawn out for either emphasis or in thought, the word is shown in elongated form. For example a drawn out ‘um’, is

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95 See Appendix 8 – Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement.
expressed as ‘uum’. Actions like laughing and sighing are indicated in square brackets, for example, ‘[laughs]’. Where changes are made to original participant words for the purposes of analysis it is indicted by round brackets. For example the participant says ‘I don’t really feel the SRC is a vessel for change’ and my analysis reads, ‘Rather than being ‘vessel(s) for change’, these organisations seem are seen as obstructing social justice’.

2.3.2. Step 2 – Thematic Analysis: Identifying Characters, Settings, Events & Plots

One of the central elements of narrative analysis is a thematic organisation of the analysable data (Phoenix, 2008; Squire, 2008). Typically this involves identifying repeated subject matter, which may present as ‘events’, ‘philosophies’ or ‘habitual ways of dealing with the world’ (Phoenix, 2008, p. 67). I identified themes through a process of ‘thematic coding’ using QSR Nvivo. I used the approach suggested by Squire (2008) where themes (or codes) are not simply labels, but ‘tools to think with’ (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 26, p. 32) or heuristic devices. They are a means to:

- develop and test theories that give a predictive explanation of the stories, moving back and forth between the interviews themselves and generalizations about them in a classic ‘hermeneutic circle’, using a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches (Squire, 2008, p. 50).

Thus thematic coding is a way of ‘identifying data, allowing the data to be thought of in different ways’ (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 29), and opening up new analytical possibilities. Importantly they are an explicit linking of the theoretical framework to the data, reflecting the analyst’s ideas (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, p. 26).

If codes and themes are the means by which researchers make links between their theory and texts, then how did I do it? The process of thematic coding was both intuitive and theoretically driven, as Squire (2008) describes both bottom-up and top-down. Codes/themes were not static but evolved as the analysis progressed. Finally, I ended up with the following loose groupings of thematic codings: characters (e.g. parents, teachers, friends, public figures and organisations like government, the police, the ANC, the TAC, etc.) and settings (e.g. school, university, church, etc.). I also identified important events or what have been called ‘critical incidents’ (Kelchtermans, 1993) and ‘critical episodes’ (Elbaz, 1991). These included both personal events (e.g. taking a particular class, seeing something, meeting someone) and socio-historical events (e.g. the 1994 elections, the TRC hearings and the xenophobic violence of 2008). Given that one of the central premises of this study is that activist identities are located in history and given shape by a generational consciousness, this was an important element of these biographical accounts. Critical incidents were usually, although not always, embedded in identifiable plots, which in the event-centred modality resembled a series
of events through time. These included what I identified as stories of access, stories of belonging, and coming
to activism stories.

It was important for me to engage this more systematic analytical approach for two reasons. First was simply
to organize what is a large amount of data into manageable and malleable chunks. Secondly given my
closeness to the topic and the people I interviewed, I was wary of ‘getting locked too quickly into naming a
pattern, assuming [I] understand it, and then thrusting the name onto data that fits it poorly’ (Miles &
Huberman, 1994, p. 70). This is by no means a claim to ‘objectivity’, but I feel a responsible approach to
manage of my closeness to the data. Thematic coding in this way forced me to engage with and consider all
the data rather than just the part that spoke most loudly to me.

2.3.3. Step 3 – Theoretical Analysis: Identifying Morality Plays, Identity Scripts &
Positionings

To make sense of how identities were being constructed through these accounts I turned to the theoretical
concepts laid out in the toolkit in Chapter Five. Morality plays and identity scripts are not identifiable
narrative structures, but rather cultural resources drawn on and implied throughout biographical accounts.
They are identifiable, however, through their elements. A morality play for example has clear ‘good’ and ‘bad
guys’, and identity scripts have casts of characters, as well as settings. In order to identify morality plays and
identity scripts I needed to observe how characters, settings, events and plots interacted with each other; who
were the characters that populated them; how did participants position themselves in relation to these
characters and; what were the moralities implied in these positionings?

By asking these questions it was possible to examine how participants constructed identity boundaries. I did
this through examining how they positioned themselves inside the identity scripts and morality plays they
accessed, paying particular attention to how they positioned themselves in relation to various characters. This
process was also facilitated through thematic coding. I coded specifically for People like me/Sameness and
People not like me/Difference, and could examine where and how those boundaries were drawn. To do so
required exploring how the categories People like me and People not like me interacted with the characters
(e.g. parents), organisations (e.g. the ANC) and settings (e.g. school) identified in the morality plays and
identity scripts. Importantly I could explore how these constructions of sameness or difference, changed in
subtle ways through stories of access. However, these boundary marking processes were not simple. The
choosing subject can accept or refuse subject positions provided by cultural resources like morality plays
(Morgan, 2004). Thus it was significant to observe respondents’ negotiations with those subject positions, and
specifically how they were mediated through other characters (and organisations).
2.3.4. Step 4 – Consultation

Once I had generated what I thought was the final iteration of the analysis, I consulted the research participants. I did this for two main reasons. The first was representation and the second interpretation. Questions around representation and specifically anonymity have been dealt with in an earlier Section (see Section 1.1 – Researching Small Connected Communities). Interpretation has also been dealt with in the discussion on relational ethics. The rationale for, but also dilemmas of consulting participants in the analytical and interpretive stages of the research process were discussed (see Section 1.2 – Friendship as Method). In this I took a middle road: participants did not get to veto my analysis, but their interpretations were considered and incorporated into my final reporting.

They did not see other people’s interview texts or my interpretation of those, they only saw the sections of analysis in which I used their interviews. I emailed these sections to them and asked them to consider the following questions: does my interpretation of what you said make sense to you; and how, if at all, would you interpret what you said differently?

I then invited them to enter into conversation with me, via email, telephone or face-to-face if they felt it was necessary. In most cases, participants were happy with my interpretations and made no suggested changes. There were a few cases where they did not completely agree with me. When this happened I entered into varying levels of conversation with them. In all these cases their insights and interpretations deepened my own, and I produced a new integrated interpretation.

3. Outline of Analysis

The analysis is laid out in three parts.

The first chapter of analysis (Chapter Seven) focuses on stories of access, stories of belonging and stories of exclusion to examine the highly social nature of social movement community formation. In doing so it examines not only how personal relationships and participation are intimately entangled, but how these entanglements have implications for collective identity and identity boundary formation.

The second chapter (Chapter Eight) widens the scope beyond the constellations of the social movement community itself, to examine how participants draw on particular social/cultural narratives, which convey particular traditions of resistance, to construct legitimate activist identities. Here I identify two master narratives or morality plays, namely ‘the Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’ and examine how participants position themselves within and relative to these.
Finally, Chapter Nine, brings the previous two foci together by examining how access to activism is not simply about access to opportunities for participation as described in Chapter Seven, but quite profoundly about *access to the traditions* of resistance and the narratives that convey them, described in Chapter Eight, and the identities they make available. Every participant has story of how they came to activism or how they came to be interested in questions of social justice and then socially/politically active. I trace some of these stories to examine how access to the tradition of the anti-apartheid struggle specifically, is mediated by a combination of positionality, especially with regards to race, and personal relationships, the two of which are related in complex ways.
Chapter 7

The Political is Social: Stories of Belonging, Access & Exclusion

Ms I: Now it’s more about like where I go and what I do and who I see and who’s in that circle and it’s certainly been getting broader and broader if that makes sense I mean like specific to what I’m doing but so um lemme give examples I suppose um art exhibitions uh theatre uh um Chimurenga Sessions\(^96\), Fong Kong\(^97\), your friends, my friends like the people that we get exposed to um definitely a particular set in Cape Town, Social Justice Coalition\(^98\) rallies where I’m like oh wow, oh hi! [laughs] you know it’s like a you know it’s it’s a social=

CK: =[laughs]=

Ms I: =as well as a justice and a coalition rally um so that all of that stuff kinda mixed up the you find people suppose who have that similar mindset and interest and you it kinda just gets people get drawn in. (Ms I Int 2)

The reason I laugh at the end of Ms I’s account, is because I know exactly what she is talking about. It is the kind of laughter that can only be generated by deep recognition. My highly social experience of social justice work in Cape Town is one of the things that prompted me to do this thesis. I’m part of the ‘particular set’, who attend exhibitions, the Fong Kong and SJC rallies and it is this set that I defined as a network of socially interested and active young people in Cape Town, who form the population of this study. To my, and arguably, Ms I’s mind, this ‘particular set’ form a ‘network of active relationships’ (Melucci, 1995, p. 44) between actors who possess a ‘similar mindset and interest’, or what we might refer to as ‘idioculture’, i.e. ‘a system of knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and which they can employ on the basis of further interaction’ (Fine, 2002, p. 233). This idioculture bears a striking resemblance to Melucci’s (1995) notion of collective identity which is constituted by a network of relationships, shared cognitive definitions and emotional investment. In addition, he defined this collective identity as ‘interactive and shared’, that is ‘constructed and negotiated and through repeated activation of the relationships that link individuals (or groups)’ (Melucci, 1995, p. 44). The ‘Oh wow, oh hi!’ nature of SJC rallies is exactly the repeated activation of relationships that he is referring to and a crucial dynamic of the processes of political and social community making that this chapter will focus on.

\(^{96}\) Annual themed musical and dramatic performances associated with Chimurenga Magazine. (www.chimurenga.co.za/)

\(^{97}\) The Fong Kong Bantu Sound System are a group of Cape Town based DJs, who decided to pool their resources in order to bring a diverse range of genres, ranging from African hip-hop-hop to Latin soul to reggae, together. They host monthly events. According to their Facebook group they aim ‘to sell you black market identities, the kind of consciousness you can't get on hi-rotation music TV’. (www.facebook.com/groups/54217191086)

\(^{98}\) Also known as the SJC, the Social Justice Coalition is ‘one of South Africa’s newest and fastest growing mass-member based social movements campaigning for safe, healthy and dignified communities’. According to its website it ‘promotes active citizenship through education, policy and research, and community organising to ensure government is accountable, open and responsive’. (www.sjc.org.za)
This chapter is interested in the process of collective identity and social boundary formation as it occurs through the repeated activations of relationship within two main clusters of participants that characterise this network of young, middle-class, activists in Cape Town. A function of the snowballing sampling methodology, these clusters mirror my current and previous organisational affiliations. The first mirrors my affiliation to the TAC, I call it the ‘TAC cluster’. The second mirrors, my affiliation to Intercultural and Diversity Studies (iNCUDISA)\textsuperscript{99}, I call it the ‘iNCUDISA cluster’\textsuperscript{100}. Access to the processes of community making as they play out through these clusters is made through examining three main narrative themes: stories of belonging, stories of access and stories of exclusion. Stories of belonging are stories which speak of experiences of ‘being the same’. Embedded in these stories are carefully constructed identity boundaries, within which participants experience a clear sense of cognitive agreement and belonging. They illustrate, very powerfully, the importance of social belonging in the business of activist politics. Like stories of belonging, stories of access speak to the importance of social relationships in accessing opportunities for participation, and in an overlap with stories of belonging in the sustaining of that participation. The final narrative theme is that of stories of exclusion. These represent the corollary of stories of access and belonging and provide useful insight into the process of boundary maintenance, not only within the network, but also within the clusters. It is here that the racialised, gendered and classed dimensions of the network become apparent.

1. ‘Thank you, I’m not a fucking alien’: Stories of Belonging

Belonging is a function of collective identity. Along with shared cognitive definitions, it is also about a ‘moral, and emotional connection with a broader community’ (Polletta & Jasper, 2001, p. 285). According to Yuval-Davis (2011) ‘belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling “at home”’ (p. 4). Here the notion of home communicates ‘safe space’ (ibid.), and although ‘safe’ may often be associated with positive feelings, it also allows for the safety of an engagement that may be angry and difficult (ibid.). However, like any function of identity belonging is a contested process, ‘The politics of belonging also include struggles around the determination of what is involved in belonging, in being a member of such a community’ (ibid.). Thus what constitutes, ‘home’ and ‘safe space’, is not given, but dialogically contested.

\textsuperscript{99} Originally based at the University of Cape Town and recently located to the University of the Witwatersrand, iNCUDISA is a research unit which ‘conducts and publishes research which aims to build capacity to meet the challenges of diverse societies through research and education. iNCUDISA provides an interface between academia and practice in social transformation interventions, which aim to further social justice and deepen democracy’. See http://incudisa.wordpress.com.

\textsuperscript{100} Interestingly, although I don’t share an official affiliation to the organisation, many of the people who cluster around iNCUDISA, also cluster around Rape Crisis (an organisation assisting rape survivors and advocating for more effective criminal justice in relation to sexual and gender based violence, see www.rapecrisis.org.za). Thus even though these clusters reflect organisational affiliations, they also, as is the nature of the broader network, transcend them. Individuals often move between organisations and participate in both professional and social activities. Ms I, is a good example of this. I would consider her part of the ‘INCUDISA cluster’, because that’s where we encounter each other the most regularly. However, I first met her at Rape Crisis (I was doing casual research work at the time) and the SJC march she is referring to in the opening extract, has nothing to do with iNCUDISA, and in fact, would have closer association with the TAC. Most participants have profiles like this.
Nowhere is the relationship between cognitive definitions and emotional investments more clearly illustrated than in the respondents who constellate in and around the ‘INCUDISA cluster’. The following extracts from Ms C and Ms O, who in fact mention each other in their accounts are indicative:

Ms C: I don’t know why, but for some reason that is like the one thing that I just I can’t actually take, giving myself the permission to explore that anger and to feel it, because I should feel it. I’m not being an uptight bitch [chuckles]. Just don’t yell at me in the street, just don’t do it. Anyway, but ja, I don’t know if that answers the question [chuckles]? Ja, just having a framework to make sense of all of that stuff, why it is, you know, it’s not why it is that I get angry when men yell at me in the streets, or why it is that, you know, whenever I see a story about someone being raped on the news or you read it, it just it feels real to me. Like it’s not not one of those things and that’s one of the things that Rape Crisis has been actually giving me words for, because I never understood it, but whenever I hear about a rape case it just chills me to the bone, because, because I’m a woman and because it’s so not about just her, you know what I mean? It’s her but it’s also going to be people closer to me, and there’s only half a degree of separation between me and the next woman, and it’s not about her as an individual. It’s about my entire gender, just how under siege we are. Feminism just gives me kind of a framework to and also just to not be overwhelmed by it, I think. It’s also it’s also a very positive contrary to stuff that people think about feminism, ball busting and whatever and we just see the world as an ugly place for women. But for me it’s actually kind of positive. Can you imagine being a woman in this world not knowing that there is nothing wrong with you [chuckles], that this entire system that’s out to get you, and not just you, but every other woman like you. I mean that’s the most comforting thing, like oh, thank God [laughs]. I’m not hysterical, my womb isn’t wandering.

Feminism, through the community of women at Rape Crisis ‘gives me kind of a framework’ and has been ‘giving me words’. The cognitive definition of rape as provided through the idioculture of this interpretive community provides Ms C with an understanding that rape is ‘not just about her’ but about herself too ‘because I’m a woman’. Through this newly acquired framework she is able to shift her understanding of the relationship between herself and the woman who is raped which results in her emotional investment, which ‘chills me to the bone’. The morality play provided by feminism does not only provide new definition but a new identity script; she is no longer a ‘hysterical’, ‘ball busting’ and ‘uptight bitch’ but a rightfully angry woman. She is no longer the problem, (‘there is nothing wrong with you’). Rather the problem is an entire ‘system that’s out to get you’ and ‘every woman like you’. Thus it provides her with a feeling of normalcy which is ‘the most comforting thing’. It is the feeling of normalcy provided by the cognitive definitions and identity scripts of feminism that for her generate a sense of belonging, and in their absence, not belonging.

Consider the following account of her shifting social circles:

Ms C: I mean my high school friends, dear as they are to me [laughs], they are all Christian, so they don’t get it. But you know, dear as they are to me, um, they don’t they don’t understand. There’s a lot of things that are taken for granted that I must explain about let me think. For example, um, one of my friends, I saw her on Tuesday, I interviewed her for my thesis actually, um, she’s, you know, she works at Rape Crisis, a purported feminist, but she’s married, um, and she can’t understand why marriage is something I’d have to think very seriously about. It’s like losing a tooth when you are six [laughs]. I’m just like well, if that’s what your marriage is like, you need to get out [laughs].

CK: Is that what she says?
Ms C: Ja, she says it’s like a stage of life. It’s like losing a tooth, getting a period. Wow! Her marriage sounds like a barrel of laughs [laughs]. But I’m but like, so she can’t she just can’t she didn’t get it. But here, when I come here and I speak to Ms O or I’m speaking to Ms I, there are certain things that are and they’re like you don’t I almost forget now how huge those things are because I’m really out of these kinds of spaces anymore. Like these are now my primary friends, you know what I mean.

CK: Ja.

Ms C: I don’t really have friends who aren’t like this anymore. So whenever I’m sitting there with someone who questions it and I realise what a big thing it is. Like we take certain political positions for granted here, but that’s just so freeing. Like it’s so nice because I used to think that being politically aware meant that you had to be aware all the time, all the time, and think about it all the time. But here’s this space where I can be politically aware, but because everyone else is politically aware, you know, you don’t have to think about it all the time, you just take it for granted. It’s just freeing. It’s just relaxing, and you don’t have to be constantly on edge waiting for someone to make a racist joke and then deciding well, how do I tackle it and whatever. Ja, so I try very, very hard, um, where I can to avoid those kinds of friends, or to keep the conversation when I’m with them to like movies. Or not even that, that’s dangerous as well, so is music because ja, but like, and also that’s the thing, you find that the level of conversation with those friends is just shocking [laughs] because there’s very little you can talk about. You can’t even talk about movies or music, you definitely can’t talk about Jacob Zuma\(^{101}\) or politics because they either love Jacob Zuma or oh, he’s a fucking rapist. Oh, he’s black! [laughs] So I can’t really talk to those friends because there’s really nothing to say at the end of the day, apart from I’m getting my carpets washed, or oh ja wow, that’s a nice car, and even that stuff bores the crap out of me [laughs]. So there’s very little to say to them, which is quite sad, but at the same time, I feel like you outgrow certain people at certain points, ja. That’s just the way it is. (Ms C Int 1)

The sharing of cognitive definitions (and commensurate identity scripts) is a very powerful factor in shaping Ms C’s changing social communities. Speaking of her school friends she says repeatedly that ‘they don’t get it’ or ‘they don’t understand’, and that she has to ‘explain’ things a lot of the time. This is not the case with her friends like Ms O, Ms I and myself, where ‘we take certain political positions for granted here’, i.e. we share particular cognitive definitions around issues like movies, music and Jacob Zuma. Once again there is an emotional dimension whereby being in these relationships do not require one to ‘be constantly on edge waiting’, but one can ‘relax’, it is ‘freeing’. What’s interesting is the allusion she makes to these shared cognitive definitions becoming normative, ‘almost forget now how huge those things’, which engenders a comfortable sense of community, so much so that ‘these are now my primary friends’. Ms O has a similar experience of an emergent ‘interpretive community’ (Plummer, 1995). She is recounting a story of a male friend who chastised her for being so ‘hectic\(^{102}\):’

Ms O: I don’t want extra rights for women. I want equal rights for people. That’s what feminism is for me. He’s like yes, but other people don’t understand what you mean by feminism. So that’s really interesting for me, and in a way I thought wow, I’m... for a moment I felt a little hurt to think that I am the alien every time, but I’m not the only one. I was sitting with Ms C and with Friend\(^{103}\) and they were saying the same things. Like, we feel alien in those other spaces because they make us that way.

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\(^{101}\) President of South Africa May 2009 to present.

\(^{102}\) ‘Hectic’ has a number of colloquial uses in South African English. In this case the male friend is chastising the participant for being, what he sees as, too intensely political and serious all the time.

\(^{103}\) Name of friend withheld to protect anonymity.
I’m perfectly fine on my own or amongst the people I’ve acquired now since then, and I think I choose friends very differently at this stage. (Ms O Int 2)

The fact that *other* people ‘don’t understand’ what Ms O ‘mean(s) by feminism’, i.e. they lack a shared cognitive definition, is what has her feel like she’s the ‘alien’, and it is this sense of not belonging that has her ‘feel a little hurt’. Like Ms C who has ‘outgrown certain people’, she finds she ‘choose(s) friends very differently at this stage’; friends like Ms C and ‘people that I meet in workshops and through diversity work and studying it’, with whom she shares the cognitive definitions provided by feminism. It is this that has ‘helped me to feel less alienated’:

Ms O: In all these conversations with people that I meet in workshops and through diversity work and studying it, it’s helped me to be strong in who I am, and it’s helped me to feel less alienated. If I didn’t have that, I don’t know where I’d be ambling on now, but I live for the Friday tea [laughs].
CK: So do I [laughs].
Ms O: Every Friday [laughs]. I think it’s like going to therapy.
CK: It is [laughs].
Ms O: It’s debriefing so that you don’t feel like a fucking psycho.
CK: Exactly [laughs].
Ms O: It’s like you sit there and you’re like yes, thank you, I’m not a fucking alien! (Ms O Int 2)

She is referring to the regular gathering that used to be held at iNCUDISA on Friday mornings, of which I too was a regular attendee. These were strictly social gatherings although, of course, the subject matter under discussion was always deeply political. I completely share her experience of this space, as one where there was a strong sense of agreement on issues, agreements which were usually not shared by most people, including friends, we encountered outside of it. This is the same experience Ms C has of her feminist community where opinions about, for example, music, movies and Jacob Zuma are usually agreed on, to the extent that they have become ‘taken for granted’, because ‘everyone else is politically aware, you know, you don’t have to think about it all the time’.

These reflections on the ‘taken for grantedness’ (or lack thereof) of certain relationships and spaces, provides a good example of how idioculture (Fine, 2002) functions; shared beliefs and behaviours providing easily recognisable identity scripts for all participants. However, as these accounts illustrate the sharing of idioculture is much more than sharing beliefs and behaviours, it is about a sense of social comfort (‘It’s just relaxing’, ‘so comfortable’), normalcy (‘you don’t feel like a fucking psycho’), wellbeing (‘it’s like therapy’), self-expression (‘It’s just freeing’, ‘so open’) and ultimately, belonging. It is also something which has a profound impact on expanded social networks, which become more populated with those who share it, and less populated with those who don’t. Ms O, for example, is choosing her friends very differently, based on her feelings of ‘alienness’ amongst her non–feminist friends. Ms C has outgrown and ‘very little to say’ to her old non–feminist friends. Both their social circles have changed as a result of their emerging politics, and these
changes generally involved greater numbers of people who are also politically interested and less people who aren’t. Mr U has a similar experience of the de– and repopulation of his social network:

Mr U: … people I know I don’t know a huge number of people who are like living fairly conventional middle-class lives working for some kind of corporate entity and just doing all that sort of stuff I just don’t know people like that [laughs]=
CK: =[laughs]
Mr U: You know I mean it’s all peripheral weirdos basically… a lot of people are not people who have nine to five jobs. So a lot of people that I know are um freelancers or self–employed um which is interesting actually I think sociologically they did a study of the Buddhist organisation in the UK and found that um higher than far higher than usual proportion of people were self–employed.
CK: Really?
Mr U: Ja. Which fought against stereotypes that religious people were dependent in their thinking and so on. And um ja then people who don’t sort of buy into the whole consumer thing um um or approach it critically people who are not particularly wealthy for the most part um ja I don’t Friend’s¹⁰⁴ is the only person I know who drives a Merc¹⁰⁵ or a BMW¹⁰⁶ or that sort of thing um ja I dunno people like you.
CK: [laughs]
Mr U: Ja. I mean I think perhaps it’s perhaps what’s common is a sense of is people that it’s people with a sense of this is how the world is and it could be better and what can we do in whatever way it is to make it better? I think maybe that’s the common thread.
CK: I suspect that is it. I’m kind of checking that whether that is=
U: =I mean if it’s anything in my I think that’s what it is if anything in my I it’s odd for years I used to say I knew for myself and I would occasionally say to other people that I’d find it immensely difficult to get involved with a woman who had no interest in politics. I tried it once or twice it f– just was disastrous.
C: =[laughs]
Mr U: I mean I just found it impossible to take seriously somebody who doesn’t think about the world that way I mean I wouldn’t it didn’t mean that I wanted that person necessarily to be a hardcore activist god I’m not a hardcore activist but just an awareness of what the world and what’s happening in it and an understanding that no matter where you place yourself in it you’re you’re a living part of the politics um… and now I have this person in my life who eats sleeps and breathes politics=
C: =[laughs]=
Mr U: =[laughs] you know SAfm¹⁰⁷ first thing in the morning the Mail & Guardian¹⁰⁸ is bought with religious fervour [laughs]. Ja it’s quite funny. (Mr U Int 2)

For Mr U it is ‘peripheral weirdos’ who seem to populate his social networks. The ‘common thread’ between Mr U’s friends is not just that they’re ‘peripheral weirdos’, however, but that they’re ‘people with a sense of this is how the world is and it could be better’. It is this shared cognitive definition ‘of how the world is’ and that ‘it could be better’ that forms the thread that holds his social network together. Interestingly, this doesn’t involve being a ‘hardcore activist’, but rather ‘just an awareness of what the world and what’s happening in it and an understanding that no matter where you place yourself in it you’re a living part of the politics’. This

¹⁰⁴ Name of friend withheld to protect anonymity.
¹⁰⁵ Mercedes Benz
¹⁰⁶ BMW
¹⁰⁷ SAfm is a South African radio station which covers mostly business, social and political news and commentary.
¹⁰⁸ The Mail & Guardian is a weekly South African newspaper which covers mostly business, social and political news and in-depth commentary.
awareness and understanding are so important to his relationships that they form the foundation for his intimate relationships. He recalls two previous attempts to date women who ‘had no interest in politics’ which ended up being ‘disastrous’, and revels in his current partner ‘who eats sleeps and breathes politics’. Like Ms O and Ms C his social and even intimate world is populated with people who share their politics, and in so doing identities once positioned as ‘alien’, ‘hysterical’, ‘peripheral’, ‘weird’ and ‘misfit’ become normal; politicised identities become normative.

This de- and re-peopling of our social networks with people with whom we share cognitive definitions can be likened to the withdrawal from dominant values and the creation of a new self-affirming interpretive community. It is a process of boundary formation (Taylor & Whittier, 1992) inside of which we create a social world which ‘affirm(s) and sustain(s) our subjectivity’ (hooks, 1990, p. 153), and which is crucial to the formation of collective identity. As a result ‘what is normal to me may be unbelievably radical to somebody else’. Ms I reflects on a comment made to her by an American visitor:

Ms I: I remember an American a visiting American saying to me at some point in time you know that your life in Cape Town is not the usual life in Cape Town, you do know that people actually don’t live like you do=
CK: =mmm that’s fascinating ja=
Ms I: =you wouldn’t there are not a lot of other white South Africans who I would go to a party at their house and get the same kind of mix of people that are in your life and that who come to your parties and who are in your life generally so it was really it’s really interesting in terms of like the context of that as well is like what what is normal to me may be unbelievably radical to somebody else whereas something that is that is radical for or something that somebody else does may be really radical for me. (Ms I Int 1)

Although most participants experience their cognitive definitions and themselves as ‘different’ and ‘weird’ outside their interpretive communities, these ways of making sense of the world, along with the relationships they engender, can become ‘normal’. According to Yuval-Davis (2011) ‘Belonging tends to be naturalized and be part of everyday practices’ (p. 4) and in Ms I’s account of having to be alerted to the ‘unusualness’ of her life, that which was once radical has become normal, and as a result invisible to her. What is particularly interesting about the nature of this normalised unusualness is the ‘mix of people’ in her life, which is unusual for a ‘white South African’. Given her explicit reference to race, one can assume that the ‘mix’ she is referring to is a racial mix. What this suggests is that the shared cognitive definitions provided by certain idiocultures, also provide differently peopled morality plays, with identity scripts that potentially provide differently racialised positions.

This section set out to illustrate the deep entanglements of sociality and political action. It did so by first, focussing on the importance of belonging in constituting political community, and second by examining the ways in which cognitive definitions of shared idioculture provide alternative identity scripts and therefore
have relevance far beyond immediate political work and into the constitution of social and intimate relationships of these participants. The following section extends the conversation about the sociality of political community by examining some of the implications of this entanglement, in *stories of access*.

2. Entering the ‘Zackiesphere’\(^\text{109}\): Stories of Access

All participants have *stories of access* of some shape or form. However, this section will only focus on these stories as they find expression in the ‘TAC cluster’. As with the ‘INCUDISA cluster’, the ‘TAC cluster’ is not simply made up of the stories of participants who are members of the TAC (although some are), but the stories of all participants who have affiliation with it in some way. However, it is important to recognise that stories of access are not particular to the TAC, but given that the ‘TAC cluster’ is relatively large, it provides a rich and complex site for examining these stories.

One of the most commonly cited truths in social movement analysis is that social networks ‘render [individuals] “structurally available”’ (McAdam, 1994, p. 254; McAdam & Paulsen, 1993) to political participation. Both Ms W and Dylan’s accounts speak to the way on which they were drawn into a political community, and it was not only on the strength of their convictions:

Dylan: Well I felt that well when I joined the TAC it was actually a friend of mine who I’d known it was this girl called Ms W and uh she was she was in the TAC and I’d never even known that she was in the TAC and I was at an Orientation Week at UCT\(^\text{110}\) just walking around and you know there’s all the societies recruiting people and TAC was recruiting people like any other society and she was there and she was kinda like you know and I liked her a lot and I wasn’t I don’t think I was I was attracted to her in a way but not in a sense that I wanted to you know… pursue her romantically

CK: =[laughs]=

Dylan: But yeah so I was like and she was just like you know saying like hey you should join TAC and I was thinking hey maybe I should you know maybe I should do something. (Dylan Int 1)

Ms W: I think back to when I was involved with TAC I was also seeing this guy, god I’m habitual=

CK: =[laughs]=

Ms W: =sh*t, I was also seeing this guy, who was involved with TAC with me, but there, I was doing it cause I was with him, and I didn’t really like and so I like progress, like I do have a, I kept on saying TAC isn’t my home, it’s not where I feel like it’s my political home, I kept feeling that way, but okay fine, I’ll like come cause I’m interested and I think it’s important for me to educate myself on these things. Um, and then when we, when we kind of split, I split from TAC, cheers cause I didn’t have this obligation, and now this time it was the other way round where my obligation to what it was that I was doing was stronger than my relationship to the person, and so it means for me that this is the right decision, it feels like it’s the right decision cause I’m not doing it for anyone else, personally, ja, I’m not doing it for anyone else, which has made me so much happier. (Ms W Int 1)

\(^{109}\) Reference to Zackie Achmat of the TAC.

\(^{110}\) University of Cape Town
Although they may have exhibited some general interest in issues of social justice and the desire to make a difference already, the direction in which they channel that desire is a function of structural availability, here organisations available on their university campus, and social access, i.e. friendships. Ms W’s story is particularly illustrative of the importance of social bonds in facilitating membership of a particular community, in this case the TAC. She gets and remains involved because of her boyfriend at the time (‘I was doing it cause I was with him’). Although her involvement with TAC is not only because of her boyfriend, it’s also that she’s ‘interested’, when they split up ‘I split from TAC’. Even though neither of Ms W or Dylan remained in TAC, and have gone on to join other organisations and social justice projects, their stories of introduction into these political communities, speak to the deep entanglements of our personal relationships with how we access political participation. With that said, as the previous section illustrated, political participation is about more than access, it is about belonging. Ms W makes the comment that she never felt that TAC was her ‘political home’. Home, in its ideal form, is where we feel comfortable and safe; it is where we belong. In quite the opposite experience of Ms O and Ms C in their feminist communities, Ms W does not feel as if she belongs in the space she has been drawn into by her ex-boyfriend, and when that relationship ends, so does her involvement with it. Thus social relationships not only provide access to participation, they sustain it.

Mr H’s experience of TAC is very different from that of Ms W’s. It also, however, illustrates the importance of personal relationships in mediating access to and sustaining participation. Mr H recounts how his personal relationship with leadership at TAC ‘parachuted’ him ‘in at the top’ of the organisation, at the ‘the level of the real core leadership’:

Mr H: Then subsequently joining TAC my involvement largely took the form of volunteer work for the organisation but at a an unusually an let’s say um not continuously and not really formally until was employed by them four years later but at a an unusually central point in the decision making structures not that I was a key player in decision making by any stretch of the imagination but because my personal links to the organisation established quite early on were with people like Zackie¹¹¹ and Participant¹¹² usually when they called on me to help with something even something trivial it was usually something at a fairly uh central level if I can put it that way so I had a I had an odd relationship outsider who’s infrequently active or I should say intermittently active frequently but intermittently and in a non–formal capacity certainly not a leader in the organisation but at that level at the level of the real core leadership it was an odd it was an odd relationship I had with the organisation which changed quite substantially when I was employed also at a I mean I was employed at the national level I suppose for a new and small programme but at the national level where again I had this really strange sensation that I was being parachuted in at the top without having necessarily built up credibility in all levels of the organisation so always had an odd an odd feeling about my leadership and or management role in the organisation. (Mr H Int 1)

¹¹¹ Zackie Achmat
¹¹² One of the other study participants, whose pseudonym is being withheld for purposes of anonymity.
Mr H is quite clear that it is because of his ‘personal links’ that he finds himself at an ‘unusually central point’ in the decision making structures’ of the organisation. It is a position which leaves even him with an ‘odd feeling’, as if he hasn’t ‘necessarily built up credibility in all levels of the organisation’ to warrant his fairly senior position and his proximity to key decision making functions. Here ‘access’ to participation is not simply about entry, it is also about access into layers of participation and influence, and it is probably not surprising that his relationship with the organisation remains strong to this day.

Importantly, the discussion of personal relationships in the formulation of political community is not an assertion of ‘nepotism’ or ‘favouritism’. Rather it is an important appreciation of the way in which, as asserted by scholars like Melucci (1989) and Taylor & Whittier (1992), all collectives and organisations are rendered in networks of personal and professional entanglements, and that the extent to which someone belongs socially is related to the extent to which they participate and wield influence. However, the entanglement of the relational and the political is not only seen inside organisational structures. The personal/professional relationships of the leadership of the TAC and Zackie Achmat, in particular, have had considerable impact on individual people, some of whom are in this study (see Chapter Eight). Through these people this impact has been extended even further, into the landscape of social justice activism in Cape Town specifically, and South Africa, more broadly. Consider the following from Ms B:

Ms B: So I think, ja, I think coming to Cape Town was a shift\textsuperscript{113} partly because I’d heard of the SJC and partly because in my very unknowledgeable opinion on this topic I think there’s more going on here then there is in Joburg.
CK: Really?
Ms B: I mean I stand to be corrected because I don’t know, but everybody I know here, not everybody, a lot of people I know here are involved in the activist scene. The people I know are very much in the sort of TAC, Equal Education, SJC sort of, the sort of conceptual offspring of Zackie Achmat kind of clique.
CK: [laughs] Yes.
Ms B: But, it’s a very normal thing to do, it’s not seen as strange, but in Joburg I don’t know anyone who does anything remotely like this, I’ve never heard of anyone doing sort of NGO work that’s in an activist direction, if anyone does NGO work it’s in a sort of charity healing soothing kind of direction, not like a push for social change?
CK: Wow, that’s fascinating.
Ms B: It is, and I mean I think I really do think some of its got to do with Zackie, I think he’s put a stamp on the sort of character of this community a lot, but it can’t be all the influence of one person?
(Ms B Int 1)

Ms B is once again a good example of how the pre-existing ties of a social network make participation structurally available. A friend of hers was in leadership in one of the organisations she mentions, and it was partly because of him that she moved to Cape Town in the first place. Her social network in Johannesburg was not one that contained the possibility of participation, but in Cape Town ‘everybody I know here, not

\textsuperscript{113} With regards to her political involvement, she’s become more politically involved.
everybody, a lot of people I know here are involved in the activist scene’. Of course, there is plenty of ‘NGO work that’s in an activist direction’ happening in Johannesburg, it’s just not happening in her immediate social circle, and therefore ‘it’s seen as strange’, not ‘a normal thing to do’. Of particular significance to the conversation about access is that the people she knows are ‘very much in the sort of TAC, Equal Education, SJC sort of, the sort of conceptual offspring of Zackie Achmat kind of clique’. Interestingly this ‘clique’ extends beyond the confines of TAC itself and into a network including EE and the SJC. The social connectedness of this ‘clique’ is further emphasised in the following:

CK: Ja, so do you find that, you mentioned it earlier that most of the people around you do this kind of thing?
Ms B: Well, I mean I think I was exaggerating a bit to make a point ja, but it is this sort of network of interconnected people who work in this three organisations, in fact I’d say more than three, because I’d say AIDS Law Project\textsuperscript{14} is also in that clique and MSF\textsuperscript{15} slightly because of their proximity of offices, I mean you know how it is, you’ve worked at TAC so like you probably know half of the people that I’m thinking of.
CK: Probably ja.
Ms B: Probably interviewed some of them.
CK: Probably [laughs].
Ms B: You know like, there’s ex-TAC people working at SJC, in Equal Education, people move between, you know, its like, I find that quite an invigorating thing. (Ms B Int 1)

Given that they work very closely with the TAC on the issues of HIV and AIDS, the Aid Law Project (ALP) and MSF are understandably also included in this ‘clique’, inside of which there is a ‘network of interconnected people’ who not only work in these organisations, but move between them. Interestingly she includes me in that network, and reflects on what my sample may look like based on this positioning (‘I mean you know how it is, you’ve worked at TAC so like you probably know half of the people that I’m thinking of... Probably interviewed some of them’). As it turns out, I had. However, more interesting than the relationship between TAC, MSF and ALP and the way in which the network operates between them, is the relationship between TAC and EE and the SJC, the ‘conceptual offspring’ of Zackie Achmat. At face value, they deal with related, but fairly different issues making their relationship to the TAC slightly less obvious. Their organisational relationship, however, has origins in a more personal one. Ms B’s account:

Ms B: Ja well what happened is they\textsuperscript{16} invited him to speak on their campsite the one year, they have this summer camp at the end of each year, and you know he always has these sort of young protégées, and he sort of made a connection with some of the leadership and there’s been this ongoing relationship between Habonim\textsuperscript{17}, and people leave Habonim, they litter all these organisations, I

\textsuperscript{14} According to their website the Aids Law Project (ALP) is ‘a non-governmental organization which works exclusively to promote equal rights and justice for people living with HIV and AIDS’. (www.aidslawproject.org)
\textsuperscript{15} Medécins Sans Frontières
\textsuperscript{16} Habonim Dror
\textsuperscript{17} According to the South African chapter's website Habonim Dror is 'is a worldwide Jewish Zionist youth movement, which exists to take responsibility for the Jewish people, Israeli society and the world.' It was founded in 1929. In South Africa it is ‘a Jewish youth movement which seeks to educate the next generation of Jewish South Africans into becoming tomorrow’s strong and courageous leaders. We strive for change in South Africa and Israel, and work towards a more equal and just society.’
mean Friend1\textsuperscript{118} he’s the most amazing organiser and he gets those skills from when he was in that youth movement, so it doesn’t matter what the content is it’s the, these guys, and it’s quite sexist, the leadership is usually male, but these guys come out of there with these incredible organisational skills as these young young guys, so Friend1, Friend2 and then there’s like two other of them, or three other of the ex–Habonim leadership that work in EE/SJC/TAC\textsuperscript{119}, another three, two who work in EE/SJC/TAC, Friend1 who works at EE/SJC/TAC, and so it’s quite interesting how this very insular, self–referential youth organisation is producing, very very middle-class, very elite in this way is producing people that are like entering this field and that might be an interesting thing for you to look at, I don’t know. (Ms B Int 1)

The relationship between TAC, the SJC and EE is well known and, indeed, acknowledged as important. What Ms B’s account of this relationship adds to our consideration is that the organisations which are emerging to populate the Cape Town social justice landscape are mediated by personal relationships, i.e. Zackie Achmat’s ‘ongoing relationship’, not with Habonim Dror as an organisation, but with a contingent of young male ‘protégées’. Joey is one of these ‘protégées’. He shares his account of this relationship:

\begin{quote}
Joey: We\textsuperscript{120} invited him onto the campsite which is in Hermanus and the summer camp I talked about happens every December at the same place. He was invited to see this event and to speak at it, and there was this HIV and Aids um event that was happening at the camp where the point of it being to actually educate and politicise everyone else about it. And showing him around and talking with him and meeting him, he was quite amazed by what he saw and couldn’t believe, you know, was interested, and subsequently has visited and there’s been this connection in that there’s always been in that Habonim was a good place to base it, as he, I’m sure, strategically saw it. Not only was it like a place like where there were these like cute Jewish guys=
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
CK: =[chuckles]=
Joey: =in his case because he was not married then, but there these people who, even if they didn’t practice it properly, understood something about about um what would I call it, you know, about changing society, about how to do it. He saw something there, and you know, that relationship has kind of continued. But through my ongoing connection with him and subsequent work that I did with the TAC and working in a broader context, working in working class communities which I had never done until then, or if we had done it was like a sporadic thing. (Joey Int 1)
\end{quote}

There is clearly a political/ideological resonance for Zackie Achmat in what he sees at the Habonim Dror camp and although Joey is being wry when he mentions the ‘cute Jewish guys’, the fact that he mentions it denotes a subtle social congruence that in combination with the powerful political and ideological congruence, is a potent catalyst for the ‘ongoing connection’ and relationship that follows. It is through ‘my ongoing connection with him’ that Joey came to ‘subsequently’ work with TAC and it is through this that the way in which he does his politics has changed. What this personal relationship has translated into then, is a form of mentorship and significantly, a socialisation into a particular idioculture (Fine, 2002). Recall Mr H, who had a close personal and consequently professional relationship with TAC leadership. His experience of

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{118} Name of friends withheld to protect anonymity.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{119} I’ve clustered the organisations being mentioned together so as to protect the anonymity of the persons being referred to, and by extension Ms B’s.}

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{120} Habonim Dror}
this relationship is one of induction, not only into the structures of TAC but into a particular ‘tradition of political resistance’:

Mr H: There are obviously several traditions of political resistance if you like um and and people in TAC some of the people in TAC like Zackie and Mark came to it with a very particular background with a kind of Trotskyist um factional struggle within a broader left struggle against apartheid um but who had had to change their minds on a number of things um because the world just didn’t work as they thought it would and um historical developments proved that to the right so I think that um knowledge set and analytical approach way of thinking about politics had a huge influence on me um and I feel privileged that I was able to absorb some of the Leninist uh tradition but stripped of uh some of the nefarious um aspects of it which um one could argue resulted in in sort of the totalitarian impulse in much of the left prior to the late eighties I suppose um so it was not only suddenly joining a team that was actually doing something that was making a real difference it was also being exposed to thinking that I thought was a lot more powerful than any of the largely academic thinking about politics that had been exposed to prior to that.

CK: Would that have been at university?

Mr H: Yes yes even though I was I dunno second year third when I first joined TAC um so so I think that was a really important shift in my consciousness and I think an important question when looking at activism is the transmission of certain traditions of activism and certain traditions of thought from between generations of activists. (Mr H Int 1)

It is clear that Zackie Achmat and Mark Heywood, have been instrumental in Mr H’s political socialisation. Not only have these relationships facilitated access to ‘a team’ at a particularly central and influential point, but they have provided a socialisation, into ‘knowledge set and analytical approach way of thinking about politics’ which ‘had a huge influence’ on him. This marks not only an enormously important shift in his consciousness, but also in the way he does his politics, from the ‘largely academic thinking about politics’ that he’d been exposed to before to ‘doing something that was making a real difference’. It is an experience so important for him that he makes the observation that one of the most important things to consider when speaking to activists in this research is the ‘transmission of certain traditions of activism and certain traditions of thought from between generations of activist’. As it turns out, it was on the strength of this comment, that I did exactly that.

The entanglements of personal relationships in mediating Mr H and Joey’s political participation and socialisation, underscore the significance of social and relational factors in studies on activism. This is not just because political collectives have socialisation functions or pre-existing ties facilitate entry into different forms of political participation or that friendship bonds contribute to belonging which is so important in collective identity formation; but because of all of these things. How people come to particular forms of participation, how this changes them and indeed how this then informs their modes of participation, is a

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121 Mark Heywood is one of the co-founders of the TAC, and Director of the Aids Law Project until 2010 when it was amalgamated into SECTION27, ‘a public interest law centre that seeks to influence, develop and use the law to protect, promote and advance human rights’. He is now the Executive Director of SECTION27. (http://www.section27.org.za)
deeply social process. Simply put, we cannot untangle the processes through which our political collectives are constellated from our sociality. Nowhere is this more deeply felt than in the stories of exclusion.

3. ‘How can you join the revolution when you’re not friends with the revolutionaries?’: Stories of Exclusion

It is clear that both pre-existing personal, and what develop into mentoring relationships, are key factors to the constellation of political collectives, and through this the transmission of traditions of activism. However, there is a corollary to this. Although some people may be drawn in and enjoy the benefits of belonging, others may not. As with any community, there are centres and peripheries. Recall Ms B’s reference to what she called the ‘Zackie Achmat kind of clique’ suggesting a form of social boundary, one that Mr H and Joey are clearly inside of. The experience of this boundary is echoed in an interaction Ms B and I have with a young American (male) intern who is volunteering at the TAC. The conversation starts with talking about the fact that many (according to Ms B) people in this network are not from Cape Town originally but ends with us talking about the intern’s experience in ‘Zackie’s little empire’:

CK: Actually last time you said something very interesting this network you find in Cape Town that part of it is that the people in the network are not so deeply linked into=
Ms B: =mmm=
CK: =their own communities, a lot of them are from other places, like from Joburg or wherever, particularly like nuclear families and religious communities and you talked about them being more socially mobile?
Ms B: Well its very interesting that you ask me that question while you’re here [indicates Intern] I wanna hear you, so like you, he lived here a couple of years before, like you are from a different, you’re the only person in the like Zackiesphere that’s from another country.
Intern: Zackie’s little empire.
Ms B: Ja Zackie’s empire. (Ms B Int 2)

It’s not the fact that the Intern is the ‘only person in the like Zackiesphere’ who is not from South Africa, that is significant, but rather the fact that the ‘Zackiesphere’ or this ‘empire’ even exists. Both Ms B and the intern, although on the inside, have a palpable sense of the exclusivity of this community, where some people like Joey and Mr H are in and others are, well, not. Recall Ms W’s experience of TAC not feeling like her ‘political home’. Mr U, like Ms W never found his ‘home’ at TAC. In fact he has ‘never felt socially at home in the activist circles’:

Mr U: I’d never socially been at home um in in the activist circles I think I was incredibly insecure and I just felt way out of my depth socially and um ja come to think of it that’s how I felt in TAC a lot of the time as well.
CK: Mmm?
Mr U: Ja like somebody who’s on the fringes who never really found their way in to feeling accepted really. Um ja but I actually hadn’t made that connection before to that sense of peripheralisation and these contexts. I don’t know what that means if anything.
CK: [chuckles]
Mr U: I mean how can you join the revolution when you’re not friends with the revolutionaries [laughs]? (Mr U Int 2)

How indeed? The extent to which someone is friends with ‘the revolutionaries’, not only determines whether they get to join the revolution or not, but also the extent to which they get to define and participate in it. As he describes it not feeling ‘at home’ has little to do with his conviction around issues of HIV and AIDS, but rather ‘being out of his depth socially’, and never really finding his ‘way in to feeling accepted’. Thus Mr U, despite his commitment to the issues TAC stand and fight for, finds himself on the ‘fringes’, both socially and with regards to his participation.¹²²

Invoking Melucci’s (1995) assertion that ‘repeated activations of the relationship that link individuals’ function to ‘construct and negotiate’ the interactive and shared cognitive definitions, which form one of the keystones of collective identity, we can understand the boundary of any ‘clique’ or ‘empire’ not simply as a social one, but one defined by cognitive definitions. By this I do not mean that people positioned outside of the boundary will have different cognitive definitions to those positioned inside, but simply that levels of agreement on these definitions may mediate where social boundaries fall. Consider for example, Ms J’s experience:

Ms J: I mean I’m not sure how much I agree with activism well with activism that I see and activism that I was involved with before um because I think that it’s sometimes misguided but that’s a whole different I think that’s a completely whole different discussion.
CK: No I think it’s actually very interesting ok can you tell me a bit about that? About the… like what is it that you saw and what is it that you felt was misguided about it?
Ms J: Well I think the lots of activists fit into this like left like this lefty kind of box and everyone has to believe in the same things and all the campaigns like people who believe in one thing have to believe in other things and when you don’t you kind get socially looked down upon by contemporaries or I mean it’s just ah you know she believes this or he believes that or [laughs]=
CK: [=laughs] (Ms J Int 1)

For Ms J the requirement for belonging is not simply agreement, but includes conformity where ‘everyone has to believe in the same things’ and ‘people who believe in one thing have to believe in other things’. The consequence for not doing so is not only social marginalisation (‘when you don’t you kind get socially looked down upon by contemporaries’), but an indictment on one’s credibility. Mr E’s experience, which mirrors Ms J’s, expands on this:

¹²² This is an experience he extends beyond just the TAC, however, to ‘activist circles’ in general and it is not surprising that he now considers himself ‘a little “a” activist’ which he describes as ‘somebody who lives with an understanding of the issues that face society and does their best to kind of transmit and engage with them, as opposed to an “activist with a capital “A”” which he defines as ‘somebody who is organisationally involved in an organisation like TAC and who is on a fairly regular basis um contributing to organisational structures’ (Mr U Int 1).
Mr E: Um, it’s like we were discussing earlier of how identity politics tends to pervade ah otherwise good NGOs based on a good idea, and then you find the same organisational politics that happen in your government departments occurring right in those, those very type organisations. Um, but not, I think it, not only does it happen at an individual level, but through unofficial but very clear networks that are established then becomes a particular caucus within um, that field amongst particular people, and their view, I think, it, it just it’s the point don’t become inclusive anymore cause they shut down, they relate to each other because they’re in particular positions of power and thus are level in that sense and the network is established on your credibility I guess in terms of how much of an activist you are. Um, obviously intellect I mean if people are able to understand each other on an intellectual level there’s the power of the intellect, but within that a network and a defensive position rests or is formed, and you, you see that because it becomes a clique, the diversity or the possibility of diversity of opinion within that clique, gets totally shut down and they start separating themselves from the very issues they want to deal with. And then, you know, so it becomes a hierarchy within, aah what can we call it, activist networks. (Mr E Int 1)

Like Ms J, Mr E expresses his discomfort with the way in which ‘the diversity of opinion or the possibility of diversity of opinion’ gets shut down within particular ‘cliques’. These ‘cliques’ are the result of what he sees as ‘unofficial but clear networks that are established’ that then become ‘a particular caucus amongst particular people, and their view’; a caucus that has ceased to be ‘inclusive’ and the result of people who ‘relate to each other because they’re in particular positions of power’, in ways that they do not with the rest of the organisation or collective. The result is not simply an exclusive ‘clique’ which dominates opinion (or cognitive definitions), but a ‘hierarchy’ where the extent to which someone conforms to those opinions becomes a reflection on their credibility and a reflection of ‘how much of an activist you are’. This ‘credibility’ in turn, then establishes their place in the network (‘The network is established on your credibility’) and the extent to which one can access the ‘clique’. Mr E continues to explore this idea:

Mr E: Um, if you bring it back to the Project thing is how I think for our generation of young activists so to speak, there needs to be, we need to start taking ownership of our own process an—and understanding that relationship more, because otherwise we get stuck into it, like, and you see the gaps I mean I’ve seen in these networks there are people who get slowly incorporated into the network I’ve had some tastes of this, and I, I have yet, and there’s some things that make me feel really uncomfortable about this, it’s a cronyism that develops, and before you know it you’re caught up in the network wondering like why is it that I haven’t thought about this issue a little bit more and I’ve just agreed with, these people. Um, and it becomes difficult to negotiate your own space within that, to keep your own, I don’t wanna say identity, to hold your own in, in that becomes quite a difficult thing, because there’s, I still think there’s a lot of pressure, there’s a lot of, strategic considerations that you have to take into account when you know that this field is so small, and if I step on the wrong persons shoes, there is a serious possibility of isolation thereafter, and then what? Um, then you become ja, it becomes a very difficult space for you to negotiate because things in this, in this activist arena are, like I say, it’s got this moral underpinning apparently, and it’s supposed to be on a principled basis I mean it’s supposed to be the things that bring us together that often gets lost, that gets forgotten, on identity politics, on people feeling threatened and you know, you might be called a better activist than me. (Mr E Int 1)

123 A project he is working on, which must remain unnamed for reasons of anonymity.
In the continuation of his narrative, Mr E expresses particular discomfort for ‘our generation of activists’ who are ‘slowly incorporated into the network’ and ‘caught up in the network’ because doing so requires a level of conformity that leaves one ‘wondering like why is it that I haven’t thought about this issue a little bit more and I’ve just agreed with these people’. Not only does he feel that it amounts to ‘cronyism’, but recognises the difficulty of negotiating one’s own space, holding one’s own and keeping one’s identity. The role of this consensus in establishing someone’s credibility and therefore access to the ‘clique’ is once again emphasised. As he points out because of the ‘moral underpinnings’ of the work, not agreeing is tantamount to being morally compromised, or indeed, a suggestion that the person you are disagreeing with is morally compromised. Thus there is a great sense of ‘people feeling threatened and you know, you might be called a better activist than me’. More than that, however, lack of consensus with the wrong person may mean expulsion from the ‘clique’ and possibly even the network; ‘you have to take into account when you know that this field is so small, and if I step on the wrong persons shoes, there is a serious possibility of isolation thereafter’.

Mr E’s account of what he calls ‘cronyism’ is an interesting juxtaposition to, Mr H and Joey’s stories of access to a community of practice and mentorship, and Ms O and Ms C’s stories of belonging. Here the sociality of the network and its dialectical relationship with shared cognitive definitions, serves to exclude rather than create community; or more accurately create exclusive community. Furthermore, it serves to create a hierarchy of legitimacy and therefore influence, which in Mr E’s account amounts to a ‘shutting down’ of dissenting voices.

4. ‘White maleness, even when it is well-meaning, is still white maleness’: Intersections of Gender, Race & Class

If as this chapter has shown, our sense of political collectivity and belonging is being rendered in an inextricable relationship with our sociality, then the cleavages of this post-apartheid South African society (as described in Chapter Two) must inevitably find some expression. Although stories like Ms I’s about the (racial) ‘mix of people’ in her social world suggest that political socialisation and the formation of political community can function to overcome socially imposed boundaries such as race, class and possibly gender, there is also much to suggest that political community formation may in fact mirror these social cleavages. This is not to suggest that social cleavages like race, class or gender will predict or predetermine patterns of collectivity. Rather it is to suggest that we cannot escape our sociality, and that regardless of our best intentions we are likely to reproduce patterns of social division, exclusion and relationships of power. This section is a demonstration of exactly that.
One of the interesting characteristics of the group of participants sampled was that it was not racially representative in relation to the broader demographics of the Western Cape, or Cape Town. In fact I struggled to find black participants. There are two points that may explain this. The first is that I was interested in middle-class activists, and Cape Town has a relatively small black middle-class. The second is that snowballing leverages the social networks of the researcher and participants. Given the racialised nature of class in South Africa, and the extensive racial divisions that persist in our society, it was inevitable that our networks would, in fact, be raced. Thus, the sample is dominated by white participants (seventeen), followed by coloured participants (six) and finally black (two). However, these social cleavages have significance beyond the peopling of the sample, and this is not lost some of the participants. Even Ms B recognises the ‘very middle-class, very elite’, ‘usually male’ and ‘quite sexist’ nature of Habonim Dror’s leadership with whom Zackie Achmat has developed such an influential relationship. Whether intentionally or not, inclusions and exclusions take on gendered, classed and gendered characteristics. Mr E’s account of the whiteness and maleness of ‘hierarchies’ within Cape Town’s ‘activist networks’ reflects Ms B’s point:

Mr E: And then, you know, so it becomes a hierarchy within, aah what can we call it, activist networks. And it, its such, in fact the whole question of like machismo and like, its male, in fact the majority of people in this network still form or are constituted by white males, which immediately brings to light a lot of questions about hidden agendas, and you know, how much credibility can you give to a principled stance when I know that there could possibly, I’m not saying that its necessarily the case but there could possibly just be another agenda there, um, that just gets very nicely flowered and sprinkled with human rights language, and you know beautiful words that mean nothing when, if you really, you know, like I say scratch beneath the surface and you see it’s a very different story. (Mr E Int 1)

It is not clear what the ‘different story’ ‘beneath the surface’ is or what ‘questions’ and ‘hidden agendas’ are raised, but it is clear that the hierarchy within these activist networks are both gendered and raced, and for Mr E that has implications for ‘how much credibility can you give to a principled stance’. His observation is powerfully echoed by another respondent. Subsequent to my interview with her, one of the respondents (to say who may compromise her anonymity and given Mr E’s point about the very real threat of isolation within the network, I do not want to take the risk), joined one of the organisations in the ‘Zackie Achmat kind of clique’. She resigned within a few months. She shared her experiences of why she resigned on her blog, which she allowed me to use. Although not part of the original interview material, what she says about her experience resonates so powerfully with what Mr E says, that I felt it pertinent to share. Her experience of the ‘pecking order that permeates the life and the operations of the organisation’ resonates deeply with Mr E’s experience:

Here’s what I object to. Over the last few weeks, I have noticed, and it has been confirmed in conversations with some colleagues, that there’s a certain pecking order that permeates the life and the operations of the organisation. At the proverbial ‘top’ of the organisation (civil society does not like to admit its hierarchies are formal, hence the quotation marks), you have mostly middle-class,
and, yes, mostly white people. In the ‘middle’, and at the (regrettably) ‘bottom’, you have mostly working-class, black people. (Single Black Female)124

Like Mr E she recognises the operation of ‘unofficial but very clear networks’. Like Mr E she also recognises that these are raced, gendered (see next excerpt) and classed – ‘At the proverbial “top” of the organisation… you have mostly middle-class, and, yes, mostly white people. In the “middle” and at the (regrettably) “bottom”, you have mostly working class, black people.’ Even though as Mr E suggests in one of his earlier excerpts, that ‘you find the same politics that happen in your government departments’ and I would argue, in any organisation, the fact that according to SingleBlackFemale ‘civil society does not like to admit its hierarchies are formal’, underscores to the deeply social nature of these hierarchies. She provides some further insight into these dynamics, as a function of privilege:

As I said earlier, I do not believe the intent of my bosses is malicious. But here’s the thing about white maleness (and note, dear reader, I use white maleness here as a proxy for privilege – not everyone at the ‘top’ is white or male): it cannot be evaded, it cannot be shrugged off. In spaces where liberal, progressive, anti-racist white maleness takes up residence, it still operates from the assumption that it knows best. I watch it at work, telling people what they need to care about (in the midst of a myriad of social problems), and precisely how to care about it. It’s why I got my job, even though there are many people in the organisation far more qualified to speak and research and write with authority about the problems facing their communities. White maleness, even when it is well-meaning, is still white maleness. It cannot recognise the value in world views that have not benefitted from the feeling of being central and normative all their lives. How can it? It has been central and normative for time immemorial. (Single Black Female)

It is not a co-incidence that the people who observed and experienced the gendered (Ms B and Single Black Female) and racialised (Mr E and Single Black Female) nature of the ‘unofficial networks’, ‘hierarchy’ and ‘proverbial pecking order’ are female and black. It is as Single Black Female points out a function of gender and racial privilege, in a world where white maleness has been ‘central and normative for time immemorial’. It is not difficult to see how ‘caucuses’ and ‘cliques’ which are dominated by young white men, however well intentioned, may shut down ‘diversity of opinion’. As Single Black Female points out, ‘In spaces where liberal, progressive, anti-racist white maleness takes up residence, it still operates from the assumption that it knows best’, something she witnesses on a daily basis. 126 127

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124 Single Black Female is her blog persona.
125 Emphasis in the original
126 It is worth noting that the leadership of the organisation being referred to by Ms C was at the time of writing indeed dominated by young white males. However, this has shifted since then with leadership now being much more representative (more specific details would make the organisation more recognisable and may compromise the anonymity of the respondent). Furthermore, the demographic profile of the leadership of TAC (which is an important organisation in this network that Mr E is referring to) has also changed quite dramatically over the last few years from, largely white and male in the early 2000s, to the time of writing in 2013 where the General Secretary and Chairperson are both black women.
127 On reading his words and my analysis of these words three years after the interview in 2012, Mr E expressed some ambivalence. He did not feel that his description (and my analysis) of the racialised and gendered networks and hierarchies was entirely accurate, and felt that that they did not in fact operate in such unequivocal ways as he seems to suggest (and I interpret) in the interviews. Given the changes in the demographic profile of leadership in these organisations over the last few years, this makes some sense. That said, he also expressed some concern that by tempering his analysis of how these networks and hierarchies operate, that he was selling-out a younger, more radical self.
5. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined processes of political community formation as it finds expression in participant narratives of their political conscientisation and practice. In so doing it has brought attention to the profound sociality of our activist politics. It has examined the ways in political participation and identity are inextricable, and how this relationship is a function of a process of political socialisation mediated by relationships with family, friends and mentors. It has also, examined how this socialisation can result in exclusion, whilst at the same time as generating inclusion and belonging. These exclusions may not necessarily be problematic – as Yuval Davis (2011) reminds us ‘the boundaries of the political community of belonging… sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into ‘us’ and ‘them’’ (p. 3). It is what Crowley (1999) referred to as ‘the dirty work of boundary maintenance’ (p. 30) and it is central to any process of political community and collective identity formation.

However, these exclusions can serve to suppress alternative voices, through delegitimising the voices of those who challenge the dominant idioculture of a network or organisation. Furthermore, it is highly problematic when these exclusions start to mirror larger social exclusions, most notably, those which occur along the lines of race, class and gender. Although problematic, it should also not be surprising. Given the inherent sociality of these political networks and identities, it is almost inevitable that they will in some way echo the ills that plague the society they serve. This is, not to suggest that they simply replicate them – these are after all networks of individuals and organisations committed to social justice – simply that any organisations or individual needs to be vigilant of when and how they replicate them, despite their best intentions, and if necessary be prepared to confront that.

These identities are not simply being constructed in relationship with other people, they are also being constructed in a particular time and place, i.e. post-apartheid South Africa. The following chapter zooms the lens out from these constellations of relationship and community, to take in the larger historical and political stage of post-apartheid South Africa. It does this in order to examine how these young activists position themselves only not in relation to each other, but in relation to those who came before them; it starts to engage the particularity of this generational consciousness.

128 My emphasis
Ms I: And again the particular context being South Africa and coming to consciousness you know turned seventeen in 1994 so there’s there was definitely that sense that fighting injustice works you know you can actually change an entire country’s government an entire structure through fighting something or fighting for something or fighting against something so it’s probably time specific as well… but that it was actually bearing fruit so and then and then going to university two three years later and having that exposure around the conversations about race class and gender um the particular experiences and people that I met and conversations that I had I don’t doubt that there was something that got seeded much earlier on but given the particular time and that time being more like the context of that time rather than the year itself but the context of transition and um hope and uh equality and justice and all of those things being attainable you know it kinda seeds into well then there’s actually something to so here you know if I go out and like do something in a place where it really still matters then change might happen because it has so there was some kind of an evidence or a proof that fighting for something really works. (Ms I Int 2)

I always tell people I was a child during apartheid and an adult, post-apartheid. Like Ms I, I was born in 1976, one of the bloodiest years in South African history. I turned eighteen in 1994, two weeks before country’s first and one of the world’s most celebrated and iconic democratic elections. I went to university in 1995, the year that South Africa won the Rugby World Cup\(^\text{129}\) and black and white South African’s across the country danced euphorically in the streets together for the first time. I know in my bones that emerging from the closeted world of a small conservative town and high school and into a world flooded with \textit{that} much optimism, energy, rapture almost, has deeply shaped my consciousness, and like Ms I, because of that I absolutely know ‘that fighting for something really works’. It is a consciousness of a generation rendered in the honeymoon period of a new democracy, what Ms G calls the ‘\textit{Madiba}\(^\text{130}\) kind of glow’:

Ms G: Like um we’re reading some Biko and Mandela and stuff like that, and um so we were kind of discussing politics but there was still the slant to it was very much building up this, kind of building up South Africa and it was very much still in that Madiba kind of glow, the way we were looking at it wasn’t really critical. Um it was like look at all these different languages and we were absolutely fascinated by all these different cultures, and we were all together, all one and so on. In that sense it wasn’t very grounded in reality probably [chuckles] it was in a bit of a bubble. So I wasn’t really aware of I was aware there were big issues but like umm hmm, I just had such a sense of optimism that they would be all solved, almost automatically, like we need to be engaged in them but the government was taking care of them. Like we were everything was fully on the right track and

\(^{129}\) The South African rugby team’s (Springboks) winning of the Rugby World Cup of 1995 is often cited as being a watershed moment in South African race relations. Associated with especially Afrikaner white culture, the celebration of this sporting victory by black South Africans together with white South Africans was considered by many to be symbolic of the new Rainbow Nation. The spirit of this (supposed) new racial comradeship is often captured in the image of Nelson Mandela wearing a Springbok jersey.

\(^{130}\) ‘\textit{Madiba}’ is Nelson Mandela’s Xhosa clan name. It is a commonly used term of affection for him in South Africa.
we were all part of this together and there wasn’t really a need to step back and criticise and look at where problems were. (Ms G Int 1)

It was the glow of a hard battle fought and won, where the good guys were finally in charge, where we had problems but ‘the government was taking care of them’ and where ‘everything was fully on the right track’, where there was no need to ‘step back and criticise’.

These opening excerpts from Ms I and Ms G powerfully illustrate the location of these political identity projects in a particular history which spans the apartheid and post-apartheid eras and as such are deeply informed by events such as the 1994 election and the preceding struggle against apartheid. This history deeply informs this ‘generational consciousness’ (Mannheim, 1952), which not only locates us in history, but as socially and politically interested young people provides us with a rich heritage of political struggle. This is a compelling cultural resource to inform their politics and our identities. However, as Andrews (2007) points out, generational consciousness is not about the simple, predictive uptake of historical narratives by a particular generation. Rather it is the ‘symbiotic relationship between the generation and the historical epoch’ (ibid., p. 57) and the active and agentic rearticulation of political/cultural stories of the past. If identities are as Hall (1990) suggests how we are positioned and position ourselves in relation to the past, then these activist identities are about how these young people are positioned and position themselves in relation to this history.

This chapter tracks the two major canonical narratives or morality plays which participants draw on to construct their activist identities. The first is that of ‘the Struggle’, the story of the fight against the apartheid regime. The second is that of ‘the TAC Method’, which is the story of the TAC’s fight against the democratic South African government for the treatment of people living with HIV and AIDS. If canonical narratives are legitimate socio-cultural stories, these two morality plays represent stories of ‘legitimate’ political struggle and throughout the chapter, we examine how respondents position themselves inside of and in relation to them. Specifically, we examine how they position themselves in relation to the complex cast of characters provided by each narrative, and in so doing construct their own political legitimacy. Implied throughout these manoeuvrings, however, a much larger contestation is at play: the question of who the most authentic and legitimate bearers of our ‘traditions of resistance and change’ (Squire, 2007, p. 181) are and, more broadly, who the real heroes in struggles for social justice are.

1. ‘The Struggle’: The Legacy of the Anti-apartheid Struggle

For all respondents (and myself) ‘the Struggle’ is omnipresent not only in our stories of political conscientisation, but how we make sense of our politics. Although articulated in different ways amongst different participants, the struggle against apartheid features as the prototype or exemplar of legitimate,
authentic and effective activism, and the standard in relation to which they position themselves. This section considers some of the ways in which they do this. Specifically, it examines how ‘the Struggle’ emerges as the key narrative or morality play within which participants make sense of their activism, and the contestation this positioning engenders. This contestation takes on two major forms; first, the idolisation of the 1980s as the glory, even defining, days of activism in South Africa and second, the experience of ambiguity and ambivalence in the post-apartheid political landscape engendered by emergent counter narratives to the morality tale of ‘the Struggle’. Associated with this ambiguity is the related complication of the roles of the characters of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, most notably the ANC. This particular complication is explored in detail through two participants’ experiences.

1.1. ‘In the Eighties’: The Glory Days

The morality play of ‘the Struggle’ is a very powerful one in providing the cultural contours of what activism in post-apartheid South Africa should look like. This is reflected in the way participants’ notions of anti-apartheid activism actually comes to define what they consider activism to be. Consider Mr X’s conundrum:

Mr X: I think because obviously I can’t take part in the apartheid struggle because there’s no apartheid I can’t be an activist in that sense but I can do this. (Mr X Int 1)

Because he was not in the actual anti-apartheid struggle, Mr X positions himself outside of ‘the Struggle’ narrative and therefore he ‘can’t be an activist’. For Mr X, the character of the ‘activist’ can only exist inside of ‘the Struggle’. He can do other things which make a positive contribution to society, but because he positions himself outside ‘the Struggle’ narrative the role of activist is denied.

Although, not quite as dramatic, Ms S’s account of a protest march she organised echoes the defining power of ‘the Struggle’ in considering political action in post-apartheid South Africa:

CK: Ja you said that you didn’t you didn’t used to consider what you do activism and now you do=
Ms S: =ja=
CK: = when did you change your mind about that?
Ms S: Mmm I guess when um when I found myself organising a toyi-toyi[132] [laughs]=
CK: = [laughs] =
Ms S: =um against Organisation[133] =
CK: = [laughs] I remember it.
Ms S: That felt quite activity and then um when it like worked really well and we had amazing results and like it was a cool thing to do and then I suddenly realised like actually we’ve got a voice and there’s a massive need for us to be pushing more so before that we kind just like things were

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[131] Do research on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which he was busy with at the time.
[132] The toyi-toyi is a form of protest dance/march, employed in South Africa during protest marches during the anti-apartheid struggle. It is an iconic modality of struggle associated with the mass protests of the 1970s and 1980s.
[133] Name of the organisation she organised the march in protest of. Name withheld to protect participant anonymity.
fucked up and we were just making a plan to you know work in the system despite it and then we made quite a consciousness conscious shift to be like actually we wanna change the system. (Ms S Int 1)

For Ms S, her moral career as an activist starts when she organises a toyi–toyi. There is an implied authenticity and legitimacy taking place here. Although actively involved in running an NGO, it is not until the organisation organises a protest march that it feels ‘activisty’. What is more significant is that it is not simply a protest march, but a ‘toyi-toyi’, which locates the protest firmly inside an anti-apartheid struggle tradition, and in so doing lends it not only ‘activistyness’, but authenticity and legitimacy. Echoing Mr X, it is only when she steps inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative that she can even start to consider herself an activist.

Inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative, the activism of the anti-apartheid struggle during the 1980s is held up as a defining and idealised form and benchmark of political action. ‘The eighties’, the most active, visible and bloody period of the anti-apartheid struggle, are often cited as the glory days of activism in South Africa:

Ms P: Like I was thinking about organising a sit in at varsity and I suggested this to the group of people who were working in the Organisation and there about eight of us core people who have been working really really hard on this project and I threw out this idea and people were like um but you know how we gonna bath [laughs loudly]=
CK: =[laughs loudly]=
Ms P: and I don’t really like you know I like my bed and I’m like christ [laughs]=
C: =[laughs]
Ms P: You know ja I feel like no-one’s that prepared to take radical measures anymore at the consequence of perhaps you know you know doing really badly on an essay because you had a sit in all week so [sighs] there’s not this like urgency anymore I feel of this like willingness to sacrifice other things like good marks and your bed to really fight for what you believe in so in that sense I think the activism has changed. I mean everyone always idealises the eighties as this you know everyone on campus was you know like active [laughs] and police raids and stuff like that but if you got like a group of students now who like tried to organise a sit-in and there was a police raid like they would not get the support and praise that they once got they would you know the university would have I dunno it just it seems like there’s not a mass movement anymore. (Ms P Int 1)

Ms G, has similar idealised notions of the ‘the eighties’:

Ms G: I don’t know, maybe this is romanticising it, maybe there were divisions, maybe there were divisions, but looking back on it, it seems almost like it was a coherent struggle… um but ja, in a sense say mobilising on campus, um, it was a struggle that you couldn’t turn away from. It was, it was clear and especially in the eighties I think, on campus, I had the sense that there was a lot of stuff happening [coughs]. (Ms G Int 1)

The glory days of activism in ‘the eighties’ have according to the above respondents been replaced with apathy and an unwillingness ‘to sacrifice’ and ‘take radical measures’. Although this in part to do with the quality of the post-apartheid activist it is also related to the post-apartheid context. Although both respondents recognise the idealisation (‘everyone always idealises the eighties’) and romanticisation (‘I don’t know,
maybe this is romanticising it’) of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, it provides something ‘clear’, ‘coherent’ and ‘urgent’. It is a clarity, coherence and urgency that the post-apartheid context does not provide. Instead its main features are ambiguity and complication.

1.2 ‘You can say down with oppression, but you can’t say down with UCT’: Complicating The Struggle

Counter narratives do not necessarily oppose master narratives (i.e. morality plays); they simply insert uncertainty and thereby undermine the unified nature of the narrative (Squire, 2004). Although ‘the Struggle’ as icon remains intact, encased in ‘the eighties’, the hero and villain characters who occupy that narrative have been exposed to more complex, contemporary truths engendered by a shifting socio-political context. This shifting context throws them ‘outside the emplotments which are ordinarily available’, in ways which do not ‘square up with the master narrative’ (Andrews, 2004, p. 1), and they are no longer simply hero or villain, but something much more complex. Whilst the past credentials of these characters are not under question, their current commitments certainly are. In fact, one of the characteristics of this generational consciousness is the tempering of the optimism of the ‘Madiba glow’ and the engagement of more ambiguous political landscape, where heroes of our morality plays do not always act according to script. This is especially true for three main sets of characters: student activist organisations, relatedly, the university (in this case UCT), and, predictably, the government of South Africa and the ruling ANC.

Given that many of these young activists attend university, university campuses are an important site where tensions emerging between ‘the Struggle’ narrative and counter narratives engendered by the post-apartheid context play out. Ms J came to UCT with an expectation of ‘activism as a continuation of student activism from before’, that of the ‘late eighties’. What she finds, unsurprisingly, given previous accounts, is a distinct lack thereof:

CK: So what was that kind push to start Organisation134?
Ms J: Well it was from that that exhibition, otherwise we wouldn’t have done it I think I think it was because of the success of the exhibition that we started=
CK: =oh I see ok=
Ms J: =that it wasn’t but I also I also did think of activism as a continuation of student activism from before and I did I was really my friend and myself we were really disappointed by the lack of activism at UCT considering that well in the late eighties I think there was quite a bit happening even through there was [unclear] there was there was stuff happening in the eighties so ja so we so were disappointed by it. (Ms J Int 1)

This is not for lack of student organisations. Except for NUSAS135, all the organisations that student activist activity occurred under during ‘the eighties’, such as SASCO136 and the SRCs137 are still there. What is

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134 Name of organisation Ms J started at UCT. Name withheld to protect anonymity of participant.
different in is their role in the political landscape and the experience of the ‘lack of activism’ on campus has to do with these organisations no longer acting according the script provided by ‘the Struggle’ narrative:

Ms G: Like from descriptions of what my parents had said Moscow on the Hill\(^{138}\) and so I arrived at UCT thinking where the hell is this involvement, where is this activism I was hearing about, why are students not engaged. So then I had a good friend, who was involved with Young Communist League\(^{139}\), so I joined the Young Communist League in first year and uh, started attending meetings and stuff and that was pretty cool because I got to meet a lot of students who were mostly in SASCO and ANC Youth League\(^{140}\) and also in Young Communist League, mostly black students, and we were kind of ja, we were discussing sort of ideological issues at our meetings, but but I soon got the sense from these meetings that it was sort of frustrating because I thought, why aren’t YCL addressing issues of say poor students on campus, or issues of communities in Cape Town? Why are we sitting in these meetings for so long? It was around, I joined around the time of the new SRC elections, so most of the energies were devoted towards that. So there were like emergency meetings called where we tried to pick candidates, to serve on the SRC in the hope that the SRC would still be a vessel for change. I don’t really feel that the SRC is a vessel for change. (Ms G Int 1)

She goes on to describe a particular incident with the SRC:

Ms G: Um, so ja, so that’s been frustrating with SRC. They’ve been kind of with us but not really, not willing to support us fully... they are too scared to take it up. They ja so they don’t [sighs] they haven’t, and even if they did take it up, I still don’t know if they’re really [sighs] if they’re really the right platform for it. So ja, we were very wary of that and we haven’t done that. Um and it is partly also because we’ve seen that a lot of times when, even if they are kind of radical individuals who get involved with SRC, they just get absorbed into process, and don’t really start speaking in the language of the SRC and the language of management and don’t take up issues properly. Ja, I noticed that with YCL as well, people who we deployed to SRC, every time we were disappointed with them. (Ms G Int 1)

Rather than being ‘vessel(s) for change’, these organisations, the protagonists of ‘the Struggle’ narrative and who embody the glory days of activism on campus during ‘the eighties’, when UCT was considered ‘Moscow on the Hill’, seem to have been ‘absorbed into a process’. As such they are no longer the ‘right platform’ to raise issues of worker exploitation. This is true even for the more ‘radical individuals’, who literally start to perform inside the script of the SRC and management as they ‘start speaking’ in their language. The organisations that once drove the struggle against the injustice of the apartheid regime, like the ANCYL and the YCL now invest their energies sitting in meetings and getting candidates elected to this platform, rather

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\(^{135}\) National Union of South African Students

\(^{136}\) SASCO refers to the South African Students Congress. It was established in its current form in 1991, but has its origins in the South African Students Organisation lead by the likes of Steve Biko. According to its website SASCO is ‘the biggest student movement in Africa. It organizes students in institutions of higher learning striving for the transformation of not just institutions of higher learning but the whole system in order to achieve a non-sexist, non-racial, working-class biased and democratic education system’. [http://www.sasco.org.za](http://www.sasco.org.za)

\(^{137}\) Student Representative Council

\(^{138}\) ‘Moscow on the Hill’ was the nickname given to the University of Cape Town because of its opposition to apartheid. [http://www.uct.ac.za/print/about/intro/history/](http://www.uct.ac.za/print/about/intro/history/).

\(^{139}\) The Young Communist League (YCL) is the youth league of the South African Communist Party (SACP)

\(^{140}\) The ANC Youth League (ANCYL) is the youth wing of the ruling ANC.
than for example addressing the concerns of poor people on campus, which inside of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, they should be doing.

Mpho did not attend UCT undergraduate at (although he’s ‘heard, and ‘can imagine’, which suggests a similar dynamic is at play) but had an experience of ‘student politics’ at North West University where he served as a member of the SRC for a year. He shares a story of how provincial youth league leadership ‘had an interest’ and intervened in SRC elections, to the extent that ‘they would come and they would have a final say’:

Mpho: We agreed on all of that and then of course because the ANC Youth League Provincial leadership in North West and ANC itself had an interest, and some of the guys on campus knew these guys and they would come and whenever there would be a backlog in terms of what we agree on campus, they would come and they would have a final say. So they came and decided against the very things that the meeting said no, this is not what we want, because one of the things that we did in these meetings, when someone is nominated you will say, we would have what they call motivation and de-motivation… and then we contested against the ANC Youth League on campus. I got phone calls and threats like you won’t get a job. This thing is going into your CV, you are contesting against the organisation. I told these guys I didn’t join the ANC for employment. The ANC is not an employment agency [chuckles]. I told them straight. These are guys who were like some big shots in North West politics. (Mpho Int 1)

He goes on to dissociate himself from this:

Mpho: I couldn’t find myself associating with that, with what was happening in the ANC and the Youth League in particular. So I mean I could be wrong, but that’s kind of the line that people took, I’m going to do things, I’m going to be an engine of change, but that’s not going to be how I do it, because student politics now, because of its party politics, association has also kind of, what’s the word, kind of broken student politics into pieces and made students, kind of compartmentalised students in a way because as much as we are all students at UCT, we are all faced with the same challenges, but the approach now is not as students. I’ve never been to the student assembly here at UCT, but I have heard and I can imagine, not even having gone there, how, what happens there really. Like it becomes like in Parliament, party politics come into play there, where that’s not really necessary. So the introduction of party politics basically in student politics is what has I think created problems and made people disassociate themselves with student politics. As much as I love the ANC and I did work for them, I had problems with such. (Mpho Int 1)

Mpho’s account resonates with Dawson’s (2006) findings from a study conducted at the University of the Witwatersand about the role of SASCO on campus, where students complain about careerism. According to Dawson’s respondents the close relationship between the ANCYL and SASCO means that being a member of SASCO leadership guarantees a job in the ANC. Echoing exactly Mpho’s words SASCO leadership insisted that SASCO was ‘not an employment agency’. However, they are seen by other students to represent parties and not students and Dawson (2006) refers to them as ‘student politicians’ rather than activists. Of course, this is not to say that all SRC’s provide feeders into mainstream political careers in political parties (although

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141 The SRC of North West University at the time.
142 How they were going to deploy SRC members.
it would be very interesting to examine the relationship between SRC participation and career trajectories, but the alignment of student organisations with institutional power (both university and governmental) significantly disrupts the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ for these young activists. For Ms J and Ms G these organisations are not the place to effect meaningful social change. As Mpho points out I’m ‘going to be an engine of change, but that’s not going to be how I do it’. In order to continue for fight for social justice they deem it necessary to align with other collectives; Ms J starts her own organisation while Ms G joins a worker’s rights organisations, their defining character being a desire for change. However, not only are the student activist organisation of ‘the eighties’ not ‘vessels for change’ but they might very well be part of the problem. Consider Mpho’s account of receiving phone calls and threats. Consider too, Ms G’s account of the SRC as ‘no longer taking issues up properly’, but specifically, ‘being absorbed into the process’ and speaking in the ‘language of management’.

As the contests around the shifting roles of student organisations on university campuses attests to, one of the major features of the ambiguity of the post-apartheid political landscape is the complication of the relationship between institutions with official power, like universities and the government, and social justice organisations. Consider this contribution from Ms G about the role of the university:

Ms G: My mom was involved with the Wages Commission and um, so they were doing work with trade unions and so on. Um and she mentioned that, in a sense, in some instance it was easier at university because the university, during the eighties at least when she was there, late seventies early eighties, the university sort of was quite supportive of students who were opposing apartheid. Whereas some of the things we are taking up now, like with Organisation\(^1^4^3^\), it’s an attack on the university but also on the system as a whole. But the university doesn’t like to be associated with that system. It was quite funny, during the protest actually, was it yesterday, Wednesday, no the day before, when the Max Price\(^1^4^4^\) came out and workers were chanting, um down with oppression, down! Phantsi\(^1^4^5^\), oppression! Phantsi! And then phantsi UCT! Phantsi! And then he sort of muttered, you can say down with oppression, but you can’t say down with UCT [laughs]! (Ms G Int 2)

Ms G’s account speaks not only to changes in the nature of student activism, exemplified by the activism of the 1970s and 1980s, but also to the changing nature of the struggle at hand as expressed in the relationship of student activism to the university. The Vice-Chancellor’s qualification of the workers chant clearly signals the shift of UCT from champion (of the anti-apartheid struggle) to antagonist (executors of damaging neo-liberal employment practices) and ‘the Struggle’ script of ‘Phantsi!’ once possibly even chanted by the Vice-Chancellor during his student activist days against the oppressive apartheid regime, needs to be reigned in, as it is turned on the institution he represents.

\(^{143}\) Name of organisation participant was involved in. Name withheld to protect participant anonymity.

\(^{144}\) Current Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town.

\(^{145}\) ‘Phantsi’ is Zulu for ‘down’, a common chant during the mass protests of the anti-apartheid struggle.
The shifting relation of government in relation to struggles for social justice is even more significant. Most obviously, government is no longer simply ‘the enemy’:

CK: But how do you think the way in which we go about activism post-apartheid is different to? I mean it’s a big question, but just=
Ms T: =it’s a huge question.
CK: You know, but just your kind of impressions.
Ms T: Well, the players have shifted, and the playing field has shifted. I think the messages were absolutely clear. Apartheid was not ambiguous. It was a mind fuck, I mean there was all the manipulation and the propaganda and all that sort of thing, but it wasn’t ambiguous, it was very clear. This is what we are doing, this is what we are doing, and this is how we follow it through. I think what’s shifted is there’s a lot more ambiguity now. There are huge amounts of ambiguity. People who support one thing and you’d think they’d support people, parties, whatever, the whole lot. So I think the first shift is just the shift in what, in know what you are fighting against and what you are supported by. That’s much less clear. I think ja, apartheid was just absolutely clear. There’s this side, look, not to be too simplistic about the divides and so on, but I think it was clearer than where we are now. (Ms T Int 1)

Ms I: There’s no longer there’s no longer the apartheid government to fight, you know there’s no longer a clear enemy because the liberation movement is in power it’s ok so the enemy as it were is not so easily defined or so unifying across so many different people looking for justice so it’s not it’s not like this one unified enemy out there that we’re all fighting it’s a lot more complex. (Ms I Int 1)

There is a sense among respondents that the post-apartheid context offers a more ambiguous and complex political landscape (‘Apartheid was not ambiguous’), that the struggles are ‘less clear’ and that the antagonists and protagonists of this morality play are not as easily defined; ‘The players have shifted’ and ‘the liberation movement is in power’ and as such ‘there’s no longer a clear enemy’, ‘the enemy as it were is not so easily defined’. In fact, a number of participants work with government to further social justice, as part of the vast provisions made under the Constitution and the various legal and structural supports. Consider, for example, Ms S’s relationship to government:

Ms S: My work is not really dangerous in fact I’m trying to work with the government to fix this thing you so I guess before it was very much us against them the people against the government um ja whereas now there is still sometimes that but um ja it’s gonna be interesting to see what happens politically in terms of how those tensions play out.
CK: You think it’ll change?
Ms S: Dunno I think people are starting to become more restless and less tolerant and I think it’s good.
CK: Of the government?
Ms S: Ja. (Ms S Int1)

However, this enormous shift is itself shifting. Echoing Ms S, Ms G reflects on the ‘tempering’ of her optimism with regards to the democratic government’s commitment to social justice:
CK: Hmm, interesting. I think there’s something you said earlier about when was it, like an early optimism that things were just going to be=
Ms G: =oh ja?=
CK: =ok, and we are all working towards, and now that you are in a slightly different place, where are you now in relation to that optimism?
Ms G: Ja, ja, well [laughs] it’s still there to some extent, in the sense that otherwise what’s the point of fighting if you don’t think you can change things?
CK: Yes, exactly.
Ms G: But um, definitely being tempered by an understanding that, no we are not all working towards the same thing. Uh, there are like the struggles of workers at UCT are not the same, not necessarily something that people in government are working for, you know, like um, for many people it’s ok for workers to earn R2 500 or less a month. (Ms G Int 1)

The giddy optimism of the early 1990s where ‘government was taking care of’ our problems and ‘we were all part of this together’, has been replaced by the realisation that we are, in fact, ‘not all working towards the same thing’ and that the post-apartheid government, the victorious liberation movement, and heroes of ‘the Struggle’, may in fact turn out to be the villains; a complication of the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, generating uncertainty and ambiguity.

1.3 ‘It’s not so clear cut as saying ‘Right I’m ANC’: Two Stories of Ambivalence

This ambiguity is especially apparent for participants who grew up in families who were active in the anti-apartheid struggle and, especially, those whose families remain ANC supporters. Ms J’s is one such case. Her family were very active in the anti-apartheid struggle, close friends with high profile ANC members and her father had until recently been ‘very pro’ ANC. However, she found herself becoming more and more critical of the ruling party:

CK: Ja no I mean so I’m just really interested as I mean how your parents politics has informed yours if at all?
Ms J: Informed me… ja um I don’t actually know because they I mean because I was always really I was very aware of my family’s involvement like my grandfather was a member of the ANC for a very long time he was a friend of Dullah Omar and my uncles was part of was fiercely against the ANC for a large part of his life as well so like I was always aware that like my family was very politically involved and especially my mother’s side of the family um and I did but I mean my parents don’t really my father has always until very recently always had a very pro ANC stance to everything like in anyway that even when there were some really terrible things happening I mean like it was the ANC corruption and that kind of thing for a very long time he was uncritical of it he just said well it’s just like everything was explained away by racism you know it was just these white journalists who are racist [laughs] and they are trying to you know they just everything gets spun against black leadership because they don’t believe that black leadership can be effective and be efficient and that kind of thing so like in that way um so I was also like I was very supportive of the ANC for a very long time until recently um so like you know that’s why I think in terms of activism I only really started being more critical much later. (Ms J Int 1)

146 Dullah Omar was a high profile member of the anti-apartheid movement and member of the ANC. He was Minister of Justice and Transport from 1999 to 2004. He passed away in 2004. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/dullah-mohamed-omar)
Ms J’s relationship with the ANC is very much mediated by her family. She starts off being ‘very supportive of the ANC for a very long time’, but this shifts to a much more critical stance, informed by a counter narrative where the ANC are clearly the villains, ‘some really terrible things happening I mean like it was the ANC corruption and that kind of thing’. It is a shift that causes disagreement between her and her father and she, for example, dismisses his suggestion that some of the criticism levelled against the ANC may be racism as laughable.

Ms J’s shift seems quite unequivocal, but for another respondent this shift is more ambivalent. Mr V grew up in a white Afrikaner family who were very active in the anti-apartheid struggle, and he recalls being deeply inculcated in that tradition and the ‘lukewarm response’ he received when he decided to focus his activism on immigrant and refugee rights:

Mr V: The decision to get involved with immigrants here was an extension of that\textsuperscript{147}, one which was met with a lukewarm response from my family because of course now the issue of immigrants is a contentious one it’s not so clear cut as saying right I’m ANC and my family’s ANC so I join and ANC branch it’s more a matter of like what are the issue around immigrants? What is the ANC’s stance? What is the…? You know it’s much more it becomes more grey=
CK: =mmm.
Mr V: Now but if the struggle had gone on longer if I had been born twenty years earlier then I would just be some MK\textsuperscript{148} guy or probably a parliamentarian or whatever or dead, but the point is you know I was just following this route until it got grey and confusing for everyone you know. (Mr V Int 1)

The reason for this ‘lukewarm response’ is because it in many ways casts the ANC in a negative light. As such it’s ‘not so clear cut as saying Right I’m ANC and my family’s ANC so I join and ANC branch’. Even from Mr V, who is so deeply rooted in this struggle narrative that as a child he aspired to join MK, things have become ‘grey’ and ‘confusing’.

The ANC do not automatically occupy the role of hero as they did when he was young, but rather his relationship to the ANC as someone concerned with immigrant rights is mediated by questions about the ANC’s position on different issues – ‘it’s more a matter of like what are the issue around immigrants? What is the ANC’s stance?’ What is interesting is that he contributes this ‘greyness’ directly to this place in history, ‘if the struggle had gone on longer if I had been born twenty years earlier then I would just be some MK guy or probably a parliamentarian’. The absence of certain historical circumstances make enacting the identity script provided by the ‘the Struggle’ narrative ‘confusing’. During the anti-apartheid struggle it would’ve been easy, join MK, become a parliamentarian or die; now one is not quite sure.

\textsuperscript{147} Referring to his deeply politicised upbringing.
\textsuperscript{148} The acronym for Umkhonto we Sizwe, the armed wing of the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.
This section has examined the centrality of ‘the Struggle’ narrative in the identity construction projects of participants. However, it has also explored the ambivalences and ambiguities engendered by counter narratives which disrupt this master narrative, and examined how some of these participants navigate that uncertainty to position themselves as socially and politically interested people. However, Andrews (2004) reminds us, inside the challenge of counter narratives, and the complexity and ambiguity they generate, lie possibilities for new identifications beyond master narratives. Nowhere is this more the case than with the second major narrative featuring in participant experiences; ‘the TAC Method’.

2 ‘The TAC Method’: A New Morality Play for a New South Africa

Although ‘the Struggle’ is the primarily dominant narrative accessed by these young activists, given the predominance of the TAC in post-apartheid South African politics, ‘the TAC Method’ features as the other dominant morality play in these participants’ construction of their activism and identities. The key protagonist is Zackie Achmat, archetype of the post-apartheid activist; the key antagonists are Thabo Mbeki\footnote{President of South African from 1999 to 2008.}, the ANC and South African government. Although the politics of the TAC represents both a translation of and dissociation from the traditions of resistance of the struggle against apartheid (ibid.), as it has both built on the foundations of the anti-apartheid struggle (Epstein, 1996) as well as augmented them by drawing on other traditions of struggle, ‘the TAC Method’ seems not only to sometimes hold almost equal symbolic weight as ‘the Struggle’ in these identity projects, but in some cases greater political legitimacy. ‘The TAC Method’ heavily references the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ (Robins, 2008a), but it is how the characters from ‘the Struggle’ are repositioned within it, a process which corresponds with much of the ambiguities being generated by this post-apartheid context, that speak to a new moral ordering. In this sense, ‘the TAC Method’ presents an important counter narrative to that of ‘the Struggle’, complicating the morality play.

This section will explore two main features of ‘the TAC Method’ narrative; first it’s ubiquity in these identity projects, and secondly how it positions the TAC, as the exemplar of post-apartheid activist politics, which has implications for characters from ‘the Struggle’.

2.1 ‘It felt like this pressing pressing immediate right in front of me’: The Ubiquity of TAC

The fact that the TAC featured so highly in these biographies is not surprising. The organisation has a pervasive presence in the post-apartheid social justice politics and their headquarters are located in Cape Town. These two factors translate into a physical presence, especially on university campuses, and especially UCT, and therefore the proximity of the TAC to young socially conscious people in middle-class Cape Town. A number of respondents related stories of how they were recruited to join the TAC on UCT campus by
friends, and so the TAC was a relatively easy, ‘structurally available’ (McAdam, 1994, p. 254) access into activism for them. In fact the TAC was my access to ‘official’ activism. I was recruited by Mr U and volunteered at the national office for six months. This raises another reason for its prevalence in these biographies. Given my connection to TAC, and the sampling of respondents through the social networks I have developed in Cape Town over the last few years, many of my respondents were also directly involved in the TAC or associated with people who were directly involved in the TAC – that is how I know them. Thus the TAC will likely feature significantly in all our activist identity construction projects. This does not negate the significance of the TAC and Zackie Achmat in the landscape of post-apartheid activist politics and important characters in the identity construction projects of young South African activists more generally, from various racial and socioeconomic backgrounds (Robins, 2008a; Squire, 2007). The TAC and Zackie Achmat are significant beyond my sampling and their ubiquity in these identity construction projects is, therefore, not idiosyncrasy, but an important finding.

Whatever the reasons are the TAC and Zackie Achmat as key protagonist provide a powerful point of reference for these young people in their narratives about who they are as activists in post-apartheid South Africa. Like ‘the Struggle’ narrative, respondents position themselves differently to in relation to these points of reference, but whatever the positioning there is a ubiquity about the TAC in this generational consciousness. Ms G and Ms T, for example, are not and never have been members of the TAC, but for both ‘the TAC Method’ narrative features significantly in the landscape of their growing socio–political awareness. Ms G is talking about her growing sense ‘that things were not right and that um, there was a need to change them’ (Ms G Int 1) while she was at high school:

CK: Did you see it\textsuperscript{150} around you?
Ms G: Um, yes in some senses. I don’t know I mean I saw it around me in lots of different ways. Um like there was an awareness from it in an external sense from the news and seeing that there were strikes going on or there were protests where there was, um, there were protests about service delivery. I’m talking about high school days now, or the TAC case for example, going to court. Um, I heard my mom talking about that a lot because she is in public health, and the fact that the government here was, like the Mbeki denialism about HIV/AIDS, and people suffering and the government not acting, and trying to work out why, why, why, why. I still can’t quite work it out [chuckles]. Um, but also seeing there the way that um, TAC was really mobilising and um, people were a lot of people who had previously been involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, but also some young activists, were taking up TAC related issues and were protesting. (Ms G Int 1)

Of course there were other things going on as well, in Ms G’s case she recalls strikes and service delivery protests, but ‘the TAC case’, takes on particular significance for her here. This significance is mediated by her mother, who is involved in public health at the time, whom she hears talking about it. Interestingly, the script Ms G encounters, and indeed continues to perform (I still can’t quite work it out), is that of the ‘the TAC

\textsuperscript{150} The sense ‘that things were not right and that um, there was a need to change them’.
Method’ morality play; that of ‘Mbeki denialism’ and ‘people suffering and the government not acting, and trying to work out why, why, why, why’ as irrational, uncaring government as the antagonists, to the TAC’s protagonist who ‘was really mobilising’. What is interesting is that she firmly locates TAC’s politics inside of a continuation the anti-apartheid struggle, by inserting characters from this struggle into ‘the TAC Method’ narrative – ‘a lot of people who had previously been involved in the anti-apartheid struggle’, which for her lends it legitimacy and weight. However, she also expels some. She does not, for example, mention that Thabo Mbeki and most of his government were also in the anti-apartheid struggle and through this elision, she expels them from the ‘the Struggle’ narrative, suggesting that the true heirs of that legacy are those people who are positioned as protagonists in ‘the TAC Method’ narrative.

Ms G is not the only person for whom TAC are a significant in the landscape of their politicisation. For the following three participants (Mr Q, Mr H and Mr U), joining the TAC, which is accompanied by a discursive stepping into ‘the TAC Method’ narrative, marks the beginning of their moral careers as ‘real’ activists. Although all accounts trace different paths and points of access, both structural and ideological, all three illustrate the ubiquity of the TAC story at the time of their decisions to become politically active.

This dynamic is evident in Mr U’s account of how he came to join the TAC. Although he encounters the ‘whole Mbeki disaster’, in South Africa whilst working as a journalist, the story is such a powerful one, that the is unable to remove himself from it, even once he has moved to London – ‘but while I was living in the UK I could never I could never forget the HIV thing here. I just it just gnawed at me all the time’. It is inescapable, ‘pressing pressing immediate right in front of me issue that that demanded something be done about it’. This sense of urgency in addition to his deepening spiritual practice provides a ‘confluence of events’ end with him being offered a job at TAC, a job which he takes:

Mr U: But ja I mean I then went into um advertising for a few years and I started working in the Newspaper but not on any particularly pressing social things. Um then there was the whole Mbeki HIV disaster which made me start to feel seriously uncomfortable about um well that actually just felt like this pressing pressing immediate right in front of me issue that that demanded something be done about it you know and um but at the same time I got this opportunity to live in London and I went off and to London. But while I was living in the UK I could never I could never forget the HIV thing here. I just it just gnawed at me all the time and at the same time my spiritual practise was advancing um a lot while I was there just kind of catalysed by being part of a bigger more experienced organisation and there was this word which kept coming up for me as I was reading the writings and guidance of the spiritual organisation this one word kept coming up which was justice. (Mr U Int 2)

Mr Q also encounters ‘the TAC Method’ narrative internationally, this time in North America. He hears the story of Zackie Achmat not taking ARVs and the TAC’s campaign, and it conveys a ‘meaningfulness’ and ‘seriousness’ that he is attracted to. Given his already politicised nature [*I suppose I was probably a bit of a

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131 Name of national South African newspaper. Name withheld to protect anonymity of participant.
political animal all along’ (Mr Q Int 1), which like Ms G, also has origins in a deeply politicised family life] and his positioning as a gay man (which gives him access to some knowledge of HIV) there is something about the TAC story, and particularly Achmat’s stance on not taking ARVs, that suggests to him that ‘they look serious’. It is a decision, which not only has him align himself with TAC ideologically, but through his networks, join the organisation:

Mr Q: I wanted to do something a bit more uh ja a bit more meaningful 152 and I’d always being a gay man had always had some knowledge of HIV but not much and uh I saw a documentary with the BB- or a BBC documentary on the Nkhosazana153 and TAC campaign TAC has already was already in existence and TAC’s campaign against it and I so um and I’d also heard about Zackie Achmat stance by not taking ARVs until he got uh until it was readily available… so I thought you know what they look serious um I got back I got a friend to tell me how to get in touch with Zackie I got in touch with Zackie and joined I said I’ll help set your website and do your email list for four hours a week and then gradually my involvement became more ja the rest is history ja. (Mr Q Int 1)

As in Ms G’s narrative the TAC, and Zackie Achmat specifically, are the protagonists to the antagonist of Nkhosazana Dlamini Zuma, the then Minister of Health. Furthermore they represent something ‘serious’, and ‘meaningful’, much more so than the campaign he had been working on. Interestingly Mr Q’s involvement with TAC is predated by an experience with student politics which had him become ‘disillusioned with politics’ for a number of years:

CK: And how did you get involved with TAC?
Mr Q: Well I actually that’s that’s an interesting story I was living in North America in 1999 I went through a long phase from 1990 through the mid-nineties of actually losing my interest in politics no no that’s actually wrong sorry I didn’t lose my interest in politics I became disillusioned with politics.
CK: Ok.
Mr Q: Um and I remember there was a particular incident which actually drove that which very much influenced my disillusionment and that was there was a strike on campus 1990 and I mean I considered myself by that time I considered myself to be quite left wing and uh pro the revolution, viva, amandla etcetera there was a strike on campus and it was just extremely ugly and I thought that the way the strikers behaved and the way the students supporting the strikers behaved was abominable.
CK: Mmm.
Mr Q: Uh and actually disillusioned my I became disillusioned with the left at that point and so and I became very peripherally involved with politics at that point very very and gradually became uninvolved in politics but was always interested and continually read up etcetera etcetera and then through the mid–1990s my interest started resurrecting or not my desire to become involved again and trying to understand I mean because I what happened was is that my worldview was shaken by that strike um I had a certain view like of I was probably I probably believed in socialist ideals at that point and my world view was completely shaken by what I saw and I realised that I hadn’t got things right so gradually it took a long time through the nineties to start re-establishing a world view that I felt consistent that I felt was consistent and that I felt comfortable with. (Mr Q Int 1)

152 At the time he was working on a campaign related to the US military presence in Iraq.
153 Nkhosazana Dlamini Zuma, the then Minister of Health.
Given his long standing and intensive engagement with the TAC and that this section of the conversation was predicated by me asking about how he joined the TAC, we can safely assume that the ‘world view’ that he felt was ‘consistent’ and that he was ‘comfortable’ with was one that he found with TAC. He distances himself from what he considers the ‘abominable’ behaviour of a certain strike, which leaves him feeling deeply disillusioned with politics in general. Interestingly, this ‘abominable’ politics has a similar script to that of ‘the Struggle’—‘pro the revolution, viva, amandla etcetera’. The ‘etcetera’ in this case is interesting, as it suggests a vacuousness to the language, not unlike when we say ‘blah blah blah’; disrupted by the ugliness of a strike that goes wrong ‘the Struggle’ narrative is no longer a legitimate option for his being political. It is testament to the power of this narrative, that for Mr Q this means no longer being political at all. That is until he encounters ‘the TAC Method’ narrative. In stark contrast to the vacuity of the ‘etcetera’ of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, this one offers him something more ‘meaningful’ and ‘serious’ and, importantly, a new script for being political.

Interestingly, TAC also becomes the political home of Mr H. Like Mr Q he started out inside a more traditional version of ‘the Struggle’ narrative. He was a member of SASCO, something he claims he ‘would never do now’ and took up battles like the language policy of Stellenbosch University:

Mr H: So at university I would uh my fights would be about the university’s language policy154 which I argued was designed to exclude black students you know things like that I did things uh which I would never do now like joining SASCO [laughs]=
CK: =[laughs]=
Mr H: =and kinda joining up with the black students because you know fight these fucking racists uh old guard whatever but without ever being a leader in campus politics
CK: So you were kinda politically involved before you got to TAC?
Mr H: Yes but in ways that I felt were not particularly effective. (Mr H Int 1)

His tone when he says ‘fight these fucking racists whatever’ is almost mocking (the ‘whatever’ has the same rhetorical function as the ‘etcetera’ of Mr Q’s comment, dismissing what precedes it), as if he is poking fun at a younger, more naïve, and less effective version of himself, performer of an outdated and ineffective politics. Consider a related account of a protest he was part of, also at Stellenbosch:

Mr H: And even later I mean those things manifested again like um this is probably in 2004 or something uh you may recall vaguely a controversy about the University of Stellenbosch posthumously awarding a an honorary doctorate to Bram Fischer155 and then there being a backlash from the conservative establishment=
CK: =yes I do=

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154 He was at Stellenbosch University. Stellenbosch University is one of the few Afrikaans medium universities in the country. Although dual-medium (English and Afrikaans), its continued used of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction is considered by some to be exclusionary to black students. It is this debate that Mr H is referring to.

155 Bram Fischer was a white Afrikaner lawyer, long standing member of the South African Communist Party, and prominent member of the anti-apartheid struggle. He lead the defence team at the Rivonia Treason Trail in 1963. He is often cited as the most iconic of white Afrikaner anti-apartheid activists. He died in 1974. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/abram-bram-fischer)
Mr H: = and I remember there was a convocation uh meeting in other words alumni um which has no formal decision making powers but it is the it’s established it’s a statutory body basically established by the founding statute of the university and uh and um an number of senior and influential alumni were pushing for a resolution condemning this decision and calling on council to reverse this decision to award this posthumous degree honorary degree a uh I remember going to this meeting joining up with a small number of other supporters of the degree and uh that was very much an emotional activity I mean we wore we wore red t-shirts with Bram Fischer’s face on it and I remember and we all jostled because to it’s a it’s a public meeting and huge forum so its kinda the chairperson gives uh a chance to speak to people who out their hands up so we were battling to get a chance to speak and when I did speak I made a fairly reasoned argument in defence of Bram Fischer and then ended it off by kind of screaming uh viva the spirit of comrade Bram Fischer and stuff and the small group of red shirted people would sort of echo the call amandla! And so on and this of course pissed off all these

CK: = [laughs]=

Mr H: = and shocked all of these uh [laughs] ou ballies terribly. Now that’s an example of a political activity that was purely driven by an emotional disgust so that that is what my politics was like before TAC and TAC helped me to achieve a greater maturity. (Mr H Int)

As with Mr Q ‘the Struggle’ script of ‘viva the spirit of comrade Bram Fischer’ and ‘amandla!’ (with associated wardrobe of ‘red shirts’), is not that which he would enact now. This is the language of an immature, ‘emotional’ politics, one associated with a teenage rebellion against the conservative establishment of his upbringing (‘resisting uh conservative and repressive forces’; and ‘we shocked all of these uh [laughs] ou ballies terribly’) and it is not unlike that which he associates with SASCO, and Mr Q associates with the strikers and student supporters that lead to his disillusion in politics. Like Mr Q, his entry into ‘the TAC Method’ narrative, however, marks an evolution for him, from ‘emotional’, young rebel to ‘mature’, reasoned and effective activist; and significantly an evolution from ‘the Struggle’.

‘The TAC Method’ narrative then, is one that is not only ubiquitous in the socio–political landscapes where these political identity formation projects are being rendered, but establishes a new morality play, where the heroes of ‘the Struggle’ become the new villains, and their scripts are rendered immature, emotional and ineffective. ‘The TAC Method’ morality play positions characters in the post-apartheid political landscape into a particular moral hierarchy, which confers and withdraws political legitimacy. Embedded in the above accounts are implications of authenticity, of what is ‘meaningful’, ‘serious’, ‘mature’ action in response to the most ‘pressing’ concerns of the time. Not unlike the appeal to ‘the Struggle’ narrative as a benchmark of what constitutes real, legitimate activism, so the ‘the TAC Method’ becomes the exemplar of legitimate, meaningful activism in the post-apartheid context, potentially displacing that of ‘the Struggle’.

156 Old men
2.2 ‘People say people I’m an activist because I wear an HIV Positive t–shirt’ – TAC as Exemplar of Post-apartheid Activism

Accounts like Mr Q and Mr H’s have implied the legitimacy of TAC over other organisations like SASCO in ‘serious’ struggles for social justice in post-apartheid South Africa. However, this delegitimisation of characters extends beyond the realm of student politics, described by the participants in the previous section, into the NGO sector in general. Although questions of legitimacy in this context have much to do with some of the ambiguity of character roles in the post-apartheid context, not unlike we saw earlier in this chapter, in some cases that illegitimacy is directly constructed to in relation to the ascendant legitimacy of the TAC. Ms T works in the NGO sector. Consider, her reflection:

Ms T: You do also see, because another big shift, you know, apartheid was not concerned with services to people. It was concerned with services to the iceberg of people, the very white iceberg of people= CK: =[chuckles]
Ms T: =the tip of the iceberg. Now with this task of government to deliver to a base beyond the wildest imaginings… well, they could imagine it, but beyond anything that the apartheid government tried to do. There’s a shift also in activism because a lot of the organisations that were the activist organisations delivering services on the sly and so on, are now paid by government, as we rightly should be, to deliver service. But now an organisation like Organisation 157 and you can name any number of NGOs that are service delivery organisations are tending to lose, and I don’t think Organisation is, their activist profile because they are now becoming more and more service oriented.
(Ms T Int 1)

Embedded in this account of ‘shift in activism’ across South Africa’s political transition, is an account of what activism actually is. Although she doesn’t include her own organisation amongst them, she feels that organisations like it, which are also paid by government to render services are ‘tending to lose… their activist profile because they are now becoming more and more service oriented’. There is ambiguity in Ms T’s account as she recognises that service delivery work is necessary and that, in fact, it is only right for government to pay organisations like the one she works for to assist with it. However, overall alignment with government seems to compromises one’s activist profile suggesting a definition of activism that is necessarily ‘adversarial’ to government. Consider how she reflects on the relationship of these organisations to what she calls the ‘TAC approach’ or ‘TAC methodology’:

Ms T: I do think we’re coming back maybe a little bit closer to, not the same thing, but to a form that is more adversarial, that is more willing to say like the whole TAC approach, no government, you’re wrong, and that TAC did you know, after years after nobody saying anything really loudly, and ja. When I was thinking about this discussion I was thinking about the Social Justice Coalition that’s been started, and thinking about the TAC methodology, and I suppose that is the social mobilisation that we have which is a vehicle started on a health issue and now deals with so, you know, so many of the realities. So that is something, I think we are shifting to a place that we are

157 Name of organisation Ms T worked at. Name of organisation withheld in to ensure participant anonymity.
coming back to it, and the magic, in fact, I shouldn’t say magic because it’s not magic, it’s more the fucking hard work of TAC and I believe of the Social Justice Coalition, is drawing on the experience of apartheid activism, of bringing it back, of saying we’ve messed around, necessarily, in the honeymoon phase. We did a lot of great things in the honeymoon phase, but we need to come back to it a bit again now. So I suppose I’m saying I don’t know enough of the detail, but I see less social mobilisation now, less organisation at community level into this huge structure. Obviously it’s changed, but you see that coming back in more through like the TAC, Social Justice Coalition, but also through smaller initiatives being more adversarial. (Ms T Int 1)

Unlike the NGOs she refers to in her the previous extract, the TAC is willing to say ‘No government, you’re wrong’. Like all the participants before her, Ms T invokes the morality play of the ‘wrong’ government and it’s valiant adversary, the TAC to define not only what ‘good activism’ is, but what activism is (as opposed to service delivery), in the post-apartheid context. Interestingly, she invokes ‘the Struggle’ narrative in order to do so, suggesting that the TAC have resurrected the spirit of the anti-apartheid movement ‘drawing on the experience of apartheid activism’ and ‘bringing it back’, and in so doing lending weight and legitimacy to what she refers to as ‘the whole TAC approach’. She also introduces a new character, the SJC, one of the ‘conceptual offspring of Zackie Achmat’ (Ms B Int 1). How she constructs the relationship between the organisations is what is significant. Just like the TAC is considered to have ‘translated’ (Squire, 2007) and ‘built on the foundations’ (Epstein, 1996) of the ‘traditions of resistance’ of the anti-apartheid struggle, so too she considers the SJC to be ‘drawing off the TAC methodology’ and following ‘the whole TAC approach’. In fact, she considers the whole of the demobilised and unorganised (‘I see less social mobilisation now, less organisation at community level’) NGO and CBO sector to be doing so, following where TAC lead (‘but you see that coming back in more through like the TAC Social Justice Coalition, but also through smaller initiatives being more adversarial’).

Thus, throughout these participant narratives, the TAC and Zackie Achmat, in particular, come to define not only what ‘good activism’ is but, in fact, what activism – period – is. Consider Dylan’s response to my opening question to him:

CK: And why is that you think I asked to speak to you for this project knowing what you know about it? What are my assumptions about you, do you think?
Dylan: Ok [laughs]=
Dylan: =[laughs]
Dylan: I am a member of the TAC or at least I was when I was at UCT so maybe you would’ve seen me wearing an HIV Positive t-shirt or something like that. People often say people often think I’m an activist because I you know they say they use the word activist if I wear a t-shirt like an HIV Positive t-shirt. (Dylan Int 1)

When I ask him why he thinks I asked to interview him on this topic, he answers because ‘I am a member of the TAC’ and ‘maybe you would’ve seen me wearing an HIV Positive t-shirt’. He goes onto say that ‘people often think I’m an activist because I you know they say they use the word activist if I wear a t-shirt like an HIV Positive t-shirt’. The implication of course is that being a member of the TAC or in fact, just wearing the
t-shirt is what defines one as an activist. This is implied, not only in the responses he gets from people in
general, but in his own response to my question. I didn’t even know he was a member of the TAC, and I’d
never seen him in HIV Positive t-shirt. I was interested in his cultural activism, but it his comparatively less
extensive involvement in TAC that becomes the reason why I might consider him an activist. He does go
onto problematise this ‘reading’ of his activism, when I ask him whether he considers himself to be an
activist:

CK: I’m trying to think if I have. I mean would you consider yourself an activist?
Dylan: Not in the true I dunno if you can say the truest sense, but not in the I dunno not in that not in
my definition I’d say of an activist who would be someone like Zackie Achmat or one of the people
who work with him you know somebody who’s kinda doing that kinda thing everyday you know
working um picketing working on campaigns and awareness projects and things like that I’d say that
that’d be somebody that I’d consider to be an activist. If somebody where to ask me are you an
activist I’d probably just say no because I feel like they’d find out I’m not doing those things and
they’d think I’m a fraud [laughs] so I would say no, ja. (Dylan Int 1)

However, his negation of his own activism occurs in relation to the fact that he isn’t like Zackie Achmat, or
‘one of the people who work with him’, who are activists in ‘the truest sense’. He relates this to the nature of
their activities (‘picketing, working on campaigns and awareness projects’), which represent more traditional
repertoires of political action, but it is also related to who is doing these activities. He does not, for example,
make reference any other organisations who also regularly engage in all these activities. Interestingly, he also
does not consider his cultural work as activism. In the same way that Mr X could only envision an activist as
occurring inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative, so too Dylan can only envision activism inside ‘the TAC Method’.

3. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined the contestation within and between two master narratives emerging from
participant accounts of their activism. The legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle persists powerfully through
the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ and positioning inside of this narrative lends legitimacy to these political
identity projects. However, what this legacy actually is, is highly contested. One of the most significant
features of ‘the Struggle’ narrative is the way in which its characters are being disrupted by the counter
narratives of the post-apartheid context. These counter narratives present the ANC, not as heroes of the
liberation movement, but as corrupt, ineffective bureaucrats. They present government as, not necessarily the
enemy, but both as the victorious democratic dispensation of the new South Africa and disappointingly
unconcerned with social justice.

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158 Seen him in an HIV Positive shirt.
In the wake of all this confusion, where who the ‘bad guys’ are is agonisingly unclear, emerges a new morality play where the lines are a little more clearly drawn: ‘the TAC Method’. The ascendance of ‘the TAC Method’ beyond mere example of post-apartheid politics, into exemplar of post-apartheid politics, suggests an important counter narrative. ‘The TAC Method’ inserts much of the ambiguity experienced in relation to the ‘the Struggle’, it says to the celebrated democratic government, heroes of the liberation movement, ‘You’re wrong’ and provides a new hero in the form of Zackie Achmat. It also, however, challenges the very notion of what the ‘tradition of resistance’ and legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle is. By delegitimising the traditional heroes of ‘the Struggle’ (specifically, the ANC) in the present, ‘the TAC Method’, not only provides a new morality play, but a more authentic version of the old one, i.e. it sets itself up as the authentic embodiment of ‘the Struggle’ in post-apartheid South Africa. In this way it lends itself the legitimacy and power that ‘the Struggle’ narrative still holds in the political imagination of South Africans and indeed, the world.
Chapter 9
Accessing ‘the Struggle’: Navigating Family & Race

Mr H: An important question when looking at activism is the transmission of certain traditions of activism and certain traditions of thought from between generations of activists. (Mr H Int 1)

The previous chapter traced two of the major narratives that participants draw on in the construction of their activist identities; the morality plays of ‘the Struggle’ and ‘the TAC method’. In doing so it examined the implied legitimacy and authenticity of various modes of social/political action and their related protagonists, and how participants position themselves in relation to these. What becomes clear in examining this process is that although participants draw on these (similar) narrative resources provided by their historical and cultural context in order to access particular traditions of resistance, they can have very different relationships to them. Chapter Seven explored how informal networks not only make participation opportunities available, but socialise individuals into particular iodiocultures and traditions of resistance (Passy, 2001). Considering the two previous chapters together, it becomes apparent that the varied relationships that participants display in relation to the narratives they draw on (in Chapter Eight) do not happen individually, they are mediated by social relationships. Thus ‘social movement spill-over’ (Epstein, 1996) does not occur through some disembodied, amorphous process; it occurs through people.

This chapter homes in on the ways in which participants access and position themselves as protagonists in the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, as a means to access the political legitimacy this positioning affords. Like myself, and as seen in Chapter Seven, most participants have a story of access. Although all the participants in this study currently share the same social and political network, they by no means share their origins. As such their stories of access are characterised by different features. The two main features, which distinguish these stories are first, the extent to which participants’ families were involved in the anti-apartheid struggle and second, positionality, most notably race. Regardless of these distinctions in biography, however, their access to ‘the Struggle’ narrative is always mediated by another person or people, who’s function was/is to ‘transmit’ ‘certain traditions of activism and certain traditions of thought’ (Mr H Int 1). Naturally depending on family relations and positionality, who, where and what those other people are, will vary. The rest of this chapter follows these stories of access, as they are inflected through experiences of family and race, and traces how parents, teachers, friends and heroes lay the path that leads each participant follows to their politics.

1. Family & Access: Considering the ‘Outsiders’ & ‘Struggle Babies’

Studies on political socialisation have long acknowledged the importance of family in this process (for example Gelman, 1990; Ichilov, 1988; Keniston, 1968; McAdam, 1982). However, the participants in this
study are characterised by two very different types of family. On the one hand, are the ‘struggle babies’, participants whose parents and families were active in the anti-apartheid struggle to varying degrees. Some had parents or other family who were in prison and one respondent’s godfather was a Rivonia treason trialist. Their transmitters of traditions of activism are almost singularly their parents and family. On the other hand are the ‘outsiders’, those who grew up in apolitical and largely conservative families and environments. Similar to the dissidents in Louw-Potgieter’s (1988) study and the young men of the End Conscription Campaign (Conway, 2012), their transmitters of traditions of activism are mostly teachers, lecturers and friends. Despite these differences both the ‘outsiders’ and ‘struggle babies’ have complex and conflicted relationships to the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, and just about all of this conflict relates to the complex rendering of their own political legitimacy. I will consider each group in turn.

1.1 ‘I didn’t learn from the big shots’: The Outsiders

Clear from the beginning of the ‘outsiders’ accounts, is that actual social relationships with people who were active in the anti-apartheid struggle, make access to ‘the Struggle’ narrative easier. This is not just through the way in which the idioculture of the anti-apartheid struggle is more readily available as a resource for accumulating knowledge and identity construction (in much the same way that being a member of a social movement organisation or collective of some from, provides the resources and means for identity formation), but also in the way that inside the dominance of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, these relationships confer social and cultural capital, and therefore political legitimacy. However, not all ‘outsiders’ navigate their outsideness in the same way. Some find ways to access ‘the Struggle’ narrative as protagonists, while others challenge its dominance by delegitimising its characters. Some do a bit of both. Consider the stories of Ms S, Ms T, Mr M and Ms Y.

Like myself, Ms S grew up in a largely apolitical family. Her first exposure to the idioculture provided by ‘the Struggle’ was during university, not through her studies, but through her friends and their parents:

CK: Do you know who where you get your politics?
Ms S: I think it was when in Honours I lived with Friend1159 and Friend2 I can’t remember her surname and my other friend Friend3 um was around allot and ja and another friend Friend4 and like I have a lot of friends whose parents were involved in the struggle and were like are very like high up and stuff now like in government and higher education um law whatever like know all these people you read about in the newspapers and ja I think it was I often being around them I think like was when I first kinda started it was only really in Honours that I started looking outside of my own little world.
CK: Ja. Were they new friends or had they always been there?
Ms S: Kinda been there but didn’t know them so well so from living with them and spending time with them and having these conversations and like you know meeting their parents and all that kinda stuff.

159 Names of friends. Withheld for sake of anonymity.
CK: Ja. That’s interesting.
Ms S: Because there are people our age who’ve grown up with this stuff around them all the time.
CK: There are yes.
Ms S: And I was like wow that was cool.

She credits the ‘often being around them’, ‘spending time with them’, ‘having these conversations’ and ‘meeting their parents’ (who are fairly high profile) with the start of her ‘looking outside her little world’, i.e. she experiences a counter narrative that provides a bigger world than that she is accustomed to and expands the possibilities of her identity beyond its current boundaries. It is almost a revelation to her that there are people ‘who’ve grown up with this stuff around them all the time’, whilst she had to ‘scrounge for a book to read’. In fact, Ms S and I share a joke about the worlds were both socialised into, one where finding a politically interesting book was difficult:

Ms S: I mean going to people’s houses and their parent’s bookshelves make you drool=
CK: =ah fuck I know=
Ms S: =and you’re like you’re fucking kidding me you grew up with this shit your whole life=
CK: =[laughs]=
Ms S: =I remember like scrounging the house to find like a book to read.
CK: =Ja like Readers Digest Condensed novels or Wilbur Smith.160
Ms S: =I read a couple of Wilbur Smiths [laughs].
CK: =So did I I was desperate [laughs]=
Ms S: =[laughs loudly] (Ms S Int 2)

What ‘the Struggle’ is not, is Wilbur Smith. For both Ms S and I politics, and in particular that of ‘the Struggle’ is associated with ‘people you read about in the newspapers’ and ‘bookshelves [that] make you drool’. However, by poking fun at the apolitical and non-intellectual culture we were brought up in, we collectively distance ourselves from it and in so doing position ourselves, if not inside, certainly closer to the world that our friends grew up in, and closer to ‘the Struggle’.

Ms T is another person who does not come from a political background. She is one of the participants with a more feminist orientation and recognises that she has a particular ‘style’ and ‘approach’, which she has learnt this through reading feminist literature. Before she ‘hit the gender sector’, her most influential community were the women at Rape Crisis in the mid-1990s. She makes the point that she ‘didn’t learn from the big shots’, who she defines as ‘people in our struggle’:

Ms T: So, who did I learn from?
CK: Ja.
Ms T: Ja no, definitely the styles and the approaches I’ve picked up there was reading, but not hugely, you know, like feminist stuff before I kind of hit the gender sector, as it were. So when I was still studying and stuff, that was but I didn’t learn, I think a lot of most well, I’m assuming actually, that a lot of the people you speak to who are a bit older maybe, would have perhaps learnt from

160 Wilbur Smith is a Zambian born, international best-selling novelist whose works usually involve stories set in colonial Africa.
people in our struggle. I didn’t learn from the big shots. You know I didn’t I can’t name drop at all about anyone. I think I’ve learnt from people who have learnt from or with, and most definitely the exposure at Rape Crisis in the mid-90s, because it was still a highly politicised place, and the women there at the time were engaging in activism in a big way. So lots of different people. (Ms T Int 2)

‘The Struggle’ remains the dominant morality play, its protagonists the ‘the big shots’. Although Ms T would certainly have been exposed to the ‘big shots’ of the gender sector during her time at Rape Crisis, they are not the ‘big shots’, who populate the ‘the Struggle’ narrative. There’s an implied hierarchy between struggles, with those activists in the gender sector, being not quite as important as those in the anti-apartheid struggle [which mirrors the point made by feminist analysts like Hassim (2006) about the delegitimisation of feminism as a ‘model of liberation’ (p. 160)]. As such she feels she needs to qualify her political education by associating those she learnt with, with people who were in the anti-apartheid struggle. In order for her to be legitimately political she needs to access ‘the Struggle’ narrative, and she does this by carving clear connections between herself and the people who populate it. However, she is also defiant of this dominance. The reference to ‘big shots’ and ‘name dropping’, is subtly derisive and her assertion that it was ‘still a highly politicised place’, in spite of the fact that there were no ‘big shots’ present, and that ‘the women there at the time were engaging in activism in a big way’ is an attempt to define the political legitimacy of this place, and her education, outside of ‘the Struggle’ narrative.

The subtle disdainfulness expressed by Ms T is much more boldly asserted by Mr M. Like both Ms S and Ms T, he learnt his politics though his friends and reading. Unlike Ms S and Ms T he does not position himself inside the narrative of ‘the Struggle’ to claim political legitimacy. On the contrary, in a move similar to ‘the TAC method’, he casts doubts over the legitimacy of the characters which populate ‘the Struggle’ narrative, in this case the children of those who were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. In an opposite move to Ms T and Ms S who access political legitimacy through their relationships to these characters, he considers these relationships as actually undermining this legitimacy:

Mr M: I’m interested in the separation between those who have been in the struggle and those who are not, and your subject group, because there is a layer of people that have had their parents in it and that have taken political lessons, good and bad, from their parents and are doing the politics in similar way to their parents, or in opposition to their parents. There’s also a nepotistic link where people use the politics in such a way, because they know, they know, they know, which can be quite intoxicifying sometimes, those links, and can disrupt things, like democracy in a group. But, so then you’ve also got another layer like me who don’t, I’ve learnt from some people that are friends, but I haven’t learnt from my parents. They weren’t politically involved at all, so I’ve got no, and half my family is fucked up. So I’ve got a fucked up half the family and I’ve got like problems that come with that. My family is stuffed. So there’s that element, there’s politics just didn’t happen. So a lot of the stuff I’ve learnt, I’ve learnt through others, but by myself. I haven’t been taught it by my family. Sometimes you get people from that level who are politically aware in such a way that they engage in certain things. Sometimes you have some who are opposed so they might say if their parents were in the struggle here and were in a communist element, they might retort in an anarchic way. So they become
anarchists in it. That’s what they have taken from their parents and become Marxists, or Unionists, or something. So, um I don’t like that [chuckles]=

CK: =[laughs]
Mr M: Partly because we should all know about politics, we should all learn how to do politics. But it’s coveted by some. (Mr M Int 1)

He makes a clear distinction between people like himself, a ‘layer like me who don’t, I’ve learnt from some people that are friends, but I haven’t learnt from my parents’ (who are likely to be characters, like Ms S and T, positioned outside ‘the Struggle’ narrative), and ‘a layer of people that have had their parents’ (and who are automatically positioned inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative). Although he recognises that we ‘all learn how to do politics’ and in fact, that we ‘should’ do so, he is very critical of what he considers to be the ‘coveting’ of this politics by some. In the case of the children of struggle activists, it is a politics he considers too closely mediated through their parents, resulting in their simply ‘doing the politics in similar way to their parents, or in opposition to their parents’. In other words, their politics is more informed by tradition and convention (‘the way’ politics is done), than a thoughtful engagement of the issues. More problematic than this is what he considers to be ‘nepotistic link[s]’ which sometimes ‘and can disrupt things, like democracy in a group’. He doesn’t give an example of these ‘nepotistic links’ and how they have played out in his experience, but in a context where being positioned inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative so powerfully lends legitimacy and weight to one’s politics, those who have immediate links with the actual ‘big shots’ who populate that narrative and who by virtue of their birth have been positioned inside that narrative their whole life, will inevitably carry more social and cultural capital, which may very well ‘disrupt democracy’. Both of these points serve to undermine the political (if not social) legitimacy of the characters from ‘the Struggle’ narrative, and in so doing legitimate his own. He is not positioned within this problematic cast of characters who engage unthinking politics and disrupt democracy through their ‘nepotistic’ relationships. On the contrary he has not ‘learnt through others’ but ‘by myself’.

Ms Y provides a similar account of being outside the social networks generated by the ‘political connections’ of having been ‘in the trenches in 1976’\textsuperscript{161}. Her experience of outsideness is more acute than Ms T’s though, reflecting an experience of more active exclusion:

Ms Y: I’m not really totally embraced and I but I think that’s got to do actually also with just the whole struggle struggle culture uh which is which is quite um uh exclusionary. There’s an exclusionary aspect there that you have to have been in the trenches in 1976 otherwise when I was six years old otherwise um otherwise it you’re not you’re not trusted basically. I think it seems to and maybe it makes sense maybe it makes sense given our terrible history maybe it makes sense total sense that you as a white person won’t just be embraced but the fact is it’s not a very pleasant experience of course. So even if you if you feel that your that you’re coming with um you know you’re coming to contribute to social transformation you’re making yourself available because you want to transform power relations when it comes to men and women and then you feeling that you’re

\textsuperscript{161} A reference to the 1976 student protests.
being blocked or certain spaces are not you’re not allowed in or whatever because you’re not a cadre\textsuperscript{162} you don’t you don’t have the necessary political connections and all of that. Ja because and I think because of my I’m an outsider in every way I’m an outsider everywhere. (Ms Y Int 2)

Although Ms Y constructs herself as ‘an outsider everywhere’, and precedes this account with a conversation about how she feels equally frustrated in feminist and leftist circles, given that leftists generally fail to be feminists and vice versa, there is something quite particular about her outsideness in this instance. It is, similar to Mr M, a function of her lack of a social network and ‘political connections’, which inside ‘struggle culture’ translates into political legitimacy and access. It is \textit{not} a function of her willingness to participate, it is a function of her not being ‘trusted’ and therefore ‘blocked’ from meaningful participation in ‘social transformation’. Although she recognises the power of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, she is clearly not positioned inside it; she was not ‘in the trenches of 1976’ (an iconic event in ‘the Struggle’ story) and she is not a ‘cadre’ (an iconic character). She is also not black. Inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative Ms Y invokes, the ‘good guys’ were black and the ‘bad guys’ were white, and it therefore ‘makes sense total sense that you as a white person won’t just be embraced’. However, as with Mr M, this does not serve to undermine her own sense of her political legitimacy. Instead, in a similar move to his, she undermines the legitimacy of ‘the Struggle’ narrative’s characters by suggesting the disruption of democracy in their exercise of the related idioculture, claiming her own as a white, non–cadre who was six years old in 1976, through her desire to ‘transform power relations’.

Thus ‘the outsiders’ employ varying tactics to claim their political legitimacy relative to the morality play of ‘the Struggle’. They either find a way to position themselves in it or find a way to delegitimise its protagonists. Sometimes they do both. Whichever they choose their activism is always in reference to it.

On the other side of this equation are those people who \textit{did} learn from the ‘big shots’. Not only did they learn from them, but some of them were raised by them. These are the ‘struggle babies’ and unlike Ms S, Ms T, Mr M and Ms Y, they were deeply socialised into the idioculture of the anti-apartheid struggle. As such their political identities have been constructed from deep within ‘the Struggle’ narrative, and their negotiation of these identities is very much a negotiation of their changing relationship to this narrative – from the \textit{inside}. Significantly, this negotiation occurs in relation to their, sometimes difficult, relationships with their parents. In the ‘struggle baby’ narratives we see a deep entanglement of personal and political stories. It is to these stories that we now turn.

\textsuperscript{162} The Oxford dictionary defines ‘cadre’ as ‘a group of activists in a communist or other revolutionary organization’ (http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/cadre). In South African political discourse it typically refers to people who were members of the ANC, and especially the armed struggle, during the anti-apartheid struggle.
1.2 ‘I was really disappointed when it all ended’: The Struggle Babies

Like most ‘struggle babies’ Ms W traces her moral career as a socially and politically interested person very far back. Ms W was ‘always in contact’, as child she was part of a group of friends who were ‘these kids of like, whose parents were like socially active’:

Ms W: I was always part of a particular community where, and my parents being, and my mom at least being a non-white person being involved in protesting and that kind of thing and her friends were, so we were these kids of like, whose parents were like socially active, who sent us to these like activities like Rap against Racism, so I always was in contact, I mean I can’t say I never, I can’t go and say this is a particular point. (Ms W Int 1)

Interestingly, Ms W like Ms Y in the previous section, racialises this access, her mother being ‘non-white’ featuring as a mediating factor in why her mother is involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. Ms P, on the other hand is white, but she unlike Ms Y and like Ms W, positions herself inside the narrative of ‘the Struggle’ (‘that kind of history that I’ve taken on and like linked it to my identity’). She also racialises this positioning, citing the fact that she has a black African name, as evidence of her parents’ involvement:

CK: So I suppose the question is then how do you come to do what you do. Like where did it start?
Ms P: That’s such a tricky question.
CK: I know [laughs]=
Ms P: =[laughs] There was this one moment [says jokingly].
CK: [laughs] Ja that’s the one!
Ms P: Ok well I can tell you my parents were anti-apartheid activists so I’ve grown up in a family with that history of activism. My name’s Ms P, my godfather was a Rivonia trialist so I have that kind of history that I’ve taken on and like linked it to my identity. So I’ve had parents that’ve always spoken to me about inequality they’ve always encouraged me to read they’ve always challenged me intellectually and have brought me up to be socially and politically conscious. (Ms P Int 1)

For Ms P and Ms W who they are, their identities, are ‘linked to this history’. They are related to the ‘big shots’ (‘my godfather was a Rivonia trialist’) and they have ‘always (been) part of a particular community’. Theirs is a very different positioning to ‘the Struggle’ narrative to that of ‘outsiders’. They have never been outside this narrative, and as such have never had to access it, like Ms S, through books and friends, or Ms T through teachers. By reason of their biographies they have always been part of it. However, this does not mean that their relationship to its cast of characters is uncomplicated and unconflicted.

Being more centrally positioned may confer more social and cultural capital, but it also means being more entangled with some of the ‘big shots’, rendering the political identity formation project a very personal and sometimes conflicted one. For many of these ‘struggle babies’, much of their negotiation of this tradition, and where they position themselves within it has to do with their negotiation of their relationships with their parents. Although this is of course also true for those of us who do not have struggle activist parents or
families (Mr M for example positions himself in direct opposition to his family – ‘They weren’t politically involved at all, so I’ve got no and half my family is fucked up’), for the ‘struggle babies’, their relationship to ‘the Struggle’ is mediated directly through their relationship to their parents, and this is not always an easy one. Mr X, Mr E and Mr V are cases in point.

Mr X, like Ms P and Ms W, identifies his family and socialisation as ‘the single most important influencing factor’ in his activism and declares that ‘it definitely informs what (he) believes and where (he’s) going’. Like Ms P and Ms W, he too has ‘always been exposed’ to ‘that kind of mentality’:

CK: Ja. So where do those beliefs come from?
Mr X: You know it’s very difficult, I’ve thought about it. And I don’t actually know [laughs]=
CK: =[laughs] I can see you’ve thought about it yes.
Mr X: [laughs] It’s like people ask me the question and I’m like you know what I actually don’t know. You know I it definitely comes from at least partially from my family in the sense that and this will link to some other stuff we gonna talk about but uh because my father was very involved in the apartheid struggle.
CK: Ok.
Mr X: So I’ve always been exposed to that kind of mentality and way of thinking and issues of fighting for other people who can’t fight for themselves have always been around at least when I was younger and during the pre-1994 period that was that was and in fact I mean I um if I can say I sacrificed but the relationship my relationship with my father was sacrificed to an extent because of that, and we aren’t that close today because of the fact that during my formative years he wasn’t around and he wasn’t around because he was fighting the cause for whatever… And initially there was no link between that and between my growing up and or at least I didn’t think there was a link, but as I kinda grew further and developed further and grew a bit more and started thinking more about things um and particularly in terms of the research that I wanted to do um which was very TRC related stuff.
CK: Ok alright.
Mr X: And the more I thought about it the more I’m like ok there’s actually some kind of link here between who I am and what I’m doing and in a sense it’s very linked to my father’s activism and it’s kinda almost a way of identifying with him I think because obviously I can’t take part in the apartheid struggle because there’s no apartheid I can’t be an activist in that sense but I can do this, because at least I think again it relates back to the relationship was not very solidified back then that now trying to find ways to perhaps make a link and to identify with him a little bit um there’s definitely work and doing TRC related work and I um the work was with victims and looking at victims things from a victim’s perspective and again that was taking a slightly social justice slant to it, looking at well the TRC is now finished but we still living in poverty. (Mr X Int 1)

Mr X’s relationship with his father is a defining factor in his decision to do the work he does, ‘what I’m doing and in a sense it’s very linked to my father’s activism and it’s kinda almost a way of identifying with him’. It is his way of forging a connection with his father, whom he experienced as ‘absent’ during his childhood, and his work on the TRC specifically, is an access to his father’s world. Although he has had access to this narrative his whole life, given that it is embodied in his father, it is a little distant to him. It is only by actively stepping into the character of activist in ‘the Struggle’ narrative (even though ‘I can’t be an activist in that
sense but I can do this’) that he can create a ‘link’ to and generate a relationship his father, ‘to find ways to perhaps make a link and to identify with him a little bit’.

Mr E has a similarly aspirational relationship, but with his mother. Like the previous ‘struggle babies’ the narrative of ‘the Struggle’ ‘has always been something that I think resonated with me, since I was young.’ For Mr E, however, his access to this narrative through ‘stories she (his mother) would tell me um of being involved in the struggle’ and more specifically the contemplation of his mother’s relationship with her father, one which was not unlike his relationship with his father, a contemplation which is catalysed by the discovery of a letter, written by his mother to her father, while she was in prison after being arrested by the security police for her political action. Not only does the letter shed light on his mother’s relationship with her father, but it provides a powerful and intimate access into a particular logic and tradition of social justice for Mr E:

Mr E: I think what really interested me in what she’d been involved in, um, and again to think like I mean she was a year younger than what I would have been now, and I, I tried to imagine myself writing a similar letter to any of my parents in perhaps the same time, and I wonder if, if it would be the same, if I would be in the same position, but she wrote there about how she, things have come to a point where she’s recognised that the fate of the majority of people in the country should lie in their hands and that there is no way that she can stand aside and watch the continued oppression of her people. And in very clear and concise terms had just explained to him that she knows that he probably won’t understand, um, that it’s probably gonna mean things, it’s gonna have harsh consequences the choices that she’s now making, um but that she feels that on a principled basis she, there is a need for a firm commitment towards actively addressing these issues... the whole concept of selflessness, of somebody acting on a principled basis of recognising that there is something bigger than them, um, and to kind of give yourself over to this bigger principle, and this bigger idea. Um has always been something that I think resonated with me, since I was young. (Mr E Int 1)

This is not a grand narrative of impersonal heroes and faceless enemies. It is of a father and daughter estranged, a story he can relate to given his estranged relationship with his father, and it is the story if his mother. It allows him to imagine himself into the identity script of the anti-apartheid activist, ‘I tried to imagine myself writing a similar letter to any of my parents in perhaps the same time, and I wonder if, if it would be the same, if I would be in the same position’, with a level of detail and clarity that is just not available to someone like Mr M or Ms T. His mother’s story is located deep within the larger narrative of ‘the Struggle’ in which she is one of the heroes ‘selfless’, ‘principled’, ‘committed’. Like Mr X he sees himself as standing in the legacy of his mother, not so much to ‘fill her shoes’ but to ‘surpass’ her generations’ work. Like Mr X, exactly what this might entail proves a little problematic, given that he has an ‘interest in being perhaps a guerrilla of sorts’ there is no longer an armed struggle to fight. Like Mr X he will simply have to do what he can. He recognises that it is not only his mother’s ‘ideas of revolution’ and stories of ‘running around pamphleteering’, that have been the catalysts for his actions. There is a deeply personal investment for him in stepping into mother’s legacy. His mother is ‘probably the person that I respect the most in my life’ and he
really just doesn’t want to disappoint her – ‘you probably just do it cause you don’t want to disappoint your mom’:

Mr E: But honestly, if I had to bring it back to your original question, um, I do think that ideas of revolution, hearing stories of my mom, being seventeen, running around pamphleteering, and you know the, I guess the excitement of it, um, being young at that time, like, and, and the, the idea of, the idea of being involved in a dangerous, and yet if successful a fulfilling mission of sorts was always so appealing to me, and ja, I think just like through reading, particularly through a lot of ah, socialist ideas, I think like that, that’s ah, it comes through very strongly in my mother’s teaching, I guess, um, informally so to speak. Um, and then obviously a lot of the literature in my house, a lot of it is Marxist and Socialist stuff, ah, anti, all in the very left wing type literature which I mean, I mean I look at my mom now and she’s probably the person that I respect the most in my life, um, that, there’s somewhat of a, um, a need for me to not fill her shoes, um, but, I mean something that she’s always told me that she believes about generations is that this, your generation will not have done its job if the one that comes afterwards does not surpass. Um, and that for me is something that’s always struck, I think like, I mean, I’ve already got this interest in being perhaps a guerrilla of sorts um, and then to say that well, I know that what’s happened before and there’s quite a lot that I would have to do if I really believed that, you know, I need to surpass that in some way. Um, so I would think that a lot of it has got to do with my upbringing, I mean, and my understanding of where my mom comes from um, and perhaps even I can see that as a direct comparison if I look at my mom and me and my brother’s for example and the conditions that she’s come out of, I mean where she is today, that’s been even a struggle in itself. I mean she’s a single women with three kids coming out of a, coming out of one of the poorest communities in the Western Cape and um, has not only been able to survive, but has also been able to make a really meaningful contribution to society, and that for me has always been something that that’s inspiring. I’m sure that some, somebody could do some psychoanalysis and say that, you probably just do it cause you don’t want to disappoint your mom [laughs]=  
CK:  =[laughs]=  
Mr E:  =[laughs] I’m sure that’s got something to do with it, somewhere along the line, but it’s not, I think that. (Mr E Int 1)

But Mr E’s mother is not simply the role model revolutionary who provides vivid accounts of the anti-apartheid struggle. She is also the inspirational figure whose upward social mobility has ‘been even a struggle in itself’ and ‘not only been able to survive, but has also been able to make a really meaningful contribution to society’, and she is his teacher if only ‘informally’. Mr E’s is one of those houses where Ms S and I would ‘drool’ over the bookshelves, the presence of ‘a lot of the literature in my house, a lot of it is Marxist and Socialist stuff, ah anti, all in the very left wing type literature’ the artefacts of a culture he is deeply inculcated with, and a narrative he is very much a character in, albeit in a different way to his mother.

Mr V’s is also a vivid account of an upbringing deeply inside the narrative of the ‘the Struggle’. However, unlike Mr E and Mr X whose accounts are almost romanticised, his narrative reveals an ambivalence, which arises from what seems almost like a resentment of his perceived passivity in his socialisation which refers to as ‘ignorance’ and ‘just accepting’:

Mr V: In many ways I’m as ignorant as the generation before my father’s generation because it’s only recently that I’ve started to read and to understand the ideology I’ve been born into. Uh I just accepted things you know. (Mr V Int1)
He shares an account of something, which happened when he was a child to illustrate his point:

Mr V: In Zimbabwe my father takes me into the garden and points to the garden and says here there’re arms buried here. Now you know my godfather I knew a lot of people who were amputees I just grew up a lot of people it was the world I grew up in um and you even as a youngster you know you can’t not see propaganda that says the terrorists that did this that did that da da da da da but you love your dad you trust your dad you know completely and what your dad says you believe him the rest of the world what the rest of the world says is this is terrorism and what the rest of the world says and you like know. You know my father’s plan for me was to go into the MK and I was really disappointed when it all ended you know. What I mean there was you know it was clear like as a little kid Mandela arrives and there we are protesting to welcome him you know that kind of a life. And to cut a long story short when he said there were arms buried there I literally thought arms. I remember as a little kid going quiet and thinking why would there be arms buried? And all these grotesque things going through my mind like what about the rest of the body? Why arms? Why did they bury arms there? I remember thinking you know maybe there’s something bad about this ANC, maybe you know, why would they bury arms? Because of course I didn’t know they meant guns. I woulda been happy with guns it wouldn’t have been a big deal but I thought arms. I couldn’t look those family friends in their faces again, because like why bury arms grim thing like you know I liked at the ground thinking there’d be fingers sticking out like [laughs]. (Mr V Int 1)

Like Mr E, the opportunity no longer exists for him to be a guerrilla fighter or in MK. Like both Mr X and Mr E he will need to find a different way to enact the script so powerfully provided by ‘the Struggle’ narrative through his relationship with his father, ‘my father’s plan for me was to go into the MK’. This leaves him without a script and no stage, so much so that he ‘was really disappointed when it all ended’.

However, even as a child he experiences some ambivalence about the characters that populate this narrative, through the confusion of what his father means by ‘arms’, which throws into doubt who the ‘good guys’ and who the ‘bad guys’ are in this morality tale he has been socialised into (‘I remember thinking you know maybe there’s something bad about this ANC, maybe you know, why would they bury arms?’). This confusion occurs in the context of a counter narrative to ‘the Struggle’, that he encounters outside his family influence; that the ANC are, in fact, terrorists, not freedom fighters. These doubts are, however, assuaged through his relationship with his father, one characterised by love and trust: ‘but you love your dad you trust your dad you know completely and what your dad says you believe him the rest of the world what the rest of the world says is this is terrorism and what the rest of the world says’. Thus even in the face of a powerful counter narrative and the uncertainty it engenders, his deep embeddedness is ensured by his relationship with his father.

His ambivalence towards the extent to which he is socialised into this particular idioculture continues, and as it does so it translates into a story about access. His access to the Cuban revolution, and Marxism is not like Ms S, Ms T, Mr M and I’s, through books, but like Mr E, through his life (‘I grew up knowing Cuba’). As for Mr E books come after the fact. But again for Mr V this ‘moulding by society’ is a ‘blind following’, ‘lazy’
and lacking in agency and choice ‘I had this I didn’t have any knowledge and I didn’t make that decision to I grew up in it’:

Mr V: I think you know we are moulded by society and it’s like I mean I grew up knowing Cuba. Know in that you know like I grew you like that and then it just so happens that when I read and I where I get to a point know where I read books on Cuba where I’m more informed about the ideology which should’ve happened when I was fifteen or younger but I got lazy and now I’m twenty–five and suddenly I’m reading and learning about the ideology that I’ve just blindly followed like your Americans follow capitalism like it’s the Holy Gospel. At the end of the day I followed communism like it’s the Holy Gospel and even get into arguments with people but I didn’t really have anything to back my argument I was just like not properly. I had enough I didn’t know much about Karl Marx I didn’t know much about I mean I just knew that communism was where everyone was equal whereas capitalism which is not like this. So and for I had this I didn’t have any knowledge and I didn’t make that decision to I grew up in it am I making sense? (Mr V Int 1)

What this immersion translates into is an ease of access (‘so it it was easy for me’) which he associates with a less authentic politics (‘That’s where the revolutionaries lie’):

Mr V: Uh so when I read and when I when I started looking into when I got to know more about the world. You know it supported the fact of my beliefs so it it was easy for me you know whereas what would’ve happened if I’d grown up and I started reading and I realised all the things I believed up to now are different and contradict and my whole family my whole everybody I know is different to me? That’s where the revolutionaries lie. Am making sense? Now you can’t control you know there may be revolutionaries who grew up in it as well you know your Thabo Mbeki’s, Govan’s\textsuperscript{163} son you know you know a lot of people the Sisulus\textsuperscript{164} and people who had like the whole family who was kinda involved. They’re there but you uh there were also people particularly the whites during that time when you like look into you’re like jeez how does somebody, take Bram Fisher for example, how does someone grow up uh being like his grandfather was the Prime Minister you know like how do you grow up in this strong solid Afrikaans family and pretty much launch Umkhonto we Sizwe yourself, because that’s what he did pretty much. And how do you do that like you know that is amazing, you know am I making sense? Your decision in life to be liberal or left wing that’s interesting it’s very interesting it’s quite revolutionary you know uh compared to the generations and the people around you who are not. You can you should ask yourself what made you change? (Mr V Int 1)

For Mr V being immersed in ‘the Struggle’ narrative his whole life makes it ‘easy’ for him, and therefore, according to him, less of a ‘revolutionary’, than someone like Bram Fischer, Mr M, or even me. Mr V’s construction of people who did not grow up inside of ‘the Struggle’ narrative as ‘more revolutionary’, like Ms T’s accounts of her feminist politics without the ‘big shots’, and Mr M’s account of his independent political learning without the ‘nepotistic connections’, in some way feeds into these ‘outsiders’ accounts which subtly delegitimise the politics of those positioned so centrally in ‘the Struggle’. Thus as his earlier account of his family’s ‘lukewarm response’ to his work in refugee and immigrant rights attests to, even though he is so

\textsuperscript{163} Referring to Govan Mbeki, who was Thabo Mbeki’s father and a prominent member of the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.

\textsuperscript{164} Referring to the family of, most famously Walter Sisulu, who was a prominent member of the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle.
deeply positioned inside the narrative of ‘the Struggle’, which is inextricably entangled with personal relationships, his appeal to the narrative remains ambivalent.

This section examined the very different relationships some participants have to ‘the Struggle’, and the subsequently very different ways in which they access it. It has examined primarily the difference between ‘outsiders’, who have no familial ties to the anti-apartheid struggle, and ‘struggle babies’ who do, and how these ties are a powerful mediating factor in the extent to which and how participants locate themselves inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative. With that said, location inside the narrative does not suggest an uncomplicated relationship to its characters, and both ‘outsiders’ and ‘struggle babies’ have ambivalent relationships to them. As Andrews (2007) reminds us new generations do not simply take up historical narratives in linear and predictive ways. Rather there is an active rearticulation of these narratives as the new generation position themselves agentically within the plot lines and in relation to the cast of characters it has inherited. This section has demonstrated that how this generation positions themselves in the historical narrative of ‘the Struggle’ is, as asserted by scholars of collective identity, very much mediated by the people surrounding them; their teachers, mentors, friends and parents, the ‘transmitters’ of this narrative.

However, it is not only social networks and relationships, which mediate this access and positioning. Another defining feature of both ‘outsider’ and ‘struggle baby’ stories is that positionality, especially race and ethnicity, mediate how and where they position themselves in the ‘the Struggle’ narrative. Consider Ms W’s earlier account in the chapter ‘so I was always part of a particular community where, and my parents being, and my mom at least being a non-white person being involved in protesting and that kind of thing’ (Ms W Int 1). Recall Ms Y’s sense that ‘given our terrible history maybe it makes sense total sense that you as a white person won’t just be embraced (Ms Y, Int 1). Recall from an earlier chapter Ms G’s comment that ‘SASCO and ANC Youth League and also in Young Communist League, um, (are) mostly black students’ (Ms G Int 1), suggesting that this racialised history of participation persists. The following section looks with greater depth at these assertions, examining how like familial relationships, race and ethnicity mediate in the positioning of these young activist in ‘the Struggle’ narrative.


The struggle against apartheid was one deeply cleft by identities; gendered (Conway, 2012), sexual (ibid.), classed (Price, 2002) but especially racial and ethnic (Nkomo, 1984; Louw–Potgeiter, 1988; Eichstedt, 2001; Price 2002; Conway, 2012). Recall Price (2002) who could find no ‘single collective narrative of activism’ (p. 199) from a group of racially mixed former anti-apartheid activists because of the way in which diversity of race, gender and class was implicated in their biographies. It’s almost so obvious, that we miss it; the anti-apartheid struggle was a struggle over race and therefore a very racialised struggle. It is like most political
struggles that involved the structural oppression of a group of people based on their identity (the women’s movement, the LGBTI movement, the disability movement, etc.); participation is mediated by that identity. As such the traditions of resistance associated with and narratives emerging out of any particular movement are likely to be informed by these identities, and in the case of the (very contested) narratives of the anti-apartheid movement, that identity is race. The assertion that movement narratives can be raced has precedence elsewhere. Polletta (2005) for example, explores how in the 1960s in the USA, the ‘symbolic associations’ (p. 3) of ‘participatory democracy’ shifted from black to white (p. 1), and as a result a number of black students distanced themselves from this political movement. Given that the anti-apartheid struggle was so deeply raced, it is not unreasonable to assume that the narratives it engendered are also raced. And given that we know how identity mediates political participation, it stands to reason that the access to these is mediated by racial identity.

This section examines the ways in which participants navigate race as they position themselves in and in relation to the morality play of ‘the Struggle’.

2.1. ‘You can be white and you can even be an Afrikaner’: The Afrikaner Dissident

Mr V: Imagine being a kid and knowing you want to be in MK you know what I mean [laughs]=
CK: =a white kid wanting to be in MK=
Mr V: =we had MK shirts and I remember I remember being in a lift me and my brother singing Kill the Boer\(^{165}\), Kill the Boer and as we were going up signing these people we started getting louder because they looked disapproving and we were getting louder and louder and these people it must’ve been so funny watching two Afrikaner kids =
C: =[laughs]=
V: = sing Kill the Boer with such confidence and not really knowing what they were singing but who’s the Boer [laughs]? (Mr V Int 1)

It is not clear if Mr V’s intention was actually to talk about race (note my insertion ‘a white kid’ into the conversation), but my experience of his wanting to join MK as a child is immediately racialised, and a complete rupture of the narrative I, as a member of a conservative white South Africa family and community, grew up inside of. In the narrative I grew up in, MK and the ANC were terrorists and those terrorists were black. Just the thought of a white boy being part of that is just beyond comprehension. (Possibly) in response to my incredulousness he deepens his exploration of his positionality in relation to his immersion in ‘the

\(^{165}\) ‘Kill the Boer’ was one of many ‘struggle songs’ sung during the anti-apartheid struggle. Music and protest songs such as ‘Kill the Boer’ were an important modality of the struggle (Hirsch, 2002). ‘Boer’ translates literally to ‘farmer’, although historically used to refer to the Afrikaner. In 2011 what ‘Boer’ means came under the spotlight. Julius Malema, the then leader of the ANCYL was taken to court for singing ‘Kill the Boer’ at ANCYL meetings, by what many would argue are a fairly right-wing Afrikaner rights group, Afriforum. They accused Malema of hate speech, saying that the song was intended to incite violence against white people, and especially Afrikaners. Julius Malema and the ANCYL’s response to this was that the song was not intended literally, but rather that ‘Boer’ referred to the institution of apartheid, and that singing the song then referred to ‘killing’ apartheid. Furthermore, they argued that it was an expression of the anti-apartheid struggle, and the celebration and recognition of its legacy in post-apartheid struggles for social justice.
Struggle’ narrative. Interestingly it is not only in relation to race that he does so, but ethnicity; he is not only white, he is an Afrikaner and to sing a which advocates for killing the Afrikaner is an obvious disruption of the casting of characters in this highly racially and ethnically defined struggle. It would most certainly have ‘looked funny’ to the onlookers in the lift.

Afrikaners have a particularly complicated relationship to the anti-apartheid struggle. Although the apartheid state was a racial state, it was also an ethnic one, forged in the interests of Afrikaner nationalism, not only in response to ‘Die Swart Gevaar’ but also British imperialism (van der Westhuizen, 2007). The apartheid state’s role was not to oppress black people, but to provide a political, cultural and spiritual home to the Afrikaner volk. As such Afrikaner culture and social life was always deeply entangled with the apartheid state (Steyn, 2004), making Afrikaner ‘dissidents’ particularly subversive. Although race was the dominant organiser, and most white people, English and Afrikaner alike, did not oppose apartheid and did not take part in the anti-apartheid struggle, white English speaking liberals could easily tap into their liberal discourse and traditions to find counter narratives if they chose to do so. Afrikaners on the other hand, had to defy their social and cultural worlds, and very often their families (Louw-Potgieter, 1988). Recall Mr V’s exemplification of the ‘revolutionary’ in the context of the anti-apartheid struggle is not the Thabo Mbeki’s or the Sisulus. Rather it is the white Afrikaner whose grandfather was Prime Minister of the apartheid state, Bram Fisher: ‘how do you grow up in this strong solid Afrikaans family and pretty much launch Umkhonto we Sizwe yourself’. For Afrikaners, challenging the apartheid system was more than a simple challenging of an unjust system, it was the betrayal of one’s people. As such it is hardly surprising that for (white) Afrikaners, this identity mediates powerfully in how they access the tradition of resistance, which is embedded ‘the Struggle’. This is especially true for someone like Ms Y, who unlike Mr V, is both Afrikaner and an ‘outsider’.

Even though Ms Y, still experiences herself as an outsider to ‘the Struggle’ narrative, and in the previous section actually dismisses it, she nevertheless has constructed her own access to it. This access has come with a deep interrogation of her Afrikaner identity, which for a while she rejected, and a remarkable rewriting of that identity from within. She draws on her experience of marginalisation, particularly as a woman and a lesbian in a patriarchal and conservative Afrikaner community, to step into an identity script which is both resistant and Afrikaner, the ‘Afrikaner dissident’, an identity script made available through ‘revolutionaries’ like Bram Fisher and even, Paul Kruger. Hers is an absolute refusal to be ‘cut out’ of this identity:

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166 ‘The Black Threat’, used by the apartheid government to refer to the perceived security threat posed by the black majority. Used similarly to ‘The Red Scare’ and ‘The Yellow Peril’ in the USA.

167 Nation.

168 Known as the ‘father of the Afrikaner nation’, Paul Kruger was the first President of the ZAR (Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek). He was responsible for negotiating the ZAR’s complete independence from Britain in 1884. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/stephanus-johannes-kruger)
Ms Y: I mean it’s all it’s full of contradictions and I just you know I’ve just learnt to I’m embracing the contradictions because the thing for me at the end of the day I don’t see why Afrikaners should only be FW de Klerk, even Roelf Meyer or um who’s Pieter Mulder from the Freedom Front. I mean why should Afrikaners only be th- and I specifically only just mention men because men have Afrikaner men have to a large extent decided who can be Afrikaner and who can’t so I mean why should Afrikanerdom and Afrikanerhood be identified only in relation to those kinds of identities. Why can’t it also embrace an identity like mine? And the fact of the matter is if you look back at Afrikaner history there was Bram Fisher standing in the dock and quoting Paul Kruger. He found inspiration in Paul Kruger and Paul Kruger’s expression of a desire to be free from British imperialism. He found that inspirational for his own struggle as a communist for racial equality in South Africa. So for me it’s actually also it’s about drawing on those uh discourses that exist that actually exist they historically exist. I’m not the first Afrikaner who’s doing this and I hopefully won’t be the last there are actually many people who went before me but they’ve been silenced by the dominant model. So for me it’s like resisting that that dominant model and saying no you will not determine you will not be cutting out people like me from this identity. (Ms Y Int 1)

By stepping inside the identity script of ‘Afrikaner dissident’ she can legitimately draw from her pool of cultural resources as an Afrikaner, ‘on those uh discourses that exist that actually exist they historically exist’. By drawing on Bram Fisher’s reading of Paul Kruger she brings into convergence two ‘traditions of resistance’, the Boer resistance against English imperialism and the anti-apartheid struggle. In this intersection a discursive space opens up; where resistance against oppression and Afrikaner identity are aligned, and where that alignment is carried into another resistance struggle. This makes it possible for her as an Afrikaner to step in the inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative as protagonist (something considered impossible in her previous account), the door being opened by Bram Fischer. Thus, by drawing on ‘the dissidents’, ‘the Bram Fischers and the Ingrid Jonkers and the Breyten Breytenbachs’, a discursive space opens up where ‘you can be white and you can be even an Afrikaner and pursue all of that and really believe in absolute social transformation and absolute doing away with social injustice’. For Ms Y, her access to ‘the Struggle’ is

169 FW de Klerk was President of South Africa from 1989 to 1994. He is credited with opening negotiations with the ANC, facilitating South Africa’s democratic transition (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/frederik-willem-de-klerk). More recently, however, he has been associated with conservative ‘white-minority’ rights groups (Malala, 2012).

170 Roelf Meyer was prominent member of parliament in both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. His positions included Deputy Minister of Law and Order and of Constitutional Development (1986 to 1991) and Minister of Defence, of Communication and of Constitutional Affairs (1991-1996). He was part of the South African government’s delegation at talks with the ANC in 1992 and was the government’s chief negotiator in constitutional negotiations. In 1997 he co-founded the United Democratic Movement (UDM) with former Transkeian leader Bantu Holomisa. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/roelof-petrus-roelf-meyer)

171 Dan Roodt is the co-founder of the Pro-Afrikaanse Aksiegroep (PRAAG) an organisation who describe themselves as a ‘movement of Afrikaner intellectuals, professionals, farmers, students and others campaigning for the rights of Afrikanners and white Africans generally and for equality with blacks as regards property ownership, language, access to education, the right to trade, and so on’ (www.praag.org). The organisation is largely recognized as far-right, white supremacist one, trading on ‘white embattlement’ (van der Westhuizen, 2007, p.320) and Dan Roodt is its leader and mouthpiece.

172 Pieter Mulder is the leader of the Freedom Front Plus, a political party ‘committed to the protection and advancement of Afrikaner interests’ (www.vryheidsfront.co.za). Like PRAAG, the organization is largely recognised as a far-right white supremacist one, similarly trading on tales of ‘white embattlement’ (van der Westhuizen, 2007, p.320).

173 Ingrid Jonker was an Afrikaans poet. She was a member of ‘die Sestigers’, a group of anti-establishment writers and poets, who were critical of the apartheid government. She died in 1965. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/ingrid-jonker)

174 Poet and artist, Breyten Breytenbach was another member of ‘die Sestigers’. He was an outspoken opponent of the apartheid regime and imprisoned for nine years. He currently resides in Paris. (http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/breyten-breytenbach)
through her Afrikanerness, an identity she had for a long time ‘exed out’ because of its associations with Afrikaner nationalism and the apartheid state:

Ms Y: It’s almost like I realised I don’t have to actually ex out my Afrikaner identity to to believe in these values and to promote them as far as I can I don’t have to become. Um I think there are Afrikaners who even went into the ANC and so on that chucked their Afrikaner identity and said ugh I totally dissociate myself from that. No no, I’m an ANC cadre and all of that I mean I never joined the ANC. In any case so that was never large groups don’t do it for me really. But um the I think it was just I dunno if this is making sense but that how I got to a point where I thought um what’s of importance is actual is actual and real change to power relations that’s something that I that is not uh exclusive to black people it’s not exclusive to ANC members. It’s not it’s not a desire or a goal that you have to be black or that you have to be ANC to be able to pursue that. Um you can be white and you can be even an Afrikaner and pursue all of that and really believe in absolute social transformation and absolute doing away with social injustice believing that that’s what one should be preoccupied with. So that’s the thing is the I think the disillusionment with the ANC and what the ANC represent… The value for me in that is that the whole thing of finding it because it makes it possible then for white people because that’s where the thing comes in with the dissidents. For example if I look at the dissidents in Afrikaner ranks if I look at the Bram Fischers and the Ingrid Jonkers and the Breyten Breytenbachs and even lesser known figures that I write about in my book who were actually questioning National Party policy even people within the National Party. (Ms Y Int 2)

But interestingly because Ms Y’s version of ‘the Struggle’ is accessed through the route of ‘Afrikaner dissident’, it is also a particular version thereof. It is ‘the Struggle’ of Bram Fisher in the dock, not that of an ‘ANC cadre’ and she positions herself quite firmly in opposition to Afrikaners who ‘chucked their Afrikaner identity’, dissociated from Afrikanerness and completely and wholly adopted an ANC identity. She goes on to say that she never joined the ANC, and although she explains this through her general aversion to groups, the ANC is definitely an antagonist in this narrative which becomes apparent later when referring to the current ‘disillusionment with the ANC and what the ANC represent’. This is of course difficult to consolidate with a positioning inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative where the ANC are the heroes, but she does so by positioning the real heroes in alignment with particular sets of values – ‘actual and real change to power relations’ and the pursuit of and belief in ‘absolute social transformation and absolute um doing away with social injustice’. In so doing she can even position people within the National Party as heroes inside ‘the Struggle’ narrative. The identity script of the ‘Afrikaner dissident’ produces a version of ‘the Struggle’ where the lines between the heroes and villains are differently drawn; not along ethnic or racial lines but along the lines of a commitment to social justice. In so doing space is made for someone who may have been positioned as villain in another version of this narrative, to be legitimately part of it. This is a different positioning to all the previous accounts. It does not disavow ‘the Struggle’, like some of the ‘outsider’ accounts did. Rather it draws into it the identity script of ‘Afrikaner dissident’, which functions to redraw the boundaries between protagonists and antagonists. Similarly, it does not disavow Ms Y’s Afrikaner identity, rather it redefines it, expanding its boundaries to include freedom fighters and radicals.
2.2. ‘Eee-xcellent finally a black pree-sident’: The Hip-hopper

Although, as Ms Y’s and Mr V’s cases illustrate how race and ethnicity mediate access to ‘the Struggle’ narrative for white respondents, black respondents do not necessarily automatically access this narrative either. Some of the black participants have personal ties to people who were in the struggle (Mr X, Ms W, Mr E and Dylan all had parents in the anti-apartheid struggle) and some do not (Ms O, Mpho and Mr A) creating different familial relationships. However, even when participants have parents who were anti-apartheid activists, it doesn’t always translate into the obvious uptake of that narrative. Dylan is a case in point. Although Dylan, like Mr X and Mr E, ‘heard all these stories’ whilst growing up this only translates into him wanting ‘to stand for something’ like his parents did, when he starts listening to hip-hop:

Dylan: I think the reason I got into it was because of my parents. They were I mean they were members of the ANC in apartheid and they were very active and they were they went to a lot of rallies they hid people you know they were tear gassed they were you know refused entry at restaurants you know that kinda thing. And we growing up we heard all these stories you know. And my parents are two people I respect a lot and so they had a big influence on me as well and I also feel like I wanted to stand for something like they did. And also through my sister because she was doing you know she had done SHAWCO before I came to varsity and she’d done things like that like the big brother/big sister mentorship programme she was part of that kinda stuff. And so I think my family in that sense had an influence on me that I wanted to carry on on that that I dunno sense of activism in a way or outreach and kinda standing for things that really matter. And I’d have to think about when I realised that because I don’t think I cared all that much when I was in high school about things. But I know that that through hip-hop music I started developing a sense of like black consciousness in high school and that then led to you know being more interested in like what my parents were talking about and things like that. I think that through hip-hop as well I got a sense of social consciousness and hip-hop definitely changed it definitely changed the way I was thinking at a certain time. And in high school there was a time in high school when I started calling myself black people said you’re coloured whatever I said no I’m not I’m black and um friends of mine would go no man look at you you’re coloured [laughs]=

CK: =[laughs]

Dylan: Like seriously what’s wrong with you? And so now I’m ok with calling myself coloured again ok. I don’t mind but it was during that phase when you start to think about issues [feigns teenage angst] and like the world [feigns teenage angst] and you know how do we define ourselves and things like that and that was really through hip-hop music really. And also because up to that point I hadn’t really been listening to a lot of hip-hop I didn’t take it seriously, but when I started listening to the stuff that’s not the radio stuff then I was like Wow there’s a lot of stuff here there’s a lot of stuff to think about to look at and you know. And so ja that was quite a big turning point for me actually ja.

CK: What were the kinds of things that you were hearing in hip-hop that had you start to think about it? Like what were they saying?

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175 Activism, specifically involvement with TAC UCT.
176 SHAWCO (Students Health and Welfare Centres Organisation) is a student community service organisation operated through the University of Cape Town.
177 South African colloquial term for university.
R: Ja. Well for example Prophets of da City\textsuperscript{178} they would say you know just like their normal stuff like they had this song called Never Again which was like they’d start with like [sings] eee-xecellent finally a black pre-e-sident you know and stuff just stuff like that. Ready D used to wear a t-shirt that said 100 per cent black you know. And also the American rappers talking about black consciousness and things like that can’t think of any quotes or anything but even and I’d say not even what they were saying some of the time but just you know that ownership over something and them acknowledging Africa a lot in their work and I think like having that thing that kinda that you could own you know as a black person I think that was like quite cool. Like having that sense of pride in something also in Cape Town the coloured community having the first real you hip-hop was kinda you know that’s where it really found its first home in South Africa in Cape Town in the Cape Flats and just having that having that thing ownership something like to identify with that wasn’t that kind of blackness that I could identify with that was the biggest thing not so much the lyrical content I was listening to at the time but more like having something that was black that spoke to me and that could identify myself with. Because being in a being in a white school or previously white school should I say there wasn’t a lot of stuff I was exposed to that I could identify with as a coloured person so that was that was great like having that thing was it kind of because I think that in high school you go through a lot of stuff you I don’t like to use the phrase so maybe you can replace it with something else later [laughs] but=

CK: =[laughs] =
Dylan: =you know you trying to find yourself. (Dylan Int 1)

Dylan’s account of how he ‘got into’ activism, travels a complex path along a number of intersecting narratives. There is that of his parents, ‘the Struggle’, in which they are heroes and whom he ‘respects a lot’. Like them he wants to stand for something, but there is a disconnect between his experience as a young, middle-class, coloured person in post-apartheid South Africa and the world his parents were heroes in. However, when he encounters black consciousness as embedded in the American hip-hop he listens to in high school, he becomes ‘more interested in like what my parents were talking about’. Black consciousness, as he accesses it through hip-hop, provides an identity script, of an empowered and proud blackness, which in the context of his experience of racial difference in a majority white school is particularly significant to him. This is significant, in that through the black consciousness identity script, he actually shifts his identification from ‘coloured’ to ‘black’, ‘and uh hip-hop definitely changed it definitely changed the way I was thinking at a certain time and in high school there was a time in high school when I started calling myself black’, a shift that is met with resistance from his peers. Through this shift in identification he can access a black identity, which is not only his own, ‘that you could own you know as a black person’, but empowered and cool, ‘that was like quite cool like having that sense of pride in something’. When he encounters this identity script in local hip-hop (‘Ready D used to wear a t-shirt that said ‘100 per cent black’) it is extended directly into the South African context. And when Prophets of da City say ‘eee-xecellent finally a black pre-e-sident’, the black consciousness of American hip-hop powerfully intersects with ‘the Struggle’ narrative, making it available through the way that it resonates with his own racialised experiences as a young coloured boy in a predominantly white school in post-apartheid South Africa. He can, for the first time, actually see himself in

\textsuperscript{178} Prophets of da City were Cape Town based hip-hop crew that became popular in the early 1990s. They were well known for the consciously political lyrics. DJ Ready D was their front man. Incidentally, they were so influential for Dylan that he made a film about them called Lost Prophets.
this ‘the Struggle’ narrative. So Dylan does not access black consciousness through, for example, Steve Biko, who would traditionally be positioned inside of ‘the Struggle’ narrative, but rather Ready D and Prophets of da City, hip-hoppers, who finally allow him to understand, what his ‘parents were talking about’. His own experience of race is rearticulated in such a way that he finally sees the connection between that experience and that of his parents, and in so doing can step into the narrative they inhabit.

Dylan’s story is an exemplification of Pieterse’s (2010) point that politically conscious hip-hop provides a ‘vital point of entry’ (p. 440) for young people to a more critical engagement of their realities, in that it provides an ‘coherent ideology’ (p. 439) and vocabulary to facilitate this engagement, the language of black consciousness. What Pieterse (2010) is in fact referring to is that hip-hop provides a different morality play, one where black people are the heroes. In so doing it provides a new identity script; that of an empowered and politically engaged black person, which as it did for Dylan, allows young black, and in this case coloured people, to ‘inhabit race’ differently (Erasmus, 2004). Although Dylan, is ‘ok with calling myself coloured again’ the replacement of his coloured identity for a black identity in the early days of his politicisation, is a significant step in accessing ‘the Struggle’ narrative. Historically, the hierarchical division of coloured and black African people, with its commensurate division of political, cultural and social rights, is considered by many to have been a tactic of the apartheid state to divide those whom it oppressed, all ‘non-white’ people (Adhikari, 2005). The joining of all ‘non-white’ people (black, coloured and indian) to struggle against the common enemy of the apartheid state, was one of the defining features of the anti-apartheid struggle (ibid.)

Thus it is not surprising that this replacement of a coloured identity for a black identity is also a feature of Mr A’s story of access to ‘the Struggle’. Like Dylan, it is through taking up the identity script of black consciousness that he has access to a political identity that can respond to the prevailing social and political environment:

Mr A: Ja BC I came across in high school, whatever. And also as a teenager you always want to identify with certain icons, and things like that. So there was Bob Marley, there was Che Guevara, there was Steve Biko and through that growing up actually reading what these people had to say instead of just wearing the image=
CK: =[laughs]=
Mr A: =trying to understand, sort of developing a better sense of what it is. I think it’s only now lately the past couple of years that I really started to process and understand black consciousness. I mean I had a slight understanding of what it was growing up even through my twenties, and that, and my twenties were also reckless years. Partying also took up a large part of it [laughs], but also, again, partying within and having a certain understanding of how to treat people around the world. But it’s only been the last five odd years that I’ve really started developing an understanding of black consciousness, and also sort of starting to understand myself, why I am who I am, and why I’ve done the things I have done… Black consciousness is because it was in direct relation to the oppression by the white minority of the black majority, and I associated myself with being part of that black

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majority. Part of that was rejecting the term black, coloured, because understanding how it was used to divide people, how it was used to make some people feel superior to others, yet still inferior to another, how it was used to put people in a certain place and this is your position and that is the path that you will follow. (Mr A Int 1)

Like Dylan, black consciousness provides a way out of one identity script (coloured) which ‘put(s) people in a certain place and this is your position and that is the path that you will follow’, into an identity script which is more commensurate with his politics (black); that is a politics which does not ‘divide people’ or ‘make some people feel superior to others, yet still inferior to another’ and which can respond directly to the ‘oppression by the white minority of the black majority’. This position mirrors Erasmus’ (2001) demand for the ‘acknowledgment of complicity on the part of those historically classified as coloured in the exclusion and disrespect for black Africans’ (p. 16). Interestingly, although he has a more traditional route to black consciousness through the work of Steve Biko (which he originally reads at school), he also, like Dylan, accesses black consciousness through popular culture, Bob Marley to be specific.

Thus in the same way that Mr V and Ms Y have to navigate their whiteness to find a place for themselves in ‘the Struggle’ narrative, so too Dylan and Mr A need to navigate their colouredness. What is clear from these navigations is that for these participants, ‘the Struggle’ is coded black. As such they need to mediate their colouredness and whiteness in order to enter it as protagonists. Given their different racial positioning, they do so in different ways; Ms Y extends the boundaries of the narrative by asserting and inserting the identity script of ‘Afrikaner dissident’, whilst Mr A and Dylan, extend the boundaries of their own identities to incorporate blackness, albeit also in very different ways. What is shared about these navigations is that like all access to ‘the Struggle’ narrative, it is mediated through other people. However, they need not even be people the participants know. They can be role models, heroes, icons; people who participants identify with, but who are also protagonists of ‘the Struggle’ morality play. For Ms Y it’s Bram Fischer, Ingrid Jonker and Breyten Breytenbach. For Dylan it’s Ready D. For Mr A its Bob Marley and Che Guevara. These characters provide identity scripts that participants recognise as their own, but that are also of ‘the Struggle’ and they act as bridges that allow participants to position themselves inside this narrative in a favourable way. By doing so they not only shift their own identities but the very substance and content of the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, repopulating it with different characters, in different relationships to each other. Herein lies the nature of contestations over the legitimate ownership of ‘the Struggle’ in battles for political legitimacy in post-apartheid South Africa. With this legitimacy being so closely tied to one’s position within the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, who decides who’s in, and who’s out, who the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ guys are, and by extension who the legitimate heirs of this rich legacy are, lie at the centre of this post-apartheid generation’s political identity projects. Starting from very varied positionings, they both rearticulate and challenge this legacy, and in so doing actually come to define it.
3. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined how participants access the position of protagonist in ‘the Struggle’ through their sociality. It has examined how that sociality is characterised by the presence or absence of familial ties to the anti-apartheid struggle, and how although familial ties may translate into a greater ‘ease’ of access to ‘the Struggle’ they by no means guarantee an unproblematic relationship to the characters that populate it. This chapter has also examined how race features as the other important aspect of the sociality that mediates access. Given that the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ is raced, access to it requires a measure of racial maneuvering by, in this case, white and coloured respondents. The Afrikaner dissident and the hip-hopper may follow very different paths, but their final destination is the same, ‘the Struggle’.

The following chapter concludes our discussion. It draws on the conversations about the sociality of our politics explored in Chapter Seven, the reflections on the two main cultural narratives characterising these participants’ experiences and how these are linked to questions of political legitimacy in Chapter Eight, and the considerations of access to the biggest of these, ‘the Struggle’, along the paths of race and family relations, covered in this chapter. It does this to provide an account of the major learnings emerging out of this study and provide some insight into this post-apartheid generational consciousness as given expression through these young middle-class activists.
Chapter 10
Concluding Remarks

This dissertation has been shaped around four main assertions. The first is that identities, in this case activist identities, are constructed through positioning in narratives. The second is that this positioning is a function of political socialisation, a process which is rendered collectively. The third is that these processes of identity formation and context, which in this case is post-apartheid South Africa, are inextricable. The final assertion is that the particularity of these identity formation processes as they occur in this context, provide us some insight into the generational consciousness shared by these participants. It is through the combination of these assertions that the four major learnings of this study emerge.

Much of what emerges from this study confirms the local and international literature. It would seem as if activist identity formation projects take on a similar shape and form the world over. However, what is different is the particularity of the context within which these identity projects occur. This context renders these projects unique, and not only adds depth and complexity to existing studies, but useful insight into this post-apartheid generational consciousness.

The first learning is that in line with local studies sharing anti-apartheid activists’ experiences of the post-apartheid context (Conway, 2012; Price, 2002; Swartz, 2007), this generation of activists is challenged by a similar ambiguity over the nature and sites of struggles for social justice. The post-apartheid context does not allow for the neat matching of historical narratives, in this case ‘the Struggle’, to the nature of struggles for social justice they encounter in post-apartheid South Africa. This ambiguity reflects Andrews’ (2007) assertion that activist identity projects are profoundly affected by ‘acute social change and transition’ (p. 116), and this seems to be true even if those activists were not directly involved in the struggle that engendered this transition.

The second learning is that the participants in this study draw from two main contextually–rooted cultural narratives in order to construct their activist identities: ‘the Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’. Not only do these narratives represent ‘the kinds of stories’ participants tell about how their ‘world works’, but they provide important insight into ‘how they explain the engine of political change’ and ‘the role they see themselves, and those whom they regard as part of their group, as playing in this ongoing struggle’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 8). However, these are not just dominant narratives, they are morality plays (Andrews, 2007) and here they confer not only moral positioning, but political legitimacy. This is especially true for ‘the Struggle’ which is the dominant narrative. Positioning inside ‘the Struggle’ as a protagonist or in proximity to its
protagonists, provides a claim to political legitimacy. However, ‘the Struggle’ narrative is contested, and
exactly who the protagonists and antagonists are, and how they translate into the post-apartheid context is at
the centre of contestations over the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle. Although ‘the TAC Method’ is a
rearticulation of ‘the Struggle’, it is also a counter-narrative, and emerges as an important element of this
contestation.

The third learning is that how participants position themselves in relation to the morality plays of ‘the
Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’ is not an individual exercise; it is part of a collective social process of
identity formation mediated through social networks. Scholars of collective identity have long argued that
political identities are collectively rendered (Melucci, 1995; Polletta & Jasper, 2001; Taylor & Whittier, 1992)
through networks of association. Here the collective serves the purpose of not only providing access to
participation by rendering participants ‘structurally available’ (McAdam, 1994, p. 254), but also the function
of political socialisation (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). This involves the transmission of idioculture, ‘a system of
knowledge, beliefs, behaviours and customs shared by members of an interacting group which they can
employ on the basis of further interaction’ (Fine, 2002, p. 233) to new members. This transmission is
achieved through narratives, which through the idiocultures they communicate provide identity scripts that
that participants can inhabit and perform, and so ‘operate to mediate the construction of self’ (Ginsburg, 1997,
p. 427).

The fourth learning is about the nature of the sociality that mediates these positionings. There are two main
aspects to this sociality, namely familial ties and race. Echoing studies and theory (Gelman, 1990; Ichilov,
1988; Keniston, 1968; McAdam, 1982) which emphasise the role of family in political socialisation, familial
relationships feature heavily in these identity construction projects. This is especially true for participants who
have parents who were in the anti-apartheid struggle and who typically exhibit a relative ‘ease’ of access to
position of protagonist in ‘the Struggle’ narrative. With that said, ease of access to ‘the Struggle’ does not
necessarily translate in an easy relationship with its characters, and for some ‘struggle babies’ the negotiation
of this morality play is entangled with complex familial relationships. However, it is not just the presence of
family that is significant, it is also the absence. For the ‘outsiders’ who have no family connections to the
anti-apartheid struggle, their political socialisation occurs, like many other activists across the world
(Andrews, 2007; Keniston, 1968) and during apartheid (Conway, 2012; Louw-Potgieter, 1998), through a
‘range of sources’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 60), which includes teachers, lecturers, friends and books. However, for
the ‘outsiders’ this socialisation is always in the context of not being connected to the ‘big shots’ or ‘cadres’,
making it less ‘easy’.

The second aspect of this sociality is the way in which race shapes and informs it. The importance of locating
activist identity projects in their socio-historical context, as this study has done, is that it reminds us that these
projects do not occur in a vacuum and that they will express broader patterns of identity formation. Whatever the nature of the struggle, it is permeated with the sociality of the context it operates in. For example, even though a struggle over race, the black nationalist struggle in the USA was deeply gendered (Perkins, 2000). This was also true for the nationalist struggles for liberation from colonialism across the globe (Banerjee, 2006; Beall et al, 1989), as well as the anti-apartheid struggle, which was not only gendered but sexualised (Conway, 2012; Gevisser, 1994). Furthermore, it is it important to recognise that certain struggles occur in relation to certain social cleavages and thus reflect the commensurate identities. We cannot, for example, understand feminist activism or activist identity without understanding that the structural and subjective realities of gender formation deeply inform both (Ginsburg, 1992; Segal, 2007; Taylor & Whittier, 1992). We also cannot understand struggles for racial justice without understanding that race will profoundly impact on participation in that struggle (Conway, 2012; Friedman & McAdam, 1992; Louw-Potgieter, 1998; Polletta, 2005; Price, 2002; Sudbury, 2001; Hangen, 2010). This finds particular expression in the identity projects of the participants in this study. Race is evident in these identity projects in the way it mediates experiences of exclusion in relation to the idiocultures of activist networks and organisations in middle-class Cape Town but also, and most importantly, in relation to how it mediates positioning relative to ‘the Struggle’ narrative. Importantly these positionings engendered by race are themselves mediated through social relationships.

The rest of this chapter will explore each of these learnings in more detail.

1. The Good, the Bad & the Ambiguous: Making Sense of the Post-apartheid Context

The political landscape navigated by the young activists in this study is one characterised by a large array of sites and modes of political action. All of these young activists share a commitment to social justice in South Africa, but all pursue this end in very different ways. Dylan is a film maker who explores questions of identity and popular culture through his work; Ms Y is a journalist who interrogates relations of power to advance social justice, particularly with regard to gender, race, class and sexuality; Ms S runs an NGO that assists township youth with their secondary education and to gain university entrance; Ms L works for an organisation which is committed to advocacy through legislative means, in the areas of sexual, gender and children’s rights; Ms I facilitates workshops, conducts lectures and does research around issues relating to various aspects of social difference and inequality, especially gender. What they represent is a small part of the contemporary response to the ‘proliferation of sites of political engagement’ (Pieterse, 2010, p. 428) that characterise the post-apartheid context.

The opening up of sites of struggle in post-apartheid South Africa is linked to the emergence of new relationships to old characters. The post-apartheid context does not allow for the neat transfer of the historical
narrative of ‘the Struggle’, its commensurate plots, settings and characters. For example accounts by Ms G and P construct the University of Cape Town as no longer an advocate for equality and fairness as it was during apartheid, but quite the opposite, as an exploitative employer. Mpho and Ms G’s accounts of SASCO and various SRCs construct the student movements of the 1970s and 1980s, no longer as agents of social justice and transformation, but sites of political corruption and self-interest. However, the most significant of these shifts is in relation to the role of government and the ANC.

Whereas during apartheid it was clear that the government (the apartheid regime) were the ‘bad guys’ and the ANC (or the liberation movement) were the ‘good guys’, in post-apartheid South Africa that relationship is less clear. Firstly government is no longer simply the ‘bad guy’. Some of these activists work with government using the structures and resources afforded by the democratic South African state and its Constitution to effect social change. For example, Ms S works with certain sectors of government and Ms T works in partnership with Parliament. Others do not direct their work at government at all. For example, Dylan makes films and Ms P works for workers rights directing her action towards employers. Secondly the positioning of government is entangled with the shifting position of the ANC in the morality plays that participants draw on. With the ascendancy of ‘the TAC Method’, the TAC displaces the ANC as hero of the struggle for social justice in South Africa, and the ANC government replaces the apartheid government as the ‘bad guys’. Finally, some participants have parents and other family who were members of the ANC during the anti-apartheid struggle. They were deeply socialised into the narrative of ‘the Struggle’, where the ANC is the hero, but their relationship to the ANC has been complicated by a more complex social and political landscape. However, this relationship is also rendered through their relationships with their parents which are sometimes difficult.

This ambiguity is very much a function of the acute social transformation brought about by the transition to democracy. Ambiguity of this nature is evident in studies conducted in contexts where social change has occurred within a generation [e.g. East Germany (Andrews, 2007) and the USA (Polletta, 1998a, 2006)], where the activists involved in facilitating that transition have needed to profoundly renegotiate their relationships to social and political institutions. This is particularly true for anti-apartheid activists (Conway, 2012; Price, 2002; Swartz, 2007). Similar to the participants in this study, this ambiguity occurs primarily in relation to the state. However, all of the previous studies were conducted with activists who had been politically active through those transitions. The group of activists in this study were not. Their identities are mediated through the legacies and narratives of the struggle that engendered the transition. They are, however, powerful enough to evoke similar experiences to those who were actually in it.
Reference to these shifting characters and plot lines brings us to the next major learning; that of the two dominant narratives that characterise these activist identity projects and how positioning relative to them is related to claims to political legitimacy.


‘The Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’ emerge as the two dominant narratives that these young activists draw on in order to construct their activist identities. These narratives communicate the ‘traditions of resistance’ (Squire, 2007) which provide the cultural resources with which they construct their identities. Following Andrews (2007), identifying how they place themselves in these ‘political world[s] that they identify’ provides insight into how participants ‘view struggles for power and attempts to resolve such struggles’ and, importantly, ‘how they locate themselves within this process’ (p. 8). They provide the answers to questions like: what do activists do, what do they look like, what do they understand as right or wrong, how do they respond to this? Importantly, these are not neutral and uninterested narratives, they are morality plays (Andrews, 2007) which provide clear moral ordering. Thus relative positioning inside ‘the Struggle’ and ‘the TAC Method’ is related to moral ordering and therefore political legitimacy.

The protagonists of these narratives are the activists: the ANC, guerrilla fighters and student protestors of ‘the eighties’ in ‘the Struggle’, and Zackie Achmat and TAC in ‘the TAC Method’. Inside these morality plays, the closer one is to the protagonists the greater one’s political legitimacy. In fact, it could be argued that the extent to which Zackie Achmat and TAC are recognised as exemplars of post-apartheid activism has to do with the extent to which they resemble the characters of ‘the Struggle’; that it is exactly because of the dominance of the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ that ‘the TAC Method’ has found so much traction. Because the TAC borrows so heavily on the tradition of resistance of the anti-apartheid struggle, its politics is recognisable, and it is recognisable as the most legitimate way of doing politics.

However, there are ‘competing claims for anti-apartheid legitimacy’ (Squire, 2007, p. 180) and as such, the morality play of ‘the Struggle’ is contested. Exactly who the protagonists and antagonists are and how they translate into the post-apartheid context lies at the centre of this contestation. Although it draws so heavily on ‘the Struggle’, ‘the TAC Method’ is an important component of this contestation. ‘The TAC Method’ provides a post-apartheid morality play where the protagonists of ‘the Struggle’, the ruling ANC and Thabo Mbeki in particular, are cast as antagonists (contributing to much of the ambiguity explored in the previous section). Not only does this narrative offer new heroes, TAC and Zackie Achmat, but it inverts the hero status of the ANC government and its members. In this way it claims the mantle of rightful heirs to the legacy of the
anti-apartheid struggle. Thus it does not negate or disavow ‘the Struggle’. On the contrary by inserting uncertainty into the morality play of ‘the Struggle’, it claims it, in so doing bolstering its own legitimacy.

Similarly, participants who position themselves inside ‘the TAC Method’, claim their legitimacy from the fact that doing so locates them in the ‘true’ legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle. Importantly, ‘the Struggle’ narrative is not abandoned. Rather it is simply accessed via another, ‘the TAC Method’, and in so doing rearticulated. This is in part achieved by the way in which only certain aspects of ‘the Struggle’ narrative are carried forward as appropriate for the post-apartheid context whilst others are discarded as less so. Recall, Mr Q and Mr E’s stories of how they found a more ‘mature’ politics in TAC, which occurs in the wake of a dissolution with a less mature one in that of ‘the Struggle’, the language and action of which are declared defunct, old, not applicable to this context. ‘The TAC Method’ then becomes the morality play for post-apartheid South Africa. Through this legitimacy it then takes on exemplar status; what the student protestor was in ‘the eighties’, Zackie Achmat is today, what the ANC was during the anti-apartheid struggle, TAC is today.

3. The Political is Social

The third major, and probably most important learning to emerge from this study is that the way in which participants position themselves in relation to the two dominant narratives is a function of their sociality. Social networks mediate powerfully in how the participants in this study make sense of themselves as political actors. These social networks provide not only opportunities for participation, but important opportunities for political socialisation. Recall Mr H’s experience of mentorship at TAC, Ms B’s account of Zackie Achmat’s ‘protégés’ and all the ‘struggle babies’ accounts of growing up with parents who were in the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore, they provide safe and legitimising spaces for identity formation projects, in very much the same way that the anti-apartheid activist collectives did (Conway, 2012; Louw-Potgieter, 1988; Price, 2002; Swartz, 2007) and the TAC (Robins, 2006; Squire, 2007) and Rape Crisis (Chadwick & Foster, 2005) have done for post-apartheid activists. Recall the stories of belonging shared by Ms O and Ms C when talking about their feminist community. In fact the ‘very marked social nature’ (Andrews, 2007, p. 54) of political collectivities has been identified as a distinctive feature of activist identity projects.

With this in mind, although social networks enable participation and provide education into the idioculture of the collective, they also work to the opposite effect. The creation of collectives inevitably involves boundary creation (Taylor & Whittier, 1992). Most scholars conceive that boundary to be a singular one, encapsulating the whole collective. This study has illustrated that because of the deeply social nature of these collectives, there are further internal boundaries. For example, within the interconnected network of this study were apparent ‘clusters’ of belonging. And within these ‘clusters’ there were further internal boundaries. What is
significant about all these boundaries, is that they were largely drawn along social lines. Recall Mr U and Ms W’s experiences of exclusion in relation to the belonging experienced by the Mr H and the ‘protégés’ – this was not simply a function of shared (or lack of) cognitive definitions. Recall again Ms C and Ms O’s experiences of belonging in relation to each other and their feminist community. Experiences of belonging and exclusion were social. The result is what Ms B refers to as ‘cliques’. Although socially generated, these cliques do not only have social impact. As collective identity scholars remind us, collectivity is a function of emotional, moral and cognitive connection (Polletta & Jasper, 2001). ‘Feeling like part of a common unity’, shared ‘cognitive definitions concerning the ends, means and field of action’ and networks of actors who ‘interact, communicate, influence each other, and make decisions’ (Melucci, 1995, p. 44) are all inextricably linked in processes of collective identity formation. Thus the feeling that one does not belong, will impact on the extent to which someone will share in and be able to influence cognitive definitions and vice-versa. Given the very social nature of the belonging and exclusion experienced by participants, it is inevitable that the sociality of the South African context must intervene. Although SMOs may be amongst some of the places where social divisions may be worked with in more emancipatory ways, this need not always be the case. Two respondents, Mr E and SingleBlackFemale, speak to the ways in which race, gender and class remain powerful boundaries within the network, problematically shaping opportunities for influence and power.

Thus the ways in which young South African activists access the traditions of resistance available to them are complex. They involve the navigation of many layers of social world including social group, political collective, family, etc. However, two features of this social world stand out as particularly significant in these activist identity projects: family and race. It is to these that we now turn.

4. Accessing ‘the Struggle’: Negotiating Family & Race

Given that any process of identity formation is inextricable with socio-historical context, it is not surprising that the aspects of sociality that feature in these young activists’ accounts very much reflect the social realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

The first of these realities is that the young activists of today have actual contact with the activists of yesterday, the protagonists in the morality play they draw on so heavily in informing their identities, i.e. ‘the Struggle’. The networks through which they are socialised into the tradition of resistance of the anti-apartheid struggle actually contain the people who populate the narrative. Therefore the transmission of this tradition of resistance is a deeply personal and relational process, especially when these activists of yesterday are parents, uncles, aunts, etc. The ‘struggle babies’ are all deeply socialised into the tradition of the anti-apartheid struggle. Mr E and Mr V’s accounts of wanting to become guerrilla fighters when they were children is just one example of this. This intimacy translates into an ‘ease’ of access into ‘the Struggle’ narrative and
identification with its protagonists which, in a context where this narrative has so much currency, translates into a form of cultural capital. However, this does not suggest that the ‘struggle babies’ have an unproblematic relationship with the morality play they grew up in. For all of the ‘struggle babies’ their relationships to the characters that populate ‘the Struggle’ narrative are always entangled with their, sometimes complicated, relationships with their parents. Mr X’s difficult relationship with his father is a good example of this, as is Mr V’s account of feeling he ‘blindly followed’ his family’s politics. Furthermore, with the post-apartheid context complicating the characters that populate ‘the Struggle’ narrative, ‘struggle babies’ often have a conflicted relationship with them. This is especially true of the ANC, where their position is often at odds with that of their families’, and when family members are prominent members of the ANC. Mr V and Ms J are good examples of this.

The post-apartheid context also serves to distance some of the ‘struggle babies’ from the legacy they have inherited. For example, although Dylan’s parents were struggle activists, he cannot translate their experience into his own. His access to ‘the Struggle’ is not easy, and it is not directly through his parents. Rather it is through the narratives of US and local hip-hop, which provide an identity script, that of ‘conscious black person’, which bridges his experience as a young coloured (black) man in post-apartheid South Africa with that of his parents’ as coloured (black) people in apartheid South Africa. It is obviously also a deeply raced negotiation, a point which will be explored in more detail shortly.

Not all participants grew up in families who were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. Although they too must access the narrative of ‘the Struggle’ in order to claim political legitimacy, they are (initially) not as well-versed or as comfortable in it as their ‘struggle baby’ peers, and their access is therefore not as ‘easy’. As per the previous discussion, this access is not only discursive and cultural, it is also structural. If social networks render people structurally available, then the ‘struggle babies’ are more available than the ‘outsiders’. This sense of ‘outsideness’ is expressed through, for example, Ms T’s experience of not having learnt from ‘the big shots’ and Ms Y’s experience of not having been a ‘cadre’. Nevertheless, the ‘outsiders’ still access ‘the Struggle’ narrative and position themselves as protagonists within it. Given that political socialisation is a social process, this access is mediated by people, which in the case of participants in this study are mostly friends and lecturers at university. However, the people that facilitate this access need not always be people in participants’ lives. Ms Y’s positioning of herself in ‘the Struggle’ as a white Afrikaner protagonist is a case in point. By drawing on historical figures like Ingrid Jonker, Bram Fischer and even Paul Kruger she inserts the identity script of ‘Afrikaner dissident’ into that of ‘the Struggle’ and in so doing she inserts herself as ‘good guy’ into a morality play where typically she would be the ‘bad guy’. By doing this she can claim her political legitimacy without sacrificing her Afrikaner identity. Interestingly, this discursive move is one facilitated by other dimensions of her identity, her gender and sexual orientation. Although this is
not the focus of this thesis, it is, as Jaramillo (2010) and Conway (2012) remind us, important to recognise how race, ethnicity and gender intersect in these identity projects.

Thus both social networks as well as characters in narratives provide those who experience barriers to accessing ‘the Struggle’, like Ms Y and Dylan, with alternative identity scripts to those provided by the dominant narrative. What these alternative identity scripts translate into, are a choice in the context of viable options and they provide people like Ms Y and Dylan a real opportunity to ‘offer, accept or refuse’ particular subject positions that are made available through discourse (Morgan, 2004, p. 337).

Both Ms Y and Dylan’s accounts speak to the second reality of the post-apartheid context that is reflected in these identity construction projects – race. It is fairly obvious why race features in these narratives. South African society is still deeply raced, something these social networks inevitably reflect. Given the close relationship of class and race in South Africa sampling for class resulted in an unintentional racial skewness away from black participants. Furthermore, given the use of a snowballing sampling methodology, the participants reflected my social and professional networks, which are similarly racially skewed. But race features beyond the simple constitution of the networks that this study draws on; it is inscribed into the very narratives that give these activist identities cultural shape (Polletta, 2005).

The primary morality play that participants position themselves in relation to as they construct themselves as activists, that of ‘the Struggle’, is raced; the ‘good guys’ are black and the ‘bad guys’ are white. In the same way that black anti-apartheid activists were galvanised into participation by their experiences as black people (Nkomo, 1984) so whiteness was often a barrier to white people’s participation, as it is in struggles for racial justice the world over (Eichstedt, 2001). For white activists participation in the anti-apartheid struggle required the ‘breach and renunciation’ of the norms of white society (Conway, 2012, p. 19). For Afrikaners it often meant the renunciation of their identities as Afrikaners (Louw-Potgieter, 1988). Although the racialised experiences of the participants in this study are not quite as dramatic, positioning as a protagonist inside ‘the Struggle’ inevitably involves some racial manoeuvring. Interestingly, this is true not only for white participants, but coloured ones also. Although they do so in very different ways, this manoeuvring is exactly what we see in Ms Y’s and Dylan’s stories of access which they must navigate through their respective white and coloured identities. Not only does this manoeuvring allow them to find space for themselves in ‘the Struggle’ narrative, but in so doing it changes it; it updates it to reflect and respond to a more complex social reality, making it more relevant to the context these young activists navigate. This ability to render ‘the Struggle’ more complex through counter narratives which offer different identity scripts, and therefore access it, is an important move for these activist identity projects as it allows them to enter a narrative which lends them political legitimacy. It also, however, changes the nature of the narrative, contributing to its ongoing contestation.
5. Closing Remarks

This dissertation has endeavoured to explore the ways in which a network of young, middle-class, Cape Town based socially and politically interested and active people construct their identities as activists in post-apartheid South Africa. It has examined how they access traditions of struggle by positioning themselves in narrative, and how they are rearticulating these traditions in ways that are responsive to this post-apartheid context. It has looked at how they do this, not as individuals, but as a part of a web of social relationships, providing a view of activist identity as a profoundly social and collective phenomenon, and one deeply rooted in context. As such it has recognised the ways in which social identities, and especially race, are implicated in these identities.

There is one simple implication of all of this for our politics and our scholarship: that who we are matters in relation to what we do. It shapes what we do, how we do it and who we do it with. For activists it calls for a much more robust examination of how our identities intervene in our politics, in sometimes useful but often problematic ways. For scholars it calls for a much more active insertion of questions of identity into our scholarship about social justice activism and social movements. This study has only examined one very small, relatively privileged group of people located in Cape Town. There are a myriad of equally important sites to examine this question, most notably grass roots movements, poor and working class groups, other urban areas like Johannesburg and Durban, and rural areas. Furthermore this study has focussed almost exclusively on race as an axis of identity. Race is an obvious place to start, but there is equally important work to be done in relation to gender, sexual, national, ethnic and class identities. In addition, given the racial skewness of the sample it did not consider black identities in much depth. This in an obviously important area for enquiry.

Further enquiry could be in the area of more modern ‘repertoires of political action’ (Norris, 2004). Although provided as an important theoretical and contextual consideration, this study did not explore the detail of the repertoires being engaged by these young activists. Recent work by Castells (2012), on the importance of the internet in recent political action by movements across the globe, again underscores the importance of cyber modalities in considering contemporary activism and activists. Further depth also needs to be achieved in examining more cultural modalities and ‘life politics’ (Plummer, 1995).

With all this in mind, we are compelled to continue to ‘rethink politics’ (Gibson, 2006, p. 40) in order to be able to respond to the obviously complex realities of being politically interested and active in post-apartheid South Africa.

Our work has only just begun.
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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Evolution of the Women’s & LGBTI Movement after 1994

After 1994 although there had been an integration of gender equality into the concerns of the government through bodies like the Office on the Status of Women and the Commission on Gender Equality, advocacy for gender equality became primarily the task of NGOs (Hassim, 2006, p. 160). There was a ‘reconfiguration and repositioning’ (ibid., p. 168) of women’s organisations, from a united national movement in the Woman’s National Coalition to a ‘more disaggregated movement with activism occurring at a number of different points in the political system’ (ibid.).

Hassim (2006) identifies three levels at which this gender activism occurs in post-apartheid South Africa. First is the national level. It is at this level that we find sectoral or issue based networks, which are highly articulate about policy and have good access to policy making processes (p. 168). This ‘policy activism’ (ibid.) approach is one of ‘critical engagement’ (ibid.) with the state, rather than adversarial, although they might engage more traditional forms of protest like marches for moments like negotiation deadlock. Second is the level of policy advocacy, which contains organisations largely supported by donor agencies. Included here are organisations like the Women’s Development Forum and the Gender Advocacy Programme. Like the first level, there are no clear constituencies but there is what Hassim (2006) calls a ‘progressive commitment to marginalised communities’ (p. 169). Finally, are the numerous women’s organisations at local level. Although here organisations are closest to particular constituencies, they typically have no resources or expertise to influence policy making through conventional institutional mechanisms. Their tactics include traditional forms of protest like marches and boycotts, which may be able to connect them to the other two levels.

Established as ‘a white, predominantly male, middle-class form of activism’ (ibid.) gay politics only found ‘significant foothold’ in the within the broad popular movement as late as 1991, when it was included in the ANC constitution. However, Dirsuweit (2006) argues that the most significant role of the gay politics in post-apartheid South Africa is ‘shifting homophobic hegemonic discourse’ (p. 339). Dirsuweit (2006) contends that ‘gay politics’ in South Africa has largely taken the form of ‘conspicuous consumption’ in the form of, for example, Gay Pride events (which has resulted in further class and racial cleavages) rather than advocacy and protest action. However, the recent violent attacks on and murder of black lesbians and severely homophobic legislation being passed in other African countries like Uganda, Malawi and Kenya with the resultant persecution of gay men, has seen an upsurge in public protest and advocacy by the LGBTI community from across a much broader range of South African society. One of its most prominent actors is, for example,
photographer, Zanele Muholi, a black lesbian. Muholi refers to herself as a ‘visual activist’ challenging norms of ethnicity, race, gender and sexuality through her photographs of the black gay and lesbian community in South Africa. Although still dominated by white people and plagued by racial cleavages, the LGBTI movement in South Africa is demonstrating increased racial diversity.
Appendix 2 – ‘The New Struggle’


Original image of a young dying Hector Pieterson being carried by a fellow student, taken by Sam Nzima during the student led protests of 1976. It became an iconic image of the struggle against apartheid. Retrieved at http://www.sahistory.org.za/people/hector–pieterson
Appendix 3 – South African Examples of ‘Detourenment’


Vuyiseka Dubula, TAC General Secretary wearing HIV+ t-shirt. Image retrieved from www.tac.org.za
Appendix 4 – Interview Agreement

I, ____________________________ (name), agree that I am participating willingly and voluntarily in an interview with Claire Kelly (the researcher) on this day ____________________ (date) at __________________________ (place).

I understand that these interviews from part of Claire’s thesis for a PhD in Psychology at the University of Cape Town.

I understand that Claire may publish academic journal articles or chapters based on her PhD work.

I understand that I will participate in two approximately one–hour interviews and that Claire or myself may call each other at any stage of the research for clarification or to request further conversation.

I understand that Claire may freely use the information from these interviews and other communications in her PhD.

I understand that I may choose to be named or to remain anonymous. I choose to be named/ remain anonymous / to decide at a later stage.

I understand that the interview will be recorded so that Claire may more accurately reflect my views in her thesis.

I understand that I may discontinue my participation at any stage of the research.

I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

Signature (Participant)_____________________  Date: ________________

Signature (Claire)         _____________________ Date: ________________
Appendix 5 – Conversation Guide for First Interview

LET THEM TALK!

As you would have read in my brief I am interested in questions of social justice in post-apartheid SA and people who I believe to be involved in working for it in various ways. I’d call what they do ‘activism’, and them ‘activists, but I use ‘activism’ because part of what I’m trying to do is develop a sense of what this looks like in post-apartheid South Africa. So I’m speaking to young ‘activists’, or people working for social justice (people who were not in the apartheid struggle) to get a sense of how they understand questions of social justice, what they do in relation to these questions, why they do it, and how they came to do it. And you are one of these people.

So the way I see it is that we’ll have this conversation and then at a later stage, after I’ve done the first round of interviews, another one. And that we can remain in contact throughout if that suits you?

Any points of clarification, concerns?

Consent for 1) interview 2) to record 3) to name?

Please briefly describe yourself. Who are you?
Please briefly describe your relationship to me.

Why do you think I asked you to speak to me for this project?
What do you understand by social justice?
What do understand by activism?
How do you feel about how things are in SA today?

Are you an ‘activist’?
How did you come to do what you do?
Appendix 6 – Invitation to Participate Email

Email for Round 1

Hey X

I have a favour to ask. As you may or may not know I’m doing my PhD. Well up until now I’ve not been doing anything, but I have until August to do all my interviews (!), so fire has been lit under bum of mine. So....

Can I interview / have a conversation with you?

Why you?
1. You are as far as I’m concerned a conscious human being that acts on that consciousness in some kinda way.
2. Your actions seem to contribute to what I call ‘social justice’.
3. You (to the best of my knowledge) mostly grew up in South Africa and (on a continuum of ‘loose identification’ to ‘Proudly South African’) identify as South African.
4. You were not (in so far as I know) actively involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, probably but not necessarily, because you were too young.
5. I’d really love know what you think about questions of social justice, activism in post-apartheid South Africa.
6. I’d really love to hear your story of how you came to do what you do.

Why this topic?
I’d love to have this conversation with you, see what you think. Attached is the intro to my proposal, which gives you an idea. It’s moved on in many ways, e.g. the whole thing around privilege, but the core ideas are still solid.

It isn’t a ‘useful’ study in that it will not further the ends of any particular agenda, except me getting my doctorate – not a bad thing, I reckon. This is one of the contradictions of doing an academic study on activism. But I think each participant may find something useful in it for themselves.

What would you need to do?
1. Spend two approximately one hour sessions with me, talking about the above. The sessions may be individual or group sessions, but I’d run that by you.
2. Let me record the conversations, as I will be using verbatim text in my analysis.

3. If you wanted you could remain in conversation with me during my analysis and writing. You know your thoughts, any articles you find, write, etc. I would love that... but it’s not an obligation.

If you are interested in principle, please let me know and I can give you call. Please include your phone number. More info, chat, my motivations, the implications, your concerns, etc.

Ok, so speak soon.
Claire

Email for Round 2

Hey X

It’s been babies and weddings and parents and boyfriends, etc. so my apologies for taking so long to get back to you for our second interview. I’ve also found where I’ve been placed in the States (California!) so that’s become very real and the clock is ticking more and more loudly! So I’m ready for round two and raring to go. I hope you are well :)

It’ll be pretty much like last time, except I’ll listen to the first one beforehand and share with you things I found interesting or significant across your and other people’s interview. Also you might have some stuff which has come up for you and I’d love to hear about that. I imagine it’d be another hour or so. Also please think of someone you think I should speak to.

My calendar is looking gorgeously empty, please let me know when you are available and we can meet.

Once again, thanks so much for this.

Speak soon,
Claire
Appendix 7 – Participant Profiles

Joey Hasson
grew up in Harare in Zimbabwe. He attended an affluent multiracial private Jewish school. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was thirty years old. He grew up Jewish, and still identified as Jewish culturally and ethnically, but at the time of the interview he identified religiously and spiritually as atheist. He identified as heterosexual and at the time was single. He came to Cape Town in 1999 to go to university. He attended the University of Cape Town and graduated with an Honours Degree in Social Anthropology in 2004. In high school he had been a member of Habonim Dror and travelled to Israel for a year in 1998. After university he started a company, which evaluated corporate social responsibility and other social development projects with a friend but became disillusioned with this work. It was after this that he co-founded Equal Education with a group of friends. At the time of the interview he was working with them. He had also been a member of the TAC. He has subsequently spent a number of years working on youth and community organising and managing campaigns work for Equal Education. He finished his work there in September 2012 and is now working for Amnesty International as part of its Economic Social and Cultural Rights Campaign, Demand Dignity. I was introduced to him by Ms B, who suggested that I speak to him. He is good friends with her boyfriend.

Mpho Tsekwa
grew up in Soweto in Johannesburg. He attended an under resourced township school. He is what would have been classified black under apartheid and Sesotho speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. He identified strongly as Christian. He identified as straight and was married. His partner was American, white. He came to Cape Town in 2006 to study. He attended UCT to complete his Masters in City and Regional Planning. Before this he had been at the North West University where he studied social science and was an active participant in student politics. He’d been a member of the South African Student Congress (SASCO) and the Student Representative Council (SRC). At the time of the interview he was working for the Western Cape Department of Transport and Public Works. He was also involved in an organisation called Umthombo We Sizwe that develops intercultural competence and leadership skills in children from diverse communities. He also considered himself an ‘agent of change’ providing guidance and support to young men in his community. He has subsequently moved to work for the Western Cape Department of Local Government. I met Mpho through his wife who was doing her Masters in Diversity Studies. I went to their wedding. We are friends on Facebook.
Dylan Valley
grew up in Kuilsrivier and then Durbanville, Cape Town. He attended a formerly white-designated ‘model-
C’\textsuperscript{180} high school in the Northern suburbs of Cape Town. He is what would have been classified coloured
during apartheid and English speaking. His parents were active members of the ANC during the anti-
apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was twenty-five years old. He identified as Christian but
was not practising. He identified as straight and at the time in a relationship. His partner was coloured. He
attended UCT and has a BA Honours in Film Theory and Practice. At the time of the interview he was
making documentary films. His previous projects included a documentary on a Cape Town based hip-hop
group, called \emph{Lost Prophets}. His project at the time was about the life journey of a reformed gangster, from
prisoner to gospel rapper. He has subsequently gone on to direct a documentary on a stage show about the
cultural and racial politics of Afrikaans, called \emph{Afrikaaps}, and about recent local clashes over land in Cape
Town, called \emph{The Uprising of Hangberg}. He had also been a member of the TAC. He is still making
documentary films, and is currently still working on the documentary about the reformed gangster who is now
a gospel rapper. I met him during our Landmark Advanced Course in 2008. He is a part of my extended social
circle so I see him at clubs, parties, events, etc. We’re friends on Facebook.

Mr A
grew up in Grassy Park, Cape Town. He attended a public high school in Grassy Park. He is what would have
been classified coloured under apartheid and English speaking. He objects very strongly to the term coloured,
however, and identifies racially as black. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the
time of the interview he was in his early thirties. He did not identify his religious or spiritual orientation. He
identified as straight and was at the time of the interview in a relationship. His partner was coloured. He was
at the time of the interview working as an illustrator and designer. He was doing illustrations for a magazine
which explored the arts, culture and politics of Africa, whose title suggested its radical subversive intentions
around representation. He was also working with an organisation that teaches teenagers from poor areas to
become comic book illustrators and was also one of the founding members of a group of DJ’s who threw
parties that were, what I considered to be, one of the most racially integrated spaces in Cape Town. He was
also a member of a Cuban solidarity organisation that I belonged to too. He continues to work with the
magazine and on various art and music projects around Cape Town. I met him through attending the parties
he DJed at. He is also friends with my partner. We’re friends on Facebook.

Ms B
grew up in an upper middle-class area of Johannesburg. She attended a private Jewish high school. She is
what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in

\textsuperscript{180} ‘Model C’ schools are previously white government high schools that are largely funded and administered by parents and alumni. They all tend to be very affluent.
the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-seven years old. She grew up Jewish, and still identified as Jewish culturally and ethnically, but at the time of the interview she identified religiously and spiritually as atheist. She identified as straight and at the time was in a relationship. Her partner was white. She came to Cape Town in 2008 to do a degree in Creative Writing. After high school she studied at Wits University and had a BA majoring in English and Philosophy. After studying at Wits she travelled to London where she worked in publishing and Nepal where she worked as a teacher and at an orphanage. In high school she had been a member of a Habonim Dror. At the time of the interview she was an organising member of an NGO that organised campaigns educational programmes around issues such as xenophobia, good governance and the constitution. She has subsequently qualified as a teacher and works at a high school. She is no longer involved in the NGO sector. I was introduced to her by Ms P who suggested I should interview her.

Ms C grew up in both Zimbabwe and Cape Town. She attended a private school in Cape Town. She is what would have been classified black under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-three years old. She grew up as a strict Catholic, but at the time of the interview she identified religiously and spiritually as ‘reverent agnostic’. She identified as straight and at the time was in a relationship. Her partner was white. She came to Cape Town in when she was young, after having been born in the Zimbabwe and living and attending primary school there. She studied at UCT and had an Honours Degree in Sociology. At the time of the interview was working towards her Masters in Diversity Studies. Her interest was in feminist practice and theory in a feminist organisation. At the time of the interview she was also doing training to become a volunteer as a counsellor at a rape counselling NGO. Before that she had been an active member of student development organisations. She has subsequently completed her Master and started working in development. I met her whilst I was working at Intercultural and Diversity Studies (iNCUDISA) and she was on the Diversity Studies programme. She also did some ad-hoc work for research projects I was co-ordinating. We’re friends on Facebook.

Mr D grew up in a upper middle-class area of Johannesburg. He attended a Jewish private high school for boys. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was just under forty years old. He grew up Jewish, and still identified as Jewish culturally and ethnically, but at the time of the interview he was entering a new phase of spirituality informed by toaism. He identified as straight and was divorced. He had two children. He came to Cape Town in the late 1980s to study at the university of Cape Town, but did not complete his degree. He came back to UCT in his thirties to complete his degree in Social Work. He was in the South African Defence Force in the early nineties. At the time of the interview he was the co-ordinator of a community service organisation at the University of Cape Town and completing his Masters in Social Work.
He has subsequently completed his Masters and continues to work at UCT. He was introduced to me by Ms I, who suggested I interview him for this project. We’re friends on Facebook.

Mr E

Mr E preferred to have most of his biographical details withheld. A number of people including Ms J and Ms B, suggested that I speak to him. I subsequently found out that his mother is good friends with one of my partner’s best friends. We are friends on Facebook.

Ms G

grew up in Rondebosch East in Cape Town. She attended a formerly white-designated ‘model-C’ high school in the Southern suburbs. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-two years old. She identified as atheist. She identified as bi-sexual and at the time of the interview was not in a relationship. She attended UCT and had an Honours in History. At the time of the interview she was a key organising member of a worker solidarity organisation at UCT. Before that she had been a member of a student communist organisation, and an organising member of a student organisation which hosted discussions on human right and social justice issues. She had started a similar organisation at her high school, and had lead campaigns against religion in education and gender discrimination in school sport. She has subsequently been awarded a Masters from the University of Chicago, and worked for a year doing research and advocacy work around issues affecting African immigrants in the USA. She is currently doing an internship in Mexico City, where she is researching women’s access to land and customary law in the South of Mexico. She returned to South Africa in January 2013 and hopes to continue working on issues of land reform/access. She was introduced to me by Ms P, who suggested I interview her for this project. They were both members of the worker solidarity organisation at the time. We are friends on Facebook.

Mr H

grew up in a middle-class area of Stellenbosch. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and Afrikaans speaking. His parents were not politically active. At the time of the interview he was thirty-one years old. He did not identify his sexual orientation but at the time of the interview was in a relationship with a woman. His partner was white. He studied at the University of Stellenbosch. At the time of the interviews he was doing his PhD, and employed as a researcher at a research unit. He was a member of the TAC for a number of years before that, where he was first a volunteer and then a national level project manager. He was involved in student politics at Stellenbosch University in an ad hoc capacity, mostly focussing on issues relating to the university’s language policy. He has subsequently been awarded his PhD, which was interested in the politics of HIV and AIDS, AIDS ‘leadership’ and AIDS social movements. He is currently doing post-
doctoral work. I met him for the first time whilst volunteering for TAC in 2003. We socialise on occasion via our mutual friend, Mr U.

Ms I
grew up in Noordhoek in Cape Town. She attended a fairly affluent public high school for girls in the Southern suburbs. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was thirty-three years old. She identified as Christian. She identified as straight and at the time of the interview was in a relationship. She came to Cape Town in when she was young, after having been born in the Free State and living and attending primary school in Lesotho. She studied at UCT and had a BSocSci majoring in Sociology (with an emphasis on Gender Studies). At the time of the interview she was working for a small marketing company and was volunteering as a counsellor at a rape counselling NGO, something she’d been doing since 2000. She had recently co-authored a book on dealing with trauma for women in South Africa. Before that she had co-ordinated a human rights exchange programme for students from across the world, where they tackled issues such as race, gender, socio-economic inequality, etc. She was also an active member of an international educational programme focusing on personal transformation. She attended protest marches and joined many political causes on Facebook. She has subsequently completed her Masters in Diversity Studies and does a variety of consulting work revolving around research, lecturing and facilitation. She is one of my best friends. I met her whilst working at iNCUDISA in 2005, where we would have long philosophical conversations about the state of the world. We continued our friendship after she left, and since then hang out in the same places like to do the same things. I was her bridesmaid for her first marriage. We lived in the same house for six months in 2009 and are in the same book club. We’re friends on Facebook.

Ms J
grew up in Rylands in Cape Town. She is what would have been classified coloured and Indian under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-five years old. She identified as atheist although grew up Muslim. She did not identify her sexual orientation or whether she was in a relationship or not. She studied at UCT and had an Honours Degree in Economics. At the time of the interview she was working for a national research foundation on education policy. She was a founding member of a Cape Town based organisation coordinating an international campaign around the free movement of Palestinians in Palestine. While she was at UCT she co-founded an organisation with the aim of raising awareness amongst students on a broad range of issues ranging from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to the genocide in Darfur to gender violence, and was an organising member of the UCT branch of the TAC. I was not able to ascertain what she has been doing since the interview. She was introduced to me by Ms P, who suggested I interview her for this project. We’re friends on Facebook.
Mr K grew up in Rondebosch in Cape Town. She attended a formerly white-designated ‘model-C’ high school in the Southern suburbs. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. He grew up Christian, but at the time of the interview he identified religiously and spiritually as atheist. He identified as straight and at the time was going through a divorce. His partner was white. He attended the University of Cape Town and had a Masters in Diversity Studies. During his time at UCT he was an organising member of a student worker solidarity organisation. At the time of the interview he was teaching at a private tertiary level business school which specifically caters to scholars who would not ordinarily have access to tertiary level education. He had retained his ties with the worker solidarity organisation at UCT. He has subsequently gone on to co-lecture a course on diversity and social justice, and has left the business school. I met Mr K whilst he was doing his Honours in Diversity Studies. We have worked closely together for the last two years. I went to his wedding. We are friends on Facebook.

Ms L grew up middle-class. She attended an interracial private Catholic high school for girls. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was just under forty years old. She grew up Catholic but did not identify her current religious spiritual orientation. She identified as lesbian and at the time of the interview was in a relationship. Her partner was white. She didn’t go to university, but at the time of the interview was studying for a degree through correspondence. At the time of the interview she was working for an organisation that consults to government on issues of service delivery. She was also still involved with a number of refugee families she had met whilst volunteering during the xenophobic violence of 2008. She was a key volunteer in both humanitarian assistance and advocacy during that time. Previous to this she volunteered as a counsellor at a rape counselling NGO, something she considers to be her first ‘structured activism’, and subsequent to that became involved in a number of other feminist organisations. Previous to all this she had been an active member of an Anglican Church Outreach programme and had initiated number of small ad hoc projects like starting a soup kitchen out the back of her car. At the time of the interview her ad hoc involvement continued in various ways, including the ongoing legal support and care of a young girl who had been abused by her father. She has subsequently continued her studies and she continues to work at the organisation she was working for in 2009. She continues her involvement with some refugee families and support of the young girl. She is a good friend. I met her through Ms I and we are all in the same book club. We’re friends on Facebook.
Mr M
grew up in Cape Town. He attended a high school for boys, from which he was expelled. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was in his twenties. He grew up Christian, but he did not identify his religious and spiritual orientation at the time of the interview. He identified as straight and it was not clear whether he was in a relationship at the time. He attended UCT and had an Honours in Diversity Studies. At the time of the interview he was working on his Masters in Sociology. During his time at UCT he was an organising member of a student worker solidarity organisation. I was not able to ascertain what he has been doing since to the interview. I met Mr M whilst he was doing his Honours in Diversity Studies.

Ms O
grew up in Lansdowne in Cape Town. She attended a public high school in Claremont. She was classified as Indian on her birth certificate under apartheid. She is born to a coloured mother and Indian father. She is English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-five years old. She identified as Muslim. She identified as straight and was at the time of the interview was not in a relationship. She studied at UCT and had a Masters in Diversity Studies. At the time of the interview she was working for iNCUDISA as a project manager on a project on racial transformation in small towns. She had published her thesis as a book on integration, xenophobia and everyday racism in German schools and was involved a Palestinian solidarity organisation aimed at creating awareness and educating students about the legal and structural effects of the apartheid occupation of Palestine. She is a supporter of the BDS (Boycotts, Divestment & Sanctions) movement. She has subsequently become more involved in volunteering for the UN with a focus on Millennium Development Goals (particularly greening the environment) in South Africa. In terms of her work she does less lecturing and research; and now focuses more on facilitating diversity workshops and also on training and mentoring students to become facilitators of diversity workshops. Ms O and I are good friends. I met her while she was doing her Masters in Diversity Studies. She subsequently became a colleague at iNCUDISA and we have been working together on transformation at UCT.

Ms P
grew up in a middle-class area of Pietermaritzburg. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was in her twenties. She identified as atheist although she grew up Christian. She did not identify her sexual orientation or whether she was in a relationship or not. She was completing her MPhil in Social Justice at UCT. She had been involved in a number of feminist organisations in Cape Town and at the time of the interview organising member of a student worker solidarity organisation. She subsequently has
gone on to complete an MA in Social and Political thought at a university in the United Kingdom. I was not able to ascertain what work she has been doing since the interview. I met her through Mr M.

Mr Q
grew up in Cape Town. He attended an affluent private school. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was in his thirties. He grew up Jewish, and still identified as Jewish culturally and ethnically, but at the time of the interview he identified religiously and spiritually as atheist. He identified as gay and at the time of the interview was in a long-term relationship. His partner was coloured. He attended UCT. He has been involved in advocacy for quality and equality in education and press freedom. He was a member of the TAC. I met him whilst working at TAC.

Ms R
grew up in an upper middle-class area of Stellenbosch. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was thirty years old. At the time of the interview she was exploring a number of spiritual paths including Jungian Philosophy and Tibetan Buddhism. She identified as straight and was at the time in a relationship. Her partner was white. She went to Stellenbosch University and where she studied leadership. At the time of the interview she was the director of a private tertiary level business school which specifically caters to scholars who would not ordinarily have access to tertiary level education, which she co-founded in 2005. Before this she had been involved in a number of educational projects focussing on youth and leadership. She continues to work with youth in the areas of education and leadership. She was introduced to me by Ms S, who suggested I interview her for this project.

Ms S
grew up on a farm in Kwa-Zulu Natal, near Pietermaritzburg where she attended school. She attended a fairly affluent private high school for girls. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was thirty–one years old. She did not identify her religious and spiritual orientation. She identified as straight and at the time of the interview was in a relationship. Her partner was German, white. She came to Cape Town to study at UCT. She had a BA Honours in Psychology. At the time of the interview she was completing a Masters in Education at UCT. She was running an NPO, that she co-founded, that offers after school tutoring, career guidance, HIV counselling and testing, computer literacy and other opportunities for high school learners from under resourced schools in certain townships in the Western and Eastern and Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. The organisation also conducts education related advocacy work. She was also chairperson of the South African branch of an international transformational leadership organisation. She continues to work with the NGO she co-founded which, in 2010, won a major award for being a significant
driver of social change in South Africa. I met her in Pietermaritzburg where we both worked in the same dingy steakhouse. Our (now ex-) boyfriends were friends. I volunteered for the organisation she co-founded. We have kept in touch in various ways since then. We’re friends on Facebook.

Ms T
grew up in Fishoek in Cape Town. She attended a public high school in Fishoek. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. Her parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was in her mid-thirties. She grew up Catholic but identified her religious/spiritual orientation as ‘trying to be a better person’. She identified as lesbian and at the time of the interview was in a relationship. Her partner was coloured. She didn’t go to university but studied photography. At the time of the interview she was studying through correspondence and working for a children’s rights organisation. Previous to this she volunteered as a counsellor at a rape counselling NGO, after being introduced by a friend, and subsequent to that became involved in a number of other feminist organisations. She has subsequently continued her studies and has started working at the University of the Western Cape for an organisation which facilitates civil society’s interaction with local and national government on key issues, including children’s rights. She is a good friend of mine. We are in the same book club. We’re friends on Facebook.

Mr U
grew up in middle-class area of Johannesburg. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and English speaking. His parents were not active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was around forty years old. He was a Buddhist. He identified as straight and was single. He studied at UCT and has a BA degree. At the time of the interview he was working in media. He continues to work in media writing on issues pertaining to social justice. He is a good friend. We’re friends on Facebook.

Mr V
grew up in Zimbabwe. He attended a fairly affluent multiracial private school. He is what would have been classified white under apartheid and identified as an Afrikaner. His parents were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was twenty-five. He did not identify his religious or spiritual orientation. He identified as straight and was at the time of the interview not in a relationship. At the time of the interview he was a co-ordinating and founding member of an organisation advocating for immigrant and refugee rights in South Africa and an organising member of a Cuban solidarity organisation that I also belong to. He continues to work actively in refugee and immigrant rights. I first got to know him through my brief involvement in refugee rights in 2008. I subsequently found out that he was friends with my partner. We are friends on Facebook.
Ms W
grew up in Cape Town. She attended a fairly affluent public high school for girls in the southern suburbs. She is what would have been classified coloured under apartheid and English speaking. Her mother was active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview she was twenty-four years old. She did not identify her religious or spiritual orientation. She identified as straight and did not mention whether she was in a relationship. She studied at UCT and had an Honours Degree in Economics. At the time of the interview she was doing her law degree at the University of the Western Cape. While at UCT she was an organising member of the UCT branch of the TAC. At the time of the interview she was a member of an organisation aimed at raising law students’ awareness of the constitution and issues of social justice more broadly, and extending free legal services to poor communities. She has subsequently completed her degree and taken a job at a human rights based NGO which provides legal services to poor and marginalised communities. A number of people including Ms J and Ms B, suggested that I speak to her.

Mr X
grew up in Rylands and then Crawford, Cape Town. He attended a formerly white-designated ‘model-C’ high school in Newlands/Rondebosch. He is what would have been classified Indian during apartheid and English speaking. His parents were active in the anti-apartheid struggle. At the time of the interview he was twenty-five turning twenty-six years old. He identified as Muslim but was not practising. He identified as gay and, at the time, was not in a relationship. He had completed his Masters at UCT. His work was with victims of apartheid crimes who testified at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He was working on projects related to reconciliation and healing in post-apartheid South Africa and internationally. He was also interested in Palestinian/Israeli politics. He has subsequently gone on to pursue a career in the health sector. I met him through Ms O who recommended I speak with him. We are friends on Facebook.

Ms Y
grew up in a lower middle-class area in Gauteng province. She attended a public Afrikaans high school. She is what would have been classified white under apartheid and identifies as an Afrikaner. Her mother was not politically active but held strong views supporting the ‘Verligte’ (Liberal) position in the National Party, which changed to a rejection of apartheid in the early 1980s. Her grandparents were active in the anti-British, pro-Nazi Germany, proto-fascist Ossewa-Brandwag (Ox Wagon Sentinel) in the early 1940s. She studied at an Afrikaans university where she was a founder member of an organisation aligned to National Union of South African Students which was banned on the campus. During that time she was threatened with expulsion for her political activities. Upon leaving university, she worked at an anti-apartheid publication. She later received a Masters in Political Economy. At the time of the interview she was thirty-nine years old. She identified as atheist but grew up Christian Protestant in one of the three Afrikaner nationalist ‘sister churches’. She identified as an out lesbian and was in a long-term relationship. Her partner was Jewish and white. She
lived in Johannesburg before moving to Cape Town in the late 2000s. Her writings as journalist and author provoked a legal challenge, censorship and threats from across the political spectrum, whether ANC politicians, neoliberal editors, apartheid operatives or neo-Afrikaner nationalist reactionaries. Her area of interest is the democratisation of power relations to advance social justice, particularly in regard gender, race, class and sexuality. I met her in 2007. We socialise on occasion.
Appendix 8 – Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

TRANSCRIPTION AGREEMENT

I, ____________________________ (name), understand that I will transcribe verbatim and in accordance with further conventions discussed with Claire Kelly, transcribe the indicated excerpts of interviews for Claire Kelly.

I understand that I will be paid Rx per spoken minute of interview I transcribe.

I understand that all that the contents of the interviews I receive from Claire Kelly are strictly confidential. I agree not to disclose the content of any of the interviews I transcribe for Claire Kelly. I understand that doing so constitutes a breach of faith.

Signature (Transcriber)_____________________  Date: ________________

Signature (Claire) _________________________  Date: ________________