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**A History of the Present: Recognizing the Complex and Shifting
Nature of Racism and Resistance in the Life Narratives of the
Khayelitsha Internal Forces**

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Abstract

This research attempts to represent and analyze the life-story narratives of a group of five former anti-apartheid combatants. Narratives were collected from a total of ten, in-depth, life-history interviews with five former-members of the Khayelitsha Internal Forces. The Internal Forces represent a group of ex-combatants who were operating in the Western Cape as a para-military Self Defense Unit (SDU) during the 1986-1994 period of popular township revolt. The first stage of analysis consists of five re-constructed summaries of each of the participant's narratives with a particular focus on common themes running through the experience of childhood to the experience of joining the internal forces. These individual narratives are followed by a joint narrative re-construction of the events of the early 1990s. Mobilizing methods of discourse analysis, the second stage attempted to analyze and discuss the constructions of racism and resistance operating in these narratives. In general, findings indicate that discourses of racism and resistance focus attention on their immediate/individual expressions, while neglecting to focus on their broader, systemic nature. The theoretical concept of "praxis" is mobilized to theorize this individualist/immediate focus, showing how it emerges from a "practice" heavy and "reflection" light context of struggle. The absence of a systemic understanding of racism feeds through into present resistant discourses of betrayal mobilized by ex-combatants in that post-apartheid context. These discourses criticize the ANC government for the continued inequality and oppression in South Africa, but neglect the role played by whiteness in sustaining relations of inequality. In conclusion it is argued that the invisible role of whiteness needs to be theorized in recent popular and academic critiques of the post-apartheid regime. Furthermore, activist-intellectuals can play a crucial role in nurturing these post-apartheid forms of resistance through sustained reflection (praxis).

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Introduction

When looking at your comrade's children walking around, smoking tik, selling their bodies, unable to go to school, you realize that his father [was] carrying [an] AK47 fighting for liberation, but today, what is happening again to the black people, the citizens of South Africa...

(Commander Zet, Internal Forces, July 2007)

What we see here, however, is a situation where the real heroes of independence are abandoned to a life of hopelessness and despair while the black elite, having achieved power through the sacrifice of these poor masses, abandon them to a life of poverty – the same situation they suffered under apartheid

Zakes Mda quoted in Uwah, C (2003:143)

In the context of a post apartheid South Africa, many former freedom fighters feel betrayed by the ANC government (Everatt & Jennings, 2006; Gear, 2002b; Swarts, 2007). Furthermore, dominant constructions of the history of the struggle focus on the role played by the ANC's military wing while excluding the role played by everyday local internal forms of resistance (MacDonald, 2006). The internal township revolts of the 1980s played a crucial role in bringing the apartheid state to a standstill; however these internal forms of resistance are relegated to a marginal space in the history of the struggle. This research aims to give expression to a group of five former anti-apartheid internal combatants, who call themselves The Khayelitsha Internal Forces. The Internal Forces continue to operate as a community development group in the present context while maintaining the leadership structure and combat identities constructed in the past.

Methods of data collection focused on life story interviews conducted on each of the five members of this group, but included forms of participant observation. The aims of this research are two-fold. On the one hand this thesis aims to tell the stories of a group of South Africans who fought for the liberation of this country, but, in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa, feel excluded from both the history of the struggle and the fruits of liberation. On the other hand, the analytical aim of this thesis is to interrogate the ways in which these narratives draw on discourses of race and resistance to give meaning to past experiences of the struggle and present experiences of continued oppression.

Chapters one, two and three of this thesis provide an orientation for the results, analysis and discussion of findings. Chapter one aims to ground this thesis in international

theoretical perspectives and debates about the nature of racism and resistance. Chapter two aims to ground this research in relevant contextual and research literatures. This chapter begins by sketching the historical context of township struggles in the Western Cape and the studies which focus on the construction of comrade identity and culture during this time. This review is then brought into the present South African context and the relevant literature on the experience of ex-combatants within this context. Chapter three takes the reader through my personal journey of the research process. This chapter attempts to unpack the motivations behind my choice of topic and methodology, as well as to articulate some of the power struggles, complications and complexities involved in conducting this research. Throughout this chapter I seek to demonstrate the creative, partial, situated and jointly negotiated nature of this thesis. In constructing this thesis, I did not seek to re-present the lives of this group as if neutral re-productions of the “truth” of their experience. Instead, I lovingly constructed my own partial, situated representations of the research participants’ own partial, situated representations of their life histories.

Chapter four, five, six and seven unfold the results, analysis and discussion sections. Chapter four consists of five re-constructed individual life story narratives which focus on the internal forces’ personal experiences of the anti-apartheid struggle. Chapter five follows with an analysis and discussion of the ways in which experiences of racism and resistance are being constructed in these personal life-narratives. Chapter six consists of a joint narrative re-construction of the negotiation period during the early 1990s. This chapter demonstrates the ways in which these five narratives converge to form a common history of the early 1990s and a common narrative of betrayal, which is brought forward into the constructions of the present. Chapter seven seeks to demonstrate the ways in which the narrative of betrayal is part of a larger discourse of betrayal mobilized to resist continued oppression and inequality in post-apartheid South Africa. By unpacking the various systems of privilege, strands of identity and systems of meaning (discourses) intersecting through the discourse of betrayal, I attempt to demonstrate the complex and layered ways in which this discourse operates to challenge and re-enforce relations of power in post-apartheid South Africa.

Findings indicate that constructions of resistance during the struggle and in post apartheid South Africa were often blind to the systemic nature of racism. In terms of the anti-apartheid struggle, both racism and resistance were constructed in terms of everyday experiences of racism and everyday expressions of resistance. However, this “practice” heavy context of the township struggles did not sufficiently foster an engagement with the ways in which these everyday experiences are located within broader systems of racism and broader ideologies of liberation. This has implications for current understandings of continued oppression in the context of a post apartheid South Africa. While a resistant discourse of betrayal emerges within ex-combatant communities and resistant factions of the South African poor, the counter-hegemonic potential of this discourse is not fully realized because the systemic nature of racism is not engaged. The insights of Whiteness literature into the “denial” of systemic racism are used to demonstrate the ways in which a lack of engagement with the systemic nature of racism contributes to its continued functioning. By way of conclusion, I draw on theories of praxis (Freire, 1972) to theorize the potential role for “the academic” in nurturing new resistant energy in South Africa through engaged reflection on the shifting nature of racism in South Africa.

Chapter One: Theorizing Racism and Resistance

Meta-Theoretical Perspectives:

This research is underpinned by the meta-theoretical insights of post-structuralism and social-constructionism. Post-structuralism posits that we give meaning to our world through language, and the meanings we choose to give to our world are contingent, i.e. one out of a number of possibilities (Gavey, 1997; Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002). Social-constructionism posits that through giving meaning to our world we define the possibilities for action on that world. Through action we constitute our world, and that action is possible only through the meanings we give to the world (Durrheim, 1997).

Within these meta-theoretical perspectives, units of meaning are called discourses. A discourse can be defined as groups of statements that give meaning to reality (Hall, 2001). Michael Foucault (1980) and J.B Thomson (1984) emphasize the ways in which discourses function to serve relations of power and domination. Foucault argues that although meaning is contested, dominant groups attempt to pin down certain meanings as if they were the “truth” of the situation (Foucault, 1980). When one system of meaning comes to dominate, it functions to exclude other possible constructions of meaning that would allow for other possible kinds of action on the world (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002).

Theorizing Racism: Privilege, Discourse and Subjectivity

Solomos & Back (1999) stress that conceptualizations of race and racism are socially constructed, linguistically plastic, and politically and historically contingent. Race is not a biological category as was once imagined, but rather a socially constructed category that gets imbued with certain meanings in particular historical and political contexts (Solomos & Back, 1999). The recognition of the socially constructed nature of race draws our attention to the discourses in which the concepts of race and racism operate. As the historical and political contexts have changed, so have the constructions of race discourse changed to suit the new contexts (Winant, 1999). The history of race discourse indicates

various shifts in the meaning of race from a basis in “biology” to a basis in “culture” to a basis in “nationalism” (Solomos & Back, 1999). Recently theorists have become interested in “new racisms” which represent “covert” or “coded” forms of racist discourses. For example, colour-blind racism represents a form of “new racism” which appears non-racial, but functions to maintain racist domination (Bonilla-Silva, 2006). Therefore discourses of race and racism are socially constructed and historically contingent systems of meaning.

Throughout the histories of colonialism, slavery and apartheid, racist discourses have functioned ideologically to maintain relations of racist domination (Foster, 1993). Racist discourses are built into the political, economic and material systems and structures of society (Fredrickson, 1981). Therefore racism does not just exist at the level of meaning and ideas, but is built into the structures through which people experience their everyday reality. As such, racism can be understood as a system of privilege based on and supported by racist discourse and built into the structures which organize society. Johnson (2001), Tatum (2003) and Jensen (2005) present a critical understanding of the ways in which power operates to construct and maintain systems of privilege. These authors construct power as existing in larger structures that function to privilege one group at the expense of another. They argue against the construction of racism as a problem of individual prejudice and for a construction of racism as a system of unequal power and privilege.

Racist discourse does not only function to organize the material world, but also the personal world of identity. A social constructionist approach resists a view of identity as a fixed, essential and internal core possessed by individuals and recognizes the multiple, fluid and contested nature of subjectivity (Calhoun, 1994). Furthermore, subjectivities are constituted within historically located discourses (Callero, 2003). In theorizing the connection between discourse, power and subjectivity, Foucault draws our attention to the micro-politics of discourse that reach into the most intimate areas of human life (Hook, 2004). Power does not only act as an oppressive force at the macro level, but also as a productive force at the micro level. Althusser’s theory of interpellation posits that

subject positions are constructed in discourse. Through a process of interpellation or “hailing”, individuals are recruited into these subject positions (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002; Wilbraham, 2004). Building on Althusser’s theory of interpellation, Foucault’s theory of bio-power argues that power works through individuals who regulate themselves in terms of discursively constructed norms of behaviour, thought and desire. Through a process of self-regulation, individuals act on themselves to produce particular kinds of selves in line with dominant discourses of power (Hook; 2004; Callero, 2003).

In sum, we can see race and racism as socially constructed discourses which are historically and politically contingent. Racist discourse has historically been built into the structures of macro power and in turn functioned to legitimize these structures. Furthermore, racial discourses produce racial subjectivities by exerting productive power on individuals to regulate their thoughts, actions and desires in terms of the relevant subject positions prescribed in discourse. These subject positions are arranged within relations of power so that for every element of structural power, there is a complementary politics of subjectivity that works hand in hand with the structural arrangements of domination (Hook, 2004).

Legitimizing Systems of Racial Privilege:

Whiteness theorists draw attention to the ways in which white identities are produced through discourses which function to legitimize the privileged position of whiteness. For example, white identity is structured in discourses which allow white subjectivities the luxury of being oblivious of their privileged position (McIntosh, 1997; Tatum, 2003). This “ignore-ance” of white identity is facilitated through the connections between whiteness and middle-classness. In the production of white identity, discourses of whiteness intersect with middle class discourses of meritocracy and Just world theory in ways that allow whites to conceptualize themselves as deserving of their privileged position (Ballard, 2004; Salusbury, 2003; Salusbury & Foster, 2004; Wale & Foster, 2007). Instead of seeing their privilege as a result of an unequal system of race and class domination, they see their “success” as a result of hard work in a context where everyone has equal opportunity to succeed provided they put in the hard work. McIntosh and

Tatum argue that white ignore-ance to the injustice underpinning their success is perhaps the strongest of all white privileges, as it allows white subjectivities to be unjustly privileged through relations of domination, but to be oblivious to the injustices underpinning their “success”.

A further characteristic of white identity which contributes to the “luxury of obliviousness” is the construction of whiteness as the norm against which everything else is judged (Wildman & Davis, 1997). Whiteness as the norm has been historically built into the systems, structures and symbols of the world to the extent that whiteness appears as the natural order of things. Being white means that you don’t need to think about what it means to be white, your whiteness is so naturalized that you can ignore your privilege (Martin, Krizek, Nakayama & Bradford, 1999).

Everyday Experiences of Racism and Resistance

Essed (1991) draws our attention to the everyday lived experience of racism. Racism in South Africa exists on a systemic level through the laws and structures constituting relations of domination, on an ideological level through the discourses mobilized to justify structures of domination, and at an experiential level, in the ways in which these structures and ideologies express themselves in the everyday lives of black South Africans. Systems of race domination and oppression position the policeman and the soldier at the dividing line between “the native” and “the settler” (Fanon, 1963). For “the native”, oppression is experienced in everyday forms of violence. In addition to these forms of direct violence, Bulhan’s (1985) definition of violence captures the pervasive nature of violence in the everyday life of the oppressed:

Violence is any relation, process, or condition by which an individual or a group violates the physical, social, and/or psychological integrity of another person or group. From this perspective, violence inhibits human growth, negates human potential, limits productive living and causes death

(Bulhan cited in Hook, 2004: 135).

Bulhan’s definition of violence allows us to conceptualize the physical, structural and symbolic levels at which violence operates. For example, South African policies of

segregation meant that black South Africans were forced to live in homelands situated far away from their places of work (Hook, 2004). Traveling such far distances impacted on African families and resulted in sleep deprivation, thus inflicting forms of physical and psychological violence on black South Africans. Therefore, the oppressed experience systems of domination in the everyday forms of direct, structural and symbolic violence.

Scott (1990) unpacks the invisible infra-politics of everyday forms of resistance to oppression. These infra-politics of resistance include myths, stories and folktales about resistance and revenge as well as everyday resistant actions such as foot dragging, squatting, evasion and desertion. Kelley (cited in Barchiesi, 2005) draws our attention to the situated nature of everyday forms of resistance. In the quote below, Kelley demonstrates the ways in which the motivations for everyday resistance challenge our taken for granted constructions of “the political”. “Political” acts of resistance to domination are often motivated by deeply situated experiences of hardship. It is often these experiences of hardship (resulting from the structural violence of racism) which move ordinary people to action:

By shifting our focus to what motivates disenfranchised black working people to struggle and what strategies they developed, we may discover that their participation in ‘mainstream’ politics (...) grew out of the very circumstances, experiences, and memories that impelled many to steal from their employer, join a mutual benefit association, or spit in a bus driver’s face. In other words, I am rejecting the tendency to dichotomize people’s lives, to assume that clear cut ‘political’ motivations exist separately from issues of economic well-being, safety, pleasure, cultural expression, sexuality, freedom of mobility, and other facets of daily life.

(Kelley cited in Barchiesi, 2005: xx)

The infra-politics of resistance as expressed by Scott (1990) and Kelley (1994) draw our attention to the everyday, situated forms of resistance to everyday experiences of oppression. While racism and resistance are built into broader structures and systems, they are often expressed and experienced at the everyday level of infra-politics. Scott (1990) adds that while everyday forms of resistance do not represent a public challenge to systems of domination, they contribute towards laying the foundation from which a public, collective liberation struggle can arise.

Black Consciousness and Strategic Essentialism

Liberation theorists have theorized a number of conditions required for a public, collective liberation struggle, starting with a positive self definition. W.E.B Du Bois, Franz Fanon, and Steve Biko demonstrate the significant psychological violence experienced by black psyches living in a white dominated world. W.E.B Du Bois, writing in the beginning of the 20th century, evocatively describes the sensation of a double vision required to exist in a world where you are constantly evaluating your self through the eyes of your oppressor:

“It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One feels his two-ness, - an American, a negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body.”

(W.E.B. DuBois, 1994: 2)

A liberation struggle begins with a shift away from “white” constructions of “blackness” and towards a more positive definition of self. In South Africa, Steve Biko emphasized the need for a psychological liberation of the oppressed. He argued for racial separation of black South Africans from white norms and standards of judgment, in order for the development of a self-confident black consciousness:

“Black consciousness” seeks to show the black people the value of their own standards and outlook. It urges black people to judge themselves according to these standards and not to be fooled by white society who have white-washed themselves and made white standards the yardstick by which even black people judge each other

(Biko, 1978: 30)

The process of constructing a positive self identity around which to mobilize black resistance to white oppression is a form of “strategic essentialism”. Calhoun (1994) argues that although anti-essentialism provides a useful lens through which to understand subjectivities, it is sometimes necessary to mobilize around a “perceived common identity” or grand narrative to further the political aims of social justice. However, feminist inter-sectional theory warns against uncritical claims to common identity. Vron Ware (1992) illustrates the ways in which white feminism of the late 19th century was often articulated with the imperialist discourses of the time. The tendency to unite women under one category functioned to subsume/trump issues of race and class inequalities.

On the flip-side, Patricia Hill Collins (1990) and bell hooks (1990) have demonstrated the ways in which struggles against racism have tended to trump issues of patriarchy and gender discrimination. For black women to accuse black men of violence or sexism is to risk playing into the white racist imagination and being labeled a race-traitor. The examples provided by Ware (1992), hooks (1990) and Collins (1990) provide invaluable insight into the ways in which power functions at the intersection of different identities to mobilize one struggle while silencing another and to place individuals in double-binds which make it seem impossible to resist one form of oppression without supporting another. While “strategic essentialism” remains a crucial mobilizing strategy for liberation struggles, any claims to “common identity” require constant reflection and sustained critique.

Collective Action and Praxis

Along with the strategies of “strategic essentialism”, liberation struggles are characterized by collective organization and action. Collective organization refers to the process of people coming together to analyze and reflect on their current situations and where shifts in consciousness feed into concrete and realistic plans for active resistance (Foster, 2004). Collective action comprises the public, visible, collective acts such as protests, marches, lobbying, armed struggle and guerilla warfare. These acts are a means towards the end goal of liberation, but are often experienced as liberation and can become ends in and of themselves. The frustration accumulated through everyday experiences of oppression is finally directed back onto the source from which it came. Scott imagines the experience of defiance as a double release:

There is the release of resisting domination and, at the same time, the release of finally expressing the response one had previously choked back. Thus, the release of tension generated by constant vigilance and self-censorship must itself be a source of great satisfaction

(Scott, 1980: 231)

Similarly Fanon (1963) draws attention to the ways in which violent acts of defiance against the oppressor can play a role in the psychological and physical liberation of the oppressed. However, if the people stop collectively reflecting on the nature and purpose

of violence and defiance, there is a danger that the broader aims of the liberation struggle towards which violence and defiance are but a tool may become lost in the energy of action. The importance of maintaining both sides of the reflection-action dialectic has been emphasized by liberation theorists in the concept of “praxis” (Freire, 1972). Praxis is the notion that both reflection (analysis, discussion, critique, and understanding) and action (armed resistance, protest, and marches) are required in a dialectical give and take relationship with one another to forge true transformation (Foster, 2004; Freire, 1972).

Systems of privilege and oppression exist at a number of different structural, ideological and everyday levels. Strategies of liberation attempt to mobilize the oppressed around a “strategic identity” to resist oppression at each of the relevant levels of expression through collective defiance. However theorists emphasize the fragile nature of both of these strategies of resistance. While the strategy of mobilizing around a common struggle identity threaten to silence the struggles which cut through this “common identity”, the psychological liberation experienced in acts of defiance threaten to become self-serving. These warnings demonstrate the need for praxis: the constant dialectical relationship between action and reflection, strategy and critique.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This research is situated within the historical context of the popular township struggles during the 1986-1994 period, as well as within the current context of a negotiated post-apartheid South Africa. With regards to the first historical context, this review discusses the literature on township struggles in general, and summarizes the Western Cape context in particular. Furthermore, key studies on the making of a “comrade” during this period are brought into focus, paying attention to the ways in which these studies theorize the identities, cultural systems, and discourses within in which the “comrades” of the township revolt emerged. The second set of literature reviewed focuses on the identities of ex-combatants in a post-apartheid South African context. The findings of these studies indicate a strong sense of being betrayed by the ANC government and can be contextualized within broader resistant discourses emerging in a post-apartheid South African context. In the final section of this literature review, I draw attention to a conceptual gap in the theoretical interpretations of this resistant discourse. While recognizing and fleshing out the critique of the ANC government expressed in the discourse of betrayal, the pervasive and invisible role played by whiteness remains out of focus. By drawing on international and local studies into the workings of white discourse, I argue that these studies provide a useful “clue” into recognizing the invisible ways in which whiteness finds its way into discourses of resistance.

Histories of Racism and Resistance

The racist histories of colonialism and apartheid and the resistant histories of the African National Congress (ANC) have been richly documented in various historical literatures (See for example: Bundy, 1979; McKinley, 1997; Terreblanche, 2002). While there is not space to comprehensively unfold this history in this literature review, I would like to draw attention to a few key points arising from my reading of South Africa’s histories of racism and resistance. The first key point is that policies of segregation and apartheid were deeply based within an unequal division of South African land. Colonialism and segregation divided the land up in South Africa so that a small white minority would have access to the majority of rich fertile land, while the African majority would be

forced into homelands representing only 7.3% of land (James & Lever, 2001). To understand this unjust division of land, it is important to realize that segregation was not really about keeping blacks and whites separate, it was about creating an ultra-exploitable black work force for the developing mineral and agricultural industry (Bundy, 1979; MacDonald, 2006; Terreblanche, 2002). Therefore, the second key point summarized by Foster (1991) is that throughout South Africa's history, the ideologies of capitalism and racism have intersected to form mutually beneficial relationships.

A third key point relates to the ways in which the strategies and ideologies of resistance emerged in relation to strategies and ideologies of repression. The African National Congress (ANC) formed in 1912 in order to resist racist capitalist attempts to squash rising African industriousness. The formative aim of the ANC was to convince white South Africans to allow civilized, educated and propertied Africans to be incorporated into mainstream society (McKinley, 1997). This early African resistance emerged within an ideology of non-violence, patience, accommodation and deferring to white liberals. However when the National Party came into power in 1948 and began reconstructing society in terms of their master plan for apartheid, the ANC Youth League responded with their own brand of African Nationalism. While non-racialism remained a central part of ANC ideology, the meaning of non-racialism shifted. The new African Nationalism of the ANCYL functioned as a form of "strategic essentialism" to construct common racial identities from heterogeneous tribal identities (Fredrickson, 1995; MacDonald, 2006).

The paragraph above demonstrates a fourth key point, which relates specifically to shifting ANC ideology. The meaning of non-racialism shifted from an emphasis on tribes as the basis of political organization to the strategic construction of racial identity as the basis of political organization. A further ideological shift occurred in 1962 as previous strategies of non-violence were replaced with violent resistance when a few individual ANC members decided to form the ANC military wing "Umkhonto We Sizwe" (MK) meaning "Spear of the Nation" (McKinley, 1997).

The final point I want to bring out relates to the strategy, politics and ideology of the ANC-UDF alliance of the 1980s. The 1980s marked a period of increased popular revolt. The United Democratic Front (UDF) formed in 1983 as an umbrella organization representing a number of different anti-apartheid groupings (Seekings, 2000). In light of popular revolts spreading through South Africa the ANC aligned with the UDF and shifted its strategy to a strategy to “a people’s war” (Lodge, 1991; Motumi, 1994b). The politics of the ANC and the UDF during the 1980s was based on the racial nationalism and multiculturalism of the 1955 freedom charter. This politics presented itself in the UDF and ANC strategy to include any interest group who was “remotely cognizant of the inevitable downfall of apartheid” in the fight against apartheid (McKinley, 1997: 51). A multitude of cultural, class and racial groups mobilized around a common struggle for racial national liberation against a single enemy (the white racists in power and their supporters (McKinley, 1997). By defining the struggle in narrow racial national terms, the ANC and UDF neglected to problematize the ways in which varying and contested interests of different group positions cut through a common racial national identity.

Urban Township Struggles

This research is based on stories of violent resistance against the apartheid state during the 1980s period. Most of the participants of this study were born in rural villages and then migrated to townships to look for work. In 1988 Cobbett & Cohen edited a book “Popular Struggles in South Africa” aimed at analyzing the internal dynamics of the anti-apartheid struggle. This book draws attention to the diverse, local, everyday struggles of ordinary South Africans, which began with the Soweto student riots of 1967 and continued to gain momentum through the 1980s. During the 1984-1986 period, these local conflicts came to constitute the most threatening challenge to the apartheid state (Seekings, 1988). The state responded by declaring a state of emergency on 12 June 1986 and shifting to strategies of full-blown counter-revolutionary warfare (Foster, 1991; McKinley, 1997). The apartheid government pursued a dual strategy of reform and repression within the black community. Limited redistribution and social reform occurred in an attempt to “win the hearts and minds” of the black population, while at the same time security forces were given carte blanche to arrest, detain and murder community

leaders (Foster, 1991; McKinley, 1997). The narratives of the Internal Forces unfold within the context of this 1980s period of increased internal forms of resistance, as well as increased state reform and repression.

Cobbett & Cohen (1988) provide a useful sketch of the various forms of popular struggles unfolding in South Africa during the 1980s period, but for the purposes of this literature review, the chapters on urban struggles by (Seekings, 1988) and Swilling (1988) are most relevant. Urban struggles are popular struggles which take the “place of residence” as the “locus of resistance” (Cobbett & Cohen, 1988: 10). Seekings (1988) focuses on the township politics of the urban struggles in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region during the 1980s. This analysis demonstrates the ways in which diverse grievances (relating to education, living conditions, pass laws, councilors) cutting across a variety of environments (such as school, residence, and workplace) gradually came to be understood as interconnected within common political, economic and moral relationships. It was the connection across these local grievances that resulted in the violent protests of the ‘Vaal Uprising’. Swilling (1988) argues that the UDF represented a front under which these diverse local grievances over issues such as transport, housing and rent could connect to become national political campaigns (Swilling, 1988). While urban struggles represented local grievances occurring within places of residence, under the UDF these grievances came to form the site over which the masses were mobilized into an internal popular revolt with a national focus.

Western Cape Township Struggles

A lethal aspect of the apartheid state’s counter revolutionary strategy came in the form of infiltrating community divisions and co-opting members of resistant black communities to work against anti-apartheid groups (Lodge, 1991). The 1980s period marked a shift in political alignments as the state co-opted right wing vigilantes to disrupt and destruct attempts at resistance. During the state of emergency, vigilantes were established in many townships across South Africa and were often headed by municipal councilors and black policemen (Lodge, 1991). These vigilante groups represented powerful allies to the apartheid state in that they could root out racial oppression groups more effectively than

the police. The history of township struggles in the Western Cape during the 1980s represents one of the most brutal examples of the successful use of vigilante groups to destroy resistant communities.

May and June of 1986 saw the most brutal form of forced removal of squatters in and around Crossroads in the Western Cape (Cole, 1987). Residents of old Crossroads under the leadership of Johnson Ngxobongwana were co-opted by the state security forces as right wing vigilantes and mobilized to fight against “comrades” of the Cape Youth Congress and the United Women’s Organization (Lodge, 1991). With uncontested support from the South African Police and the South African Defense Force, these vigilante “witdoeke” forcibly removed over 70 000 people from surrounding squatter communities (Cole, 1987). Using methods of participant observation and in-depth interviewing over the 1980-1986 period, Josette Cole unfolds the events leading up to the violent conflict between the “comrades” and the “witdoeke”. She demonstrates the complex, contradictory and tragic nature of squatter history in the Western Cape, showing how the apartheid state gradually co-opted and armed one side of the divide in an unfolding divide and rule strategy.

The squatter communities of Crossroads emerged as a strong resistant force to the apartheid state’s various attempts to remove the surplus African population from the Western Cape (Cole, 1987). In 1983 the apartheid state announced that the older community members could stay in Crossroads, while the younger members of surrounding communities (Portland Cement, Nyanga Bush, Nyanga Extension) would be relocated to a new high-density black township called Khayelitsha. Three out of five community leaders resisted the state’s attempts to relocate communities to Khayelitsha, arguing that this was another attempt to gain control over black communities. The Commander of the Khayelitsha Internal Forces was originally part of one of these resistant groups led by Melford Yamile and continued to report to Yamile whilst commanding the Internal Forces. From 1985 the security forces cemented an alliance with Ngxobongwana who was able to recruit an army of “elders” (Lodge, 1991). These Witdoeke declared war on the surrounding Crossroads communities of Portland Cement,

Nyanga Bush, Nyanga Extension, and nearby KTC. This war took place over the period 17 May to 12 June 1986 and resulted in 13 dead, 75 injured, and an estimated 70 000 refugees. 1000s resisted moving to Khayelitsha and 1000s, tired of the pressure, moved to Khayelitsha. By September about 126 000 people had moved to Khayelitsha.

In an attempt to maintain law and order in Western Cape townships after the relocation to Khayelitsha, the security forces recruited former Witdoeke and former comrades in need of employment into the police force to become special policemen labeled 'kitskonstabels'. These kitskonstabels were armed and placed within township communities to discipline 'trouble makers' (Cole, 1987). The general infiltration of the army and the police into townships did not result in increased discipline, but rather in increased militarist resistance from comrades against security forces (Swilling, 1988). As part of the strategy of "a people's war", local combatant structures formed in the mid 1980s to protect the community from the security forces. These para-military structures would come to be called Self Defence Units (SDU), but were initially conceived of as organs of people's power (along with street communities and people's courts) (Motumi, 1994a). SDUs were based and trained internally, and were responsible for defending the community. Their main targets were the security police and the internal community betrayers, such as councillors, dissenters or spies (Motumi, 1994a). The Internal Forces can be understood as a para-military unit aimed at protecting and disciplining the Khayelitsha Community. Therefore in terms of structure and function, the Internal Forces most closely represents a Self Defence Unit.

Relevant Studies on Township Struggles

During the early 1990s a number of studies emerged on the township struggles of the (1986-1994) period. Although these studies have different focuses, they are pulled together as a body of literature attempting to explicitly or implicitly subvert popular white constructions of township resistance and violence during this period. These popular views drew heavily on a Le Bon's theoretical legacy, which had dominated understandings of violence throughout the 20th century. Le Bon theorized that crowd

violence resulted from a tendency for individuals to lose their sense of individual identity in a crowd situation and become swept up in the impulsive, irrational character of “the crowd” (cited in Foster, Haupt & de Beer, 2005). Following Le Bon, popular views of the township struggles assumed that this violence emerged out of a state of anomie (lawlessness) and was provoked by a few unruly individuals (the bad apples) (Foster et al., 2005; Straker, 1992). Therefore, within this context where township violence was generally constructed by white South Africans as the result of anomie spurred on by a few criminal, undisciplined “bad apples”, a number of studies (Campbell, 1992; Marks, 2001; Orkin, 1992; Sitas, 1992; Straker, 1992) were conducted during the late 1980s and early 1990s which attempted to refute this popular notion.

Catherine Campbell’s (1992) study attempted to situate “comrade” identity within a broader social context of racism, capitalism and patriarchy. Based on in-depth, open ended interviews conducted with township people in Durban on the perceptions of how township society is changing, she found that in a context of capitalism and racism, township youth were experiencing a crisis in masculinity. While township youths were more educated than their parents and therefore had higher expectations for their futures, they faced a reality of unemployment which threatened their ability to fulfill the traditional masculine role of provider. At the same time, an alternative expression of masculinity as violence opened up for these youth in the macho-militarist comrade identity. Therefore, Campbell showed that gender in relation to class and race (rather than anomie and “bad apples”) is a key factor in understanding the construction of comrade identity in terms of militarist masculinity in a context of racial and class oppression.

Studies conducted by Sitas (1992) and Marks (2001) argue that South African “comrades” of the 1980s formed part of a broader “comrade” social movement. Sitas’s 1992 article on the Natal comrade movement during the 1985-1989 period draws on formal and informal discussions conducted with members of the movement during a process of research into youth cultures and politics in South Africa. Monique Marks used methods of in-depth interviewing and participant observation to conduct research during the early 1990s on youth involved in the Charterist movement during

the 1980s and 1990s in Diepkloof in Soweto. Both studies emphasize that comrade identity is borne out of an experience of hardship, oppression and violence. Sitas focuses on the militarized cultural content infused into the songs, fashion, and ways of speaking developed within the comrade movement, demonstrating the complex systems of meaning and identity within which violence takes place. Marks (2001) focuses on the justifications for collective violence were deeply based within a sense of comrade identity as an advanced moral identity entitled to use violence to discipline any elements which threaten the aims of the Charterist movement. These studies demonstrate that rather than being rule-less and irrational; violence in South African townships emerged within a broader social movement based in complex cultural meaning systems, rational justifications and comrade identity.

Following Le Bon's theory of the crowd, the popular conception of township violence in white minds was that it erupted from a state of lawlessness. Similarly this popular white construction of township violence assumed that these uprisings did not have popular support, but rather resulted from a few trouble makers stirring up and intimidating the masses (Straker, 1992). However international and general studies demonstrate that militant activists are often more educated, empowered and socially and politically integrated into their societies than non-militants who demonstrate greater feelings of powerlessness (Tomlison, cited in Straker, 1992).

Bringing the focus onto the psychology of activists, Staker's (1992) research on Leandra Youth demonstrates that in opposition to assumptions that resistance is instigated psychologically unhealthy and anti-social individuals, these youth demonstrated significant psychological resilience. Straker (1992) conducted in-depth interviews on 60 Leandra Youth who had fled from their homes during a time of internal community violence, which was tacitly supported by the police and which resulted in violent battles between conservative and resistant factions of the community. Her findings demonstrate that within the identity position of "comrade" exist a number of different and shifting personality types, such as "the leader", the "warrior-hero", the "conformist" and "the conduit". Each personality type represents a different reason for joining the struggle and

different potential levels of psychological resilience to trauma. In general, Straker found that these activist youth demonstrated high levels of psychological resilience to trauma and that it is the exceptional youth rather than the average youth who becomes chronically anti-social. However, a shift in the traumatic environment which spurred the militant identities is crucial if youths are to be able to heal and construct new peaceful identities.

Similar results were expressed by Caplan & Paige (1968) in the United States and Maluleke (1989) in South Africa, who both demonstrate that activists experience an empowering psychological shift allowing them to recognize the ways in which individual hardships are part of a broader social system (both cited in Straker, 1992). Similarly, research conducted by Orkin (1992) on three personal accounts of MK soldiers on their circumstances and motivations for becoming guerilla soldiers demonstrated that all three accounts represented a refusal to accept the dominant political order. Orkin concludes this study by turning the issue of violent resistance on its head and re-directing the focus from explaining the violence of the MK soldiers towards explaining the inaction of the passive on-lookers. In his final sentence he asserts that “what really needs explaining is why the rest of us did less” (1992: 669).

The studies unpacked above represent qualitative studies into the experiences of militant youth activists fighting against the apartheid state and its symbols. All five studies were conducted as resistance and violent protest was unfolding. Furthermore these studies represent a general aim to resist a popular belief held by white South Africans that the township revolts emerged out of a state of anomie and were instigated by a few psychologically deviant and anti-social youths. In general, these studies aimed to situate these violent protests within the rules, norms, identities and justificatory discourses of a broader “comrade” culture. My research is based on a group of comrades involved in township revolts (focusing mainly on the Western Cape context). Therefore these reviewed studies are relevant in that they unfold the “making” of comrade identity, culture and discourse during this period, and provide a general cultural and psychological

framework of understanding within which to interpret the narratives of the Internal Forces.

Recent Studies on Ex-Combatants

A more recent study conducted by Foster, et al. (2005) seems to fall into a space between the studies which focus on the making of a comrade during resistant and more recent studies which attempt to understand ex-combatant identity in post-apartheid South Africa. This book takes forward the argument initially developed in previous qualitative studies (Campbell, 1992; Marks, 2001; Sitas, 1992) that violent resistance results from a combination of cultural context, comrade identity and counter-discourse. The dominant post-apartheid attempt to understand past violence came in the form of the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) process, which focused attention on the factual and objective documentation of the motivations and perspectives of individual perpetrators of violence. Foster et al.'s (2005) study attempts to engage in dialogue with the TRC's factual and objective perspective and to understanding political violence from a multitude of knowledge perspectives.

Between 2000 and 2004 Foster, et al. (2005) collected personal life stories of protagonists of political violence from both sides of the political conflict in South Africa. The life story of nine protagonists of violence formed one of these knowledge perspectives and was joined by the factual lens of the TRC, the academic lens and the popular discourse (media portrayal) lens to create a multi-perspectival understanding of protagonists of violence. A key issue that was thrown up across the different perspectives on political violence was the problematic nature of the term "perpetrator". This term holds a dichotomous assumption reflected in the academic literature that violence is either located within individual willing agents or within situated pressures. Instead the term "protagonist" of violence is suggested to represent the ways in which violence results within a "third space" created by the complex relationships between structure and agency. Foster, et al. (2005) demonstrate that to understand violence requires an understanding of the ways in which violent acts are a result of an intersecting and relational mix of situational, discursive, organizational and individual factors.

The research conducted by Foster et al. can also be situated within a second set of studies on former combatant's identity in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. These studies exude a reflective quality in their attempts to understand the present in terms of the past. The titles of three current studies on former combatants in post apartheid South Africa tell their own story. In the context of a post-apartheid South Africa, former combatant's feel like current leaders are "Wishing Us Away" (Gear, 2002b), because ex-combatants were "Only Useful Until Democracy" (Everatt & Jennings, 2006). Based in these common experiences of being sidelined and marginalized, "A New Terrain of Struggle" (Swarts, 2007) is forming on the horizon of post-apartheid, ex-combatant identity. In an attempt to contribute to an understanding of the current situation of former combatants who seem to have disappeared from public eye and dominant discourse, Gear (2002b) conducted eight focus groups on former combatants and their families, as well as 26 in-depth interviews on former liberation movement members (including MK and SDU members) and apartheid state soldiers (South African Defense Force members). A profound sense of betrayal emerged as a dominant theme across former combatant levels in differing degrees. Former combatants feel that they have been forgotten by former leaders and the goals they fought for have been discarded. In general, the expectations of former combatants have been severely unfulfilled in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

Similarly, findings from a Gauteng survey of ex-combatants conducted by Everatt & Jennings (2006) demonstrated that this sense of betrayal is a dominant theme among ex-combatants. The purpose of this survey was to provide base-line data on ex-combatants for Non Profit Organization (NPO) attempting to implement re-integration projects. Results further indicated that ex-combatants face great economic struggles and a high rate of unemployment. Despite feelings of betrayal and socio-economic hardships, two-thirds of ex-combatants surveyed asserted that they would do it all again knowing the consequences of post-apartheid democratization. Furthermore, an even greater proportion espoused a strong sense of hope in the belief that their families will be living a better life in the future. Everatt & Jennings (2006) argue that these hopeful sentiments represent a

rapidly closing window period where ex-combatants are receptive to re-integration interventions. Once closed, a strong sense of disillusionment and hopelessness is likely to thwart re-integration attempts.

Although the focus of Foster et al.'s (2005) study was on understanding protagonists of political violence, the emerging sense of betrayal can be recognized in some of the narratives. For example, Shirley Gunn (a former MK commander) describes her experience of attending a meeting with the Deputy Finance Minister in 1998. Her description emphasizes feelings of betrayal as a few former MK soldiers benefit at the expense of the foot soldiers:

The people who did the work have never been honored... Yet on the other hand, there is all sorts of handshaking, back patting, ladder climbing and moving above everyone else, creating this huge distance between them and the soldiers on the ground.

(Foster, et al. 2005: 223)

A similar sense of betrayal was found in the in-depth interviews conducted by Swarts (2007) on members of the Mass Democratic Movement (MDM) for her Masters Thesis. She found that these former anti-apartheid activists demonstrated strong feelings of betrayal. Furthermore these ex-combatants mobilized their combatant identities in a post-apartheid context to construct new terrains of struggle around a new sense of being sidelined by government. The evolving terrain of struggle Swarts identifies in her interviews with former anti-apartheid activists appears to be part of a broader resistance evolving within poor communities. While ex-combatants represent a form of this group, there are other similar forms of resistance based in similar narratives of betrayal documented in recent research conducted by Ballard, Habib & Valodia (2006); Desai & Pithouse (2004); Gibson (2006) & Hart (2007).

New Resistant Struggles

The people want things really to change and right away. Thus it is that the struggle resumes with renewed violence

(Fanon 1967 cited in Desai & Pithouse, 2004:249)

The closing of the 1990s marked the point at which the patience of poor black communities began to wear thin. This shift was reflected in the locally based community struggles which spread through the country as the poor mobilized around their everyday experiences of poverty and oppression (Gibson, 2006). Examples of such struggles include the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), the Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) and the Western Cape Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC) (Ballard, Habib & Valodia, 2006).

Gibson (2006) draws attention to the daily reports occurring in the *Cape Times* showing frustrated Gugulethu and Khayelitsha residents who have taken it on themselves to pressure the government into providing them with basic human services. By setting up barricades to block off the N2 highway they send the following message to the ANC government “We are tired of your promises, we want houses as much as you want our votes... where is the dignity in begging the council for a toilet” (Gibson, 2006: 8).

In another example of community resistant struggles Desai and Pithouse (2004) track the unfolding of struggles in Mandela Park against housing evictions and water and electricity disconnections. This article illustrates the deep sense of betrayal experienced by these poor black South Africans:

Mandela has been the real sell-out, the biggest betrayer of his people. When it comes to the crunch, he used his status to camouflage the actual agreement that the ANC was forging with the South African Elite

(Trevor Ngwane, Soweto Electricity Crises Committee
cited in Desai & Pithouse, 2004:239).

This sense of betrayal has given birth to a new resistant consciousness based in experiences of deepening poverty, marginalization and alienation. In many ways these new struggles “trace a lineage to” the anti-apartheid township struggles of the past (Gibson, 2006: 4). These community struggles represent the re-emergence of older forms of resistance against a new enemy and a new hegemonic order. Emerging community struggles are deeply situated within current the socio-economic situation of post-apartheid South Africa. In this context, the ANC attempts to negotiate the contradiction between pro-poor promises and economic realities by drawing on a discourse of racial

nationalism to claim to a common racial identity based in the struggle for liberation. This point is demonstrated by Gillian Hart (2007) who draws attention to the increase in the occurrence of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) discourse in ANC documents since 2000. She argues that this discourse plays on “histories, memories and meanings of freedom struggles, redress for the wrongs of the past, and visions a new nation”. While this discourse of racial nationalism functions to legitimize the ANC government, it also contains within it a contradiction which opens up the conditions of possibility for the resistant discourse of betrayal. This contradiction lies in the very fact that the common vision used to legitimize the hegemony of the ANC has not been achieved, thus undermining that hegemony. In the next section I aim to unpack the unfolding politics of the post-apartheid regime in order to demonstrate the workings of the discourse of racial nationalism.

The Negotiated Compromise

The power politics of reform apartheid, as it was unfolding, was that white supremacy could not survive without capitalism; capitalism could not survive without blacks; and blacks could not abide by white supremacy. But blacks and capitalism might become partners

(MacDonald, 2005: 81)

South Africa’s transition from racial capitalism to democratic capitalism was not the result of a people’s revolution, but the result of a negotiated compromise (Gibson, 2001; Guy, 2004; MacDonald, 2006). While the ANC’s strategy of people’s power functioned to mobilize the masses with dreams of a revolution, at the end of the day business exerted its influence to ensure that a revolution would not be the final outcome (McKinley, 1997). In the context of blatantly racist apartheid, capitalist inequality could no longer be constructed as fair and just inequality. The apartheid state was battling to hold on to power. Pressure was exerted internally as the subordinated black majority became increasingly vocal and militant in their resistance, externally by the ANC and internationally through the use of economic sanctions (Guy, 2004). In a context where the economy was collapsing and the state was battling to hold onto power, capitalism needed to re-legitimize itself. To do this, capitalism needed to de-link itself from race, and for this it needed a black bourgeoisie (MacDonald, 2006). Towards these ends the liberation movement parties were legalized in February 1990, their leaders were released from

prison, and negotiations began (Guy, 2004). In the end the negotiations resulted in a trade off. The ANC traded in its dreams of social revolution and agreed to protect the imperatives of capital; and the national party traded in its hopes for power-sharing (MacDonald, 2006). Business got its wish and the ANC and the mobilized masses got half their wish.

In a post-apartheid context, black South Africans became equal citizens under the law and were given access to democratic institutions enabling them as a majority to elect black leaders to power. However property rights had to be respected and orthodox economic policies adopted. This “compromise” meant that old systems of economic privilege were maintained and brought forward into the post-apartheid regime. Through the workings of racial capitalism, white South Africans had managed to accumulate and pass down a significant and influential asset base (Oliver, 2001). Therefore, by 1994 white South Africans no longer needed legalized racial discrimination to maintain their economic privilege (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

White South Africans continue to enjoy an intersecting asset base of material and non-material privileges. MacDonald draws attention to the privileged cultural identities of white South Africans which are “reinforced by consumerist, secularizing, post modernist globalization” (2006: 133). White South Africans maintain the privilege of having their language, value system and worldview positioned as the naturalized way of the world. While white South Africans continue to enjoy the economic, cultural and private privileges bestowed on them by the apartheid regime in post-apartheid South Africa, these privileges are enjoyed in direct relationship to the continued hardship of the majority of black South Africans. This majority experiences South Africa as a society where “the individual leads an imaginary life as a citizen of the state and a real life as an alienated and monadic isolated being, an object of the capitalist economy” (Gibson, 2005: 92). For this majority the transition did not bring liberation, instead it brought continued hardship and oppression. The continued oppression of black South Africans and privilege of white South Africans has the potential to place the ANC in a very insecure position.

During the negotiations, the powerful corporate sector influenced the ANC into accepting neo-liberal economic policies such as those espoused by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). While privileging local and global capital, these policies exclude the possibility of re-distribution and functioned to work against the ANC's pro-poor promises (Terreblanche, 2002). Furthermore, the legacy of apartheid's education system has resulted in a severe lack of skills base in the black population. White South African's mobilize their economic, cultural and corporate power, as well as their skills base to hold the ANC to ransom by threatening to leave the country and "take their skills with them" if the ANC does not bend to their wishes. Despite these compromises and difficulties, the ANC has managed to effect valuable changes in people's lives, especially with regards to service delivery (Muiu, 2004). In general, the ANC finds itself between a rock and a hard place. On the one hand it needs to respond to the popular demands of its majority black, poor constituency within the confines of the inherited legacy of apartheid. On the other hand, the ANC finds itself under the powerful thumb of "white skills" and "white money" continually threatening to leave the country if their demands are not met.

The ANC navigates this precarious position through an interconnected strategy of de-racializing capital whilst mobilizing African National identities. These interconnected policy and discursive strategies form part of a broader hegemonic project working to legitimize capital in South Africa. Despite the reality that capitalism allows racial privilege and oppression to continue in the New South Africa, these strategies attempt to hide the ways in which capital works to maintain racial inequality. In order for capital to gain legitimacy in post apartheid South Africa, it required a multi-racial class of capitalists. Towards the goals of creating a black bourgeoisie, the ANC pursued policies which would open up new economic opportunities for black South Africans such as black economic empowerment (BEE) and affirmative action (AA) (Seekings & Nattrass, 2006; Terreblanche, 2002). While these are important steps to make, they do not contribute to changing an inherently unequal system inherited from apartheid. The majority of wealth remains in white hands, and the majority of poor South Africans remain black, while a few black South Africans are sucked up to join forces with the old wealthy elite (Seekings & Nattrass, 2006; Terreblanche, 2002). If policies of BEE and AA are to enact

any meaningful racial redress, they must be accompanied by deep structural transformations geared towards improving the quality of life and general empowerment of the majority poor black South Africans (Terreblanche, 2002). In South Africa these policies are not accompanied by meaningful structural transformation. As a result, the black elite fulfill the hegemonic function of legitimizing the capitalist system and the inequalities resulting from it.

The discursive leg of this hegemonic program to legitimize capital is located in the ANC's construction of South African "nation-hood". "Nations" are imagined communities in the sense that even though most of the individuals comprising the nation will never meet each other, they imagine a sense of connection to these people (Anderson, 1991). Despite the heterogeneity existing within nations, a national identity is imagined and mobilized as if it was homogenous (Mare, 2005). Following from this conceptualization of nationalism as imagined, an important area of study becomes the discourses which work to construct the meaning of the nation and national identity (Gray, Delany & Durrheim, 2005). The ANC's imagining of the "nation" in the public politics of citizenship is based on tenets of "non-racialism" and a "rainbow nation". However, outside the public politics of citizenship, sections of the ANC mobilizes a private politics of racial nationalism (MacDonald, 2006). These discourses of racial nationalism represent a site through which previously constructed "strategic" racial identities continue to be mobilized for political purposes.

The discourse of racial nationalism can be seen in the ways in which the former-president of the ANC, Thabo Mbeki mobilizes a discourse of "two nations". Mbeki (1998) described South Africa as comprising two separate racial nations, one white and prosperous, the other black and poor. While this "two nations" discourse recognizes the link between capitalism and racism, it also brings the significance of racial identities to the foreground and sets up the possibility to argue that by improving the socio-economic position of a few black South Africans it amounts to a victory for all black South Africans. As policies of black economic empowerment widen the gap between the wealthy black and white elite and the poor black majority, the ANC legitimizes the

poverty of the black majority by strengthening the discourse of a common racial nationalism.

The discourse of racial nationalism is effective at interpolating (calling to) black South African subjectivities, because of the way in which it pulls on powerful emotional strings. For many black South Africans there is a strong sense of pride attached to the non-racial democracy and the ANC government. These two symbols represent the fruits of a collective struggle against the apartheid regime under the guidance of the ANC (Guy, 2004). This sense of “nationhood” constructs Black Africans as a common people with a common history of struggle and a common vision for the future, while at the same time working to absorb the contradictions and inconsistencies between ANC discourses and socio-economic realities.

This final section of the literature review has attempted to draw attention to two interconnecting arguments. The one relates to the tricky position of the ANC wedged between white economic, cultural and skills power on the one hand and the needs of the majority poor, black South Africans on the other hand. By drawing attention to this difficult position, the intention is to show the position in which it is placed and the legacy it has inherited. The second point relates to the ways in which the ANC attempts to hold the tension between these two opposing pressures by mobilizing a discourse of common racial-nationalism. While the racial aspects of identity are highlighted allowing the ANC to claim to act in the interests of all black South Africans, at the same time the significance of different class interests are dimmed down. Socialist critiques of the ANC’s discourse of racial nationalism rightly recognize the ways in which this discourse functions to legitimize the ANC despite the continued suffering of the majority of its voters. However, these critiques generally neglect to analyze and demonstrate the privileging of white capital within this discourse as it functions to invisibly benefit white South Africans by maintaining the capitalist system and their privileged positions within that system.

The invisibility of whiteness in the socialist critiques of the ANC is also evident in the discourse of betrayal, which focus attention on the ANC's failure to live up to its pro-poor promises. Based in an analysis of the resistant potential of the discourse of betrayal as it is expressed in the narratives of the Internal Forces and in other studies, this thesis argues that the role of whiteness be brought more strongly into these debates. Despite the fundamental role played by white South Africans in maintaining the status quo, this group is remarkably absent from the discourse of betrayal. As a potential resistant discourse presented as a critique of the current regime, whiteness represents a necessary, but absent, site of engagement. By excluding the role played by whiteness, the discourses of betrayal and the studies which theorize these discourses run the risk of allowing a powerful force of oppression to continue its operation in an invisible space.

While studies into resistance tend to exclude the role of whiteness in their analysis, the opposite blind-spot is evident in studies of whiteness. While the obvious focus of studies on whiteness is white identity, these studies neglect to show how whiteness might be operating in resistant spaces. Although it seems counter-intuitive to think that a discourse of privilege (whiteness) might be operating in spaces of resistance, the slippery and pervasive nature of whiteness enables white discourse to shift shape from a overt racist form to a covert seemingly anti-racist form. This shape shifting ability has been widely documented in whiteness studies in the United States and South Africa, which demonstrate the counter-intuitive racist functioning of the discourses of colour-blindness and non-racialism.

Frankenburg's (1993) research into discourses of race mobilized by white women in the U.S. found various forms of colour/power evasive white discourse. This discourse draws on liberal individualist discourse to argue that we should not see colour, and instead treat everyone as colour-less individuals. Within this discourse, differences that are implicated in power are evaded with euphemisms in order to de-emphasize relations of domination. Through this discourse the unequal power structures are played down and denied, in order to argue for the same treatment regardless of race (Frankenberg, 1993). Gallagher (1997) found a similar discourse to be operating in the United States in reaction to

affirmative action policy. His findings indicate that white university students mobilized discourses of colour-blindness and individualism to argue that affirmative action was unfair to whites (Gallagher, 1997). In terms of South African whiteness, research indicates that white South Africans mobilize a combination of discourses that deny white privilege, argue for non-racial colour-blindness and construct whites as a victimized racial category. These discourses function to legitimize and perpetuate white racial privilege in South Africa, while at the same time keeping up non-racial appearances (Ansell, 2004; Salusbury, 2003; Salusbury & Foster, 2004; Steyn, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005).

The slippery, invisible nature of “new racism” masquerading as “non-racialism” reflects a highly sophisticated and lethal strand of racist discourse. The strength of these discourses is in the ways in which they hide white privilege. Statman (1999) argues that a key characteristic of white identity is the denial of whiteness. Whiteness functions within a powerful combination of pervasiveness and invisibility enabling it to be everywhere and nowhere – a constant invisible force. The studies on whiteness discourses of privilege maintenance discussed above provide an important clue towards theorizing the connection between discourses of whiteness and discourses of resistance. While whiteness influences cultural, economic, political, and everyday realms, it manages to enact this influence invisibly. Therefore the key to theorizing whiteness in resistant discourses is to notice its absence and theorize the effects of that absence.

Chapter Three: The Research Journey

Memory has an amazing ability to prune, clean and order experience. This process is like tumbling semi-precious stones that were once jagged and covered in dirt, but now shine in neat, round, perfection. In telling our stories, we string our tumbled memory stones onto a coherent story line, each following the other in logical conclusion. This ability for memory to prune and order the messiness of experience allows us to communicate our experiences with clarity and coherence, but these stories will never represent experience in all its complexity and confusion.

Deciding on a Topic of Research

The conceptualization of this research, in fact the whole research process, often felt as if it was happening backwards. Instead of finding a topic of research and then an appropriate methodology, I found a methodology I liked and then searched for an appropriate topic. The discovery of auto-ethnographic forms of methodology resulted from a personal process of struggle with dominant methods of sociological research. The process of research itself is often a messy, unpredictable and unfolding process (Ellis & Brochner, 2000). Whilst the researcher influences and is influenced by her research, the researcher's central role is often written out of that research report (Clifford, 1988). Auto-ethnography represented a research methodology that resonated with my personal experiences of research as a frustrating and enlightening process of self-discovery, as well as a co-constitutive process negotiated between the researcher, the research participants, and a variety of other influencers.

Auto-ethnography is an autobiographical approach to research and writing that brings the layered and reflexive nature of the research process into focus. It can range from starting your research from your own experience; to including your experience in your research; to making your research processes the objects of your research (Ellis & Brochner, 2000). By narrating and performing the experience of research through the presentation of findings, auto-ethnography allows one to connect the auto-biographical and personal to the cultural and social. In Ellis's words, "Auto-ethnographic forms of writing and

research feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness, and introspection” (cited in Jones, 2005: 765). Mobilizing auto-ethnography as a form of auto-biographical and performance text, I envisioned the possibility of weaving personal, experiential narrative through historical, cultural and political contextualization and critical analysis.

I decided on a topic of auto-ethnographic study during a one week intense workshop in June 2006 on training diversity trainers. While I was already on a path of interrogating, understanding and challenging my own white identity I went through an experience on the final day of the workshop which indicated to me some of the more difficult work on white privilege that lay ahead of me. While watching a documentary I had seen twice before, I was struck by a side narrative on former combatants, which had never affected me before. This side narrative touched on the experience of former combatants in South Africa, who felt unappreciated, unacknowledged and sidelined. These former-combatants represented the suffering, pain and oppression, which was the result of my privilege. These were the people who sacrificed their lives to fight against the inhumane and unjust system of apartheid. These are people that continue to experience unjust oppression and inhumane living conditions in post-apartheid South Africa. For me, the easier part of coming to terms with whiteness was coming to terms with the way it unjustly privileged me and the more difficult part is coming to terms with the continued pain, oppression and inhumanness on which my privilege was/is built.

With the almost manic confidence, adrenaline and excitement of someone embarking on a dangerous journey, I decided my Master’s thesis would be the beginning of this process of delving into the uglier side of my white privilege through engaging the life stories of former anti-apartheid struggle combatants. I wanted to gain insight into who these former combatants were, what it felt like for them to resist the apartheid regime, what had happened to them in the post-apartheid regime, and how they feel about their current situation. Working within a social-constructionist paradigm, my aim was not to collect accounts which represented the “truth” of the situation, but rather to build an

understanding of the socially constructed meanings these groups give to their experiences of the past and the present and the subject positions constructed within these experiences.

Social-constructionist paradigms form part of the myriad of approaches, methodologies and strategies under the label of qualitative research. Denzin & Lincoln (2000:3) define qualitative research as a naturalistic and interpretative practice:

“qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them.”

Therefore, qualitative research implies a situated and contextualized understanding. Phenomena are understood within the contexts from which they emerge and the constructions of meaning in which they are articulated. Within a social constructivist, qualitative and auto-ethnographic research paradigm, my aims were represented in the following broad research questions:

- *How do anti-apartheid former combatants give meaning to their experiences of the struggle and their experiences of liberation in the context of a post-apartheid South Africa?*
- *How is my identity as a white South African woman in post-apartheid South Africa implicated in the discourses which former combatants mobilize to tell their stories?*

The Search for Former Combatants

My first step towards finding research participants was to email Ginn Fourie at the “Lindie Fourie Foundation” who worked with former combatants and had played a central role in the documentary which prompted this research topic. Ginn put me in contact with a group of former combatants called the “internal forces”. During the struggle an internal anti-apartheid para-military structure was formed in Khayelitsha called the “internal forces” or the “amabutho”. This group closely resembled what the literature calls an “SDU”. However, since the name SDU only appeared in the early 1990s and this group formed in the mid 1980s, they call themselves “the internal forces”. In the context of a post-apartheid South Africa, members of this group have come together to form “youth for change”, a community development programme geared towards combating crime and drug abuse through providing the youth of Khayelitsha with various forms of educational and entertainment activities. Therefore the former

combatants participating in this research all operated within the borders of South Africa, under the UDF banner and within a structure very similar to the SDUs, but under the name “the internal forces”. Furthermore, the research participants operated as a group during the struggle and continue to operate as a group (with the same leadership structure) in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

I was first introduced to the internal forces when I attended a meeting with Commander Zet (the leader of the group) and Ginn at the Khayelitsha training centre. At this meeting I met Mandisi who works closely with this group of former combatants and possesses an insider’s knowledge of their stories of the struggle. Mandisi explained to me that he had been helping the internal forces in their mission to get their stories into the public domain. This group felt a strong feeling of being left out of history and a strong desire to challenge the dominant historical constructions of the anti-apartheid struggle. At my request, Mandisi agreed to be translator. Additionally he positioned himself as co-organizer, co-researcher and co-constructer of the research process. I digested this unexpected enthusiasm and support with mixed emotions; on the one hand I was excited at the energy that this group brought to the research and on the other hand I was unnerved by the strong interests they had in it.

The Process of Data Collection

My main strategy for Qualitative data collection was to collect life story narratives from the internal forces through in-depth interviews. My motivations for this approach stem from the ability of narrative stories to express experiences of everyday life (Bruner, 1991) and the ability of life history approaches to give a voice to marginalized histories and invisible struggles (Miles & Crush, 1993). In addition to life story interviews I also engaged in participant observation and kept a research journal documenting field notes and engaging with my subjective experiences of the research. Due to the over-arching interest of having their role in the struggle acknowledged, each research participant chose to have their name reflected in this study. Therefore I use the names that each group member used to introduce themselves, and then provide their full name in the introduction to their narrative.

Mandisi and Commander Zet suggested a format for the research process and the appropriate payment for interviews. We decided to hold a weekend of intense interviewing, with lunch and snacks. I paid R600 and Mandisi organized enough meat, bread, chips and juice to feed the internal forces and the various other characters around the training centre for the two days. On this weekend we managed to complete Boy Boy's (2hrs), Pamela's (2hrs) and Two Boy Jacks's (5hrs) interviews and we conducted the first of three interviews with Zakuthini. Over the next two months I completed two more interviews with Zakuthini (6hrs) and three more interviews with Commander Zet (7hrs).

At the beginning of each interview Mandisi translated a brief introduction, which emphasized my interests in the personal life stories of the internal forces and the use of these stories towards the completion of a Master's thesis. The interviews followed a loosely structured framework summarized in the introduction to the interview, and then used throughout the interview to ensure that key topics were addressed. The framework for the life histories began with the childhood experiences of the internal forces and moved through the process of becoming involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, forms of education and/or training, key experiences during the struggle, experiences of combat and violence, the transition to democracy, and reflections on the post-apartheid present in terms of experiences of past struggle. The interview began with the question: So tell us about your childhood? And closed with the question: Looking back on your involvement in the struggle, how does that make you feel? All the interviews were conducted at the Khayelitsha Training Centre.

Mandisi was present for every interview. Boy Boy, Two Boy Jack and Zakuthini's interviews were translated by Mandisi from Xhosa into English, Pam's interview was partly in English and partly translated from Xhosa to English, and Commander Zet's entire interview was in English, but I still required help from Mandisi at times to interpret meanings or events across cultural boundaries. Mandisi became the central axis on which the research turned, the bridge connecting me to the internal forces. As a translator, Mandisi was both valuable and problematic. On the one hand his own interests in the

process were problematic in the sense that his translation was not neutral, but on the other hand his in-depth understanding of the complexity of the stories and ability to translate across cultural boundaries, while keeping the meaning of the story intact was a blessing.

During the data collection phase my research methods were ethnographic, in the sense that I was interested in immersing myself in the lives, experiences and personal stories of this group in order to understand the ways in which they construct meaning in their lives (Miller, Hengst & Wang, 2003). This process of immersion was stronger with some participants than with others. Mandisi and Commander Zet became key informants and our constant interaction allowed a space for us to develop relationships. Furthermore, I spent time getting to know Two Boy Jack and Zakuthini through the various community projects and events that I attended at the training centre (a breakfast, a cycle race and bicycle donation, family constellation therapies workshop). I spent a total of 60 hours at the training centre. The most significant proportion of this time was devoted to getting to know the internal forces through their life history stories. In addition I spent time hanging around the training centre, attending events organized by this group, getting to know the internal forces and gaining a general “feel” for the place and the people.

Through this process of immersion, the internal forces began to think of me as a friend and an advocate to speak on behalf of the group. The research process began to take on a Participatory Action Research (PAR) quality as research participants became co-researchers and actively participated in the research process. (Fine, Torre, Boudin, Bowen, Clark, Hylton, Martinez, Missy, Roberts, Smart & Upedi, 2003). I had no original intention of “sharing power” in the research process. Therefore the decision and action to empower the research participants as co-researchers came directly from the group of participants. I just tried my best to “go with the flow” and reflect on the “power struggles” which emerged in this context of “shared power”.

The internal forces were very invested in the research process. They knew how they wanted to be represented and how they wanted me to represent them. Due to their strong impulse and ability to direct the research process, “control over representation” became a

key site of struggle around which the research process unfolded. For a researcher this is both amazing and terrifying. I felt as if I was in a unique position to do research which challenges the researcher/researched relationship, without having to problematically “hand over power”, because shared power was already assumed. However, as much as I would try to go with the flow and allow the internal forces to define the aims and methods of the research, there always seemed to be a breaking point when I would feel myself pulling back on the reins of control. Even in a context of shared power, the researcher still has her hand on the control sharing meter, she decides how much to slacken her control reins and when to pull them in. When I felt my ability to control my lack of control slipping away, that’s when I would panic and grab hold a little tighter, pull back on the reins a little more.

While I inevitably had my hand on the control meter deciding just how much control I was willing to give away, I would like to think that the research process was continually negotiated between my self and the internal forces. For example, the ways in which I constructed my role as researcher was continually negotiated and repositioned in relation to the ways in which the internal forces constructed my role. I saw myself as a qualitative researcher, trying to understand and re-tell the life experiences of the internal forces. My interest was not in “truth”, and names, dates and places were of less importance to me than capturing the rich meaning of experience. However, this was not what the group had in mind for this process. In the internal forces version of the research process, I was constructed as the journalist whose role was to accurately record the details of the events of their stories and reproduce these stories for the public to read the “truth” of South Africa’s history. Painstaking attempts were made to “make this true for me” by weaving dates, places, names and news-paper articles through painfully confusing and highly charged explanations for why history had played itself out the way it did for this group of internal forces.

In general, the way in which these stories were to be represented was continually negotiated, as various subjectivities and the stories within which they were constructed (including mine) were moved around as if on a chess board continually being

repositioned in relation to one another. Although I am the ultimate teller of the stories in that I interpret my moves as well as the moves of my fellow players, the process of research I am interpreting was jointly and relationally maneuvered. This negotiated process of research came to influence both the analysis and writing up stages of research, as I was given the responsibility to re-tell the stories for the internal forces. I realized that in the newly carved out PAR space, I needed to “give something back” to the internal forces by re-constructing their stories without much analytical intervention (Fine et al., 2003: 176-177).

Process of Data Analysis

All the interviews were tape-recorded, and the process of analysis began with 80 grueling hours of transcription. During this process I kept a record of any thoughts, insights, recognitions and ideas. Once I had transformed my interview recordings into text, I began the analysis process by reading through all the transcriptions, coding the data into themes and making lists of emerging codes. I found myself conducting a double analysis geared towards the dual aims of re-creating the life narratives in a neat, shortened version, as well as looking for the ways in which meaning was being constructed in order to pursue a discourse analysis of the text. I decided to focus firstly on the goal of recreating the stories, a task that was much more complicated than I initially imagined it would be.

Clifford Geertz (1973: 9) argues that research writings are really “our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to”. Therefore when the qualitative researcher writes up their research, they are creating their own story about the research process. Similarly, Kvale describes the qualitative researcher as a traveler who “is on a journey that leads to a tale to be told upon returning home” (cited in Price, 1999: 11). My process of re-constructing the narratives of the internal forces often felt like a “subjective neat making process”. There were no neat narratives waiting to be discovered in the transcribed texts, instead I had to go through a process of attempting to unravel a complex, contradictory, confused, emotionally charged ball of knots, while trying not to lose the significance of the knots as I attempted to unravel the ball.

From first hand experience of these stories and the lives and meaning systems of their narrators, as well as the second and third hand transcribing and re-reading across and within these narratives, I began to pick up a general sense of the stories. This sense included, but was more than just the texts themselves, it required a tacit, intuitive understanding developed from “being around” the internal forces, their environment and their stories. From this sense I started to see how bits fit together, what is being expressed and what is of particular importance to the narrators. Of course this is and can only ever be a partial sense, embodied within the researcher’s own biases, subjectivities and experiences. It is from this sense that I was able to unravel and make sense of the “ball of knots” in terms of a larger framework of understanding. This process resulted in two sections of narrative reconstruction. The first comprises the individual stories of the internal force members, and the second comprises a group history of the early 1990s. While each internal force member told their own version of the events of the 1990s, taken together this period reads like a group history.

Once I had completed the narrative reconstructions, I returned back to the original narratives to identify the ways in which meaning was being constructed and how these meanings functioned within relations of power. This analysis was experienced as a remembering of whiteness, and required a shift in consciousness from seeing the narratives from the perspectives of the internal forces to seeing the narratives through a critical, analytical lens. Throughout the process of immersion I forgot about whiteness as it pertained to the stories, because white privilege did not appear as a significant point of engagement in the narratives of the internal forces.

In my initial interview with Mandisi I attempted to bring a critique of whiteness into the frame in our discussion of post-apartheid South Africa, however this attempt was silenced and the boundaries of engagement were drawn. Whiteness was situated outside these boundaries, a point that was re-asserted a number of times in the interviews in statements like “we are not worried about whites”. Of course, non-engagement is also a form of engagement, a point I would come to pick up on during this second discourse analysis phase. My initial attempts at discourse analysis resulted in a list of a number of

different crisscrossing themes re-occurring through the texts, but none jumped out as a potentially fruitful theme to explore. I went down a couple of dead end analytical paths and hunches that didn't seem to go anywhere particularly interesting. On the good days I felt like I was drowning a little, and began to panic a little... on the bad days I felt overwhelmed, scared, and unsure whether I was going to find my way back home to be able to tell my research tale.

Luckily, a moment of insight struck as I was reading Swarts' (2007) Masters Research on the narratives of former anti-apartheid activists. Her participants expressed strong feelings that the ANC government had betrayed its people. As I read these quotes I wondered: *where am I?* As a white, wealthy South African in Post-apartheid South Africa, I sit in the leafy suburbs with maids and swimming pools, yet I appear no-where in these narratives of blame. As a white South African I am protected from blame. For months I had listened to, reconstructed and thought about similar narratives of betrayal mobilized by my participants without noticing the invisibility of whiteness in these stories, and how whiteness is protected through this very invisibility. Recognizing the invisibility of whiteness provided me with the springboard I needed to dive back into the research again with a new analytical focus on the construction of race and racism in these stories. Using a combination of different discourse analysis methods, I re-analyzed the individual narratives in terms of the ways in which race, racism and resistance to racism were constructed in the text.

Doing Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis carries with it the post-structuralist and social-constructionist assumptions about meaning and language outlined in the theoretical section (Phillips & Jorgensen, 2002; Wood & Kroger, 2000). My approach to discourse analysis attempts to analyze constructions of meaning in terms of how they constitute subjectivities, events and relationships within particular historical contexts and power dynamics. This approach draws on various conceptual strands from a number of different theories of discourse. Laclau and Mouffe focus on the ways in which meaning is constructed. Some useful

conceptual terms from their theory of discourse as summarized by Phillips & Jorgensen (2002) include:

- **Hegemony:** the attempt to fix one particular meaning as if it was the truth of the situation. Once a meaning becomes taken for granted as the truth of the situation, it can be defined as hegemonic
- **Articulation:** The ways in which certain discourses are connected with and expressed in terms of other discourses. For example the ways in which discourses of masculinity are articulated with discourses of violence.
- **Discursive Contestation:** Struggles over which meanings will be mobilized to construct particular situations. Discursive contestations are often part of power struggles over who gets to define the situation. Once a meaning reaches hegemonic status it means there are no longer discursive contestations.

While Laclau and Mouffe's discourse analysis focuses on meaning, Hall (1980) draws our attention to the ways in which meanings always operate within particular political, economic and cultural systems. Therefore discourses need to be analyzed as situated within particular political and material environments. While the construction of meaning is the focus of my analysis, this analysis is contextualized within the ways in which the political and economic history of South Africa impacted on this group of former combatants. Drawing on Foucault and JB Thompson I attempt to analyze the ways in which discourse functions ideologically to support unequal relations of power (Foucault, 1980; Thompson, 1984). The political and economic history of South Africa becomes particularly important when trying to understand the ideological functioning of discourse.

In terms of doing discourse analysis, Ian Parker (1992, 1994) provides a useful framework of ten steps. In a nutshell the steps allow the researcher to identify the versions of the social world (discourses) being constructed in the text. This includes the particular ways of speaking about objects, the rights of speech given to subjects occurring in the text and the possibility and implications of alternative versions of the social world. Three auxiliary steps deal with how the identified versions of the social world support or subvert institutions and relations of power (Parker, 1992, 1994).

The tendency for some discourses to articulate themselves with other discourses meant that some of my previous "dead-end" analyses could be included by showing how they articulate themselves with discourses of race, racism and resistance within particular historical periods. The final analysis of the individual interviews unpacks the

constructions of everyday experiences of racism and resistance within the context of growing up under apartheid and becoming part of the 1980s township struggles. The final analysis of the joint narrative construction of betrayal follows on from the previous analysis in the sense that it demonstrates the ways in which a general silence on the systemic nature of racism during the struggle is brought forward into a post apartheid context. This point is made by focusing particularly on the discourse of betrayal and demonstrating the ways in which the continued privilege of whiteness is absent in this discourse.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Four: The Narratives of the Internal Forces

This section aims to reconstruct the narratives of the internal forces. The original narratives were very long, and often very confusing. These re-constructions do not represent the narratives as a whole, but rather my own attempt to pull together short, historical stories leading up to the 1990s period for each of the five Internal Forces. Interviews differed in terms of length and detail. These differences are represented in the re-constructions, resulting in shorter and longer individual stories. In constructing these stories, I aimed to draw out quotes which represented key experiential themes, and weave these quotes into a summarized re-telling of key themes as part of a sequentially unfolding narrative. “Key” experiential themes were selected on the basis of three criteria: experiences which re-occurred across narratives; experiences of racism and resistance; or experiences which seem particularly important to the individual narrative. The following narratives provide short histories of the experiences of the Internal Forces and summaries of the dominant identity positions each inhabits.

Boy Boy’s Story

Boy Boy Tuma was born in 1965 in the Transkei. Boy Boy describes school and life in the village as tough.

It was tough going to school back then, because back in the day in the villages it was tough, life was simply tough back then

In 1980 Boy Boy “stole some money from my grandmother, brought a passport and went to seek work”. Looking for work was a disappointing experience for Boy Boy as he was told that he was “very thin and very young in posture, people would tease me and tell me to eat more and that would hurt me”. He found work in East London at a farm called “shoot them,” where for the first time he experienced a cruel, racist, white boss:

There was this tractor driver there called McIntosh, I really hated him. He would make us carry heavy things and work like slaves, carrying big baskets. One day this man said I should carry a big basket to the tractor, I carried the first one the second one, and the third one, na ah, I'm powerless, and I stood there for a minute and I looked at him. He was very fluent in Xhosa, even though he was white, and he told me that if I want money I should proceed with work, if I don't want money I should go home.

In 1984 Boy Boy came to Cape Town and lived in Crossroads with his uncle's friends. In Crossroads he first began to notice the political action of comrades in resistance to the apartheid police. He noticed a man, Commander Zet, who seemed to be protecting the community from the police. He decided that he would like to be part of what this man was doing, because he hated what the police were doing:

While I was living in this area, there would be riots and commemorations for the people who died, like on June 16th. When people would have big events, cops would come and shoot at them, and do all of these things. And I noticed one thing that there was this man... that was commander Zet, and I noticed that this man was carrying rifles, and what he would do is to protect people, and shoot back at the cops and all of that. So I thought the best way to protect myself was to form alliance with this man and be part of what he's doing. This man, liked me, and took me under his wing, and would teach me self protection and self defense... he would teach me how to protect, how to run away, how to fight, because he saw that I really didn't like what the police were doing.

Boy Boy began his training by learning how to protect the community and how to stand up for his rights. After a while, commander Zet decided to show Boy Boy and the other young men how to use guns. They were introduced to the rest of the internal force commanders, and officially became part of the internal forces. Boy Boy repeats and explained one of the slogans of the internal forces, which demonstrated the weight and seriousness of taking on this role:

There was a slogan for the internal forces: "There's only one way in, there's no way out" and if you get arrested by the police with a gun, you should go down with it, but if the gun gets taken by the police and you are left outside, you would be killed, because you wouldn't justify what you did with the gun. If the gun is arrested, you should be arrested too, the cops wouldn't leave you behind, so if the gun has been taken, and you are not taken, you did something with that gun, it wasn't taken from you.

Boy Boy describes the first task that Commander Zet gave to the newly recruited soldiers to prove that they were ready to be part of the internal soldiers. Through the successful completion of this task, Boy Boy proved himself and described discovering his own ability to fight against what he hated: "That's when I really discovered that I could really defend myself well and that I really hated being disrespected and ill treated in my own country".

Boy Boy and the newly recruited group of internal forces would hunt, attack and kill their main enemies, represented by the apartheid police and spies. Boy Boy asserts that despite Commander Zet's attempts to control this killing desire, the young soldiers were driven by the belief that they must kill or be killed:

Once you see a police van, you would just shoot at it, so we would act more than thinking about what to do before we do it. So the commander wasn't like that at all, he would first think before he went out and acted... he wanted more peace than fight... Some of the stories the commander really doesn't know, and sometimes we would even shoot some of our own, you know, once we see that you're a spy, once we get that information, we wouldn't think twice. The commander would stop us from killing one of our own, a spy... he would stop us at all times, because he said this thing is currently under negotiation, but we didn't stop, we continued shooting. We also knew that if anybody was to get us, we would be killed, so let's kill first. That's why we had to make sure we killed all of our enemies.

Throughout Boy Boy's narrative, he draws on the "warrior-hero" identity position to construct his role in the Internal Forces. Straker (1992) theorizes the "warrior-hero" comrade identity position as a "follower" identity, which is driven by a need for affirmation. This affirmation is satisfied through confronting adversity and risk-taking. Throughout Boy Boy's narrative, he constructs a sense of needing to prove himself and then managing to prove himself through the confrontational and risky act of violence. This risk-taking behaviour of the "warrior-hero" identity resulted in Boy Boy's later struggles with drug abuse.

Pamela's Story

Pamela Buyana was born in 1963 in East London. She describes her experience of growing up as "tormented". This torment stemmed from a combination of a disrupted and complicated family experience, a physically and verbally abusive step-father, and economic hardships. At a very young age Pam was sent to live with her Aunt. She grew up believing that her aunt was her mother. One day, Pam injured herself and landed up in hospital. Pam's biological mother came to visit her, and she decided it was better for Pam to come and live with her and her husband:

Then, when I was there, with my mother... It was a very, very tormented life... She had two children with her husband, and then when my stepfather hit her, he always hit me, because I'm the one who he doesn't know... I didn't have a name from him, he was just calling me names, nasty names that would hurt me so that I cannot eat... when I go to school, I'm crying, because there's

no one to give me a uniform, even something to eat, because if my mother, I tell my mother I want this, she says, you can ask your father, and then whose my father? I don't have a father.

In Standard Four Pam began to join her activist brother at “events and “rallies” where she experienced the horrors of police brutality. When she joined a Workers’ Union, she continued her activist work and deepened her political knowledge. She describes the political education she received through the Union as enabling her to “see” what she previously could not see:

They told us, if you want to see your rights, you need to know your rights, just go there, they are going to tell you about your rights at work... So, I joined that union, and that's when my eyes were opened, because most of the time it seems as if they were closed.

As Pam's participation in the struggle intensifies, so does her experience of police brutality and dehumanization:

My father opening the door for the policeman, even if we were naked, we had to be taken to the police station, we had to be taken to the van, to the back of the van, we were naked that time and no one knows where we are going... they come in the middle of the night, when we're fast asleep and then we just woke up, not knowing what to do, and then take what is, because they are taking someone (sighs) like a rubbish, cause we are just like dogs.

When Pam came to Khayelitsha, in Cape Town, she was disturbed by ways in which the police and the councilors used the youth to sell drugs and commit crime. With some of her activist friends and boyfriend, she decided to become a Marshall to protect the youth and maintain order in the community. During her time as a Marshall, Pam and her friends had a life-altering experience that pulled them closer together and cemented their commitment to the struggle. The police and “the businessmen” accused the marshals of stealing and burnt their hands. Pam believes that this torture was committed because the marshals were affecting the ability of these corrupt businessmen and police to use the youth to sell drugs and commit crime.

Then it started there now, for us to hold each other ...They said we had done this, but there was nothing that had been done, then they took this boyfriend, with the others, they were four. They put the plastic around their wrists, and then they take spirits, then they pour the spirits and light it, their hands... it has been cooked by the spirit and plastic, because the plastic was getting inside their flesh... So that's where it started for ourselves (said with passion and conviction) to hold on to each other, because we saw that what these boers are doing here, we are not going to see our country: so the freedom, all of us, we did want. Then I started to be outside of anything, just to go with the struggle.

With a deepened sense of determination, Pam and her boyfriend move to site B where there were more activists for them to work with. Pam started working at a creche where she collected the children off the street so they would be safe from the general township warzone environment. Pam was involved in educating the children at the creche. The children were provided with general education, political education and self-protection education:

Then I was working in the creche, collecting the small children from three years, because if there is a fight, you can't see them, the fight can just kill them, so we just take them and put them in a safe place... There, we would teach them all about the struggle, and all those sort of things we were teaching them, telling them Walter Sizulu was this, and Mandela was the one who's fighting for us, he's still in jail, waiting for the whites to give him the freedom, and we are going to fight... so we are teaching them to know what is going on so they cannot be there in the street when the whites, or the soldiers are coming, so they must go straight inside the house... if there is a fire, because we used to have houses that were burning, because the boers were taking the fire bullet, and just point at this house and the next one, and the next one, we'll have that fire. We taught them how to come out from the fire, all of those sorts of things, because those are the things that they were having at that moment; those were the serious problems.

Pam and her activist group approached Commander Zet to ask him if he would train them to protect themselves and to fight against the police. She comments on the uselessness of meetings while people are dying and the pointlessness of speaking when someone would hit you. She demonstrates the power of violence as a form of resistance in the face of the powerlessness of verbal resistance

We want to have the karate, we're so active, because we want to know how to do things, because now what we can see is that our people are dying, and no one's doing anything... we are holding the meetings, but there's no solution, and we are there as the youth, we still have the power, but we don't know how to use this energy, and they are still coming and killing us inside, they are taking our people inside our houses, and you cannot do anything, because you are afraid, you don't have that power... Even if you can speak, to speak is nothing, someone is going to hit you, and then you don't know how to block, or what to do, and then he [Commander Zet] came to us and asked, and then we said, we want to train. We want to know what we are doing, and then he started to train us in karate, because he's the one who has the black belt.

Through the karate training with Commander Zet, Pam became part of the internal forces. As part of the internal forces, Pam's role was to collect information about "the police" who were the enemy, and to clean and hide the guns that were used to fight against the police:

Commander Zet was the commander then. We were like an underground force, nobody knew about us, even though there were those guys who were acting externally away from us. It was now the time that we also took up arms, but most of the time we remained underground... The first

thing that was taught to us, was being the intelligence, meaning that we would give information to the soldiers. When we go out in the daytime, we would go to the places where we know we keep our ammunition, check that the coast is clear, and then we would also check the other areas where we know the police would come, we would check if the coast was clear... We were also taught how to clean guns, and to open the weapon and put it back together, and clean it up.

Pam discusses her experience of fighting against apartheid as part of the internal forces. For Pam, this struggle was mainly experienced at the site of police brutality and the battle field. Pam experienced the horrors of apartheid as police brutality, violence, fighting, killing, and spies. The struggle against apartheid was then a reaction to this police brutality as they took up arms against the police:

There was no more peace, no happiness, no nothing, it was fights all the way. And the police were just raiding our houses, burning our houses down and killing people, and Mxhini had information about the comrades, so he was then a spy for the white people... so what happened is that we created one entry, no exit areas, so that if they come into Khayelitsha, we would beat them up, we shoot them, we kill them... so we had to make sure we fight back.

In discussing the experience of being a woman in the internal forces and whether or not she was scared, Pam displays some ambiguity. Although Pam expresses a bit of ambiguity on whether or not she was "scared," she is confident about the boldness she felt when she had been given training. There is a sense of power in Pam's experience of training to resist oppression violently. Fear was not an option in teaching "the government" a lesson:

I was a little bit scared of dying, but because most of the people... My only worry was my child actually, I was scared only for my child, but being a soldier I wasn't scared, and at some point I was in the same mission as the other soldiers, we wanted to teach the government a lesson. Even though it was tough, we had given our blood to the nation, we all told ourselves that our blood would sprinkle up the nation, so even though I was scared for my children's sake, but at the same time, I wasn't scared.

Pam's story presents a particularly interesting lens into the construction of gender in comrade identity. While often inhabiting the feminine role of "care-taker" and "supporter" during the struggle, there are also hints into the ways in which the 'on the ground' experience of the struggle worked to subvert dichotomous gender roles (to be unpacked later).

Two Boy Jack's Story

Two Boy Jack was born in the Eastern Cape in 1955. He begins his life history with a memory of appearing in court when he was seven years old, because he threw a stone at a passing car.

We used to play under the bridge... and as I climbed on top, a car came by. I just took a stone and threw at it... we were taught not to fight against white people, because white people were big people, and I hated that... what I hated was that nobody I knew had a car, only these people had cars, and why were they the ones that were taken as big people, you know, while we had nothing, we didn't have cars and all of that, so I didn't like that... In court I was asked, did I really do it, and I was asked the reasons for doing it and I gave the same reasons... I also told them that I have no god such as a white person, my only god is Qamata, that I've never seen, not a white person... The ruling in court was that I was going to be given three lashes.

When Two Boy Jack was 17 years old he went to Johannesburg to work in the mines as a caretaker. He describes his experience of work as one where he really experienced racism, apartheid and discrimination between black and white people:

I saw how a black person can be used by a white person to kill another black person. I experienced it... white people would have their own thing and black people would have their thing, you know, and black people started to work at 2 o'clock in the morning and white people only start to work at 10 o'clock in the morning, you know, and only 2 hours, they would then come out. A white person would come out at 4 o'clock, so that was the experience.

In 1970 Two Boy came to Cape Town, joined the UDF in Guguletu, and began his political education. He met commander Zet in a tent and received karate training from him:

In 1971 I joined the UDF in Guguletu... Basically, the aim was to unite the people, and teach them about what was going on in their own country, especially with regards to history, the politics and the freedom charter... They used to have meetings that were called regularly, and gatherings and all that, so I would attend those meetings and gatherings, and the people that were speaking there, were very inspiring, talking about real issues that affect real people, which were the things I had experienced, and I really saw that this is where I was heading all this time... That's when I met Commander Zet... in a tent... and then I told commander Zet that I want to work with him, I want us to work together. At the time, he was taking Karate lessons in Guguletu, he was doing Karate lessons in Guguletu.

Two Boy Jack continued to experience racism and discrimination at work. He was dismissed from three different jobs as a fisherman, in a hotel and in cold storage. In each case he recounts the bad working conditions, low pay and disrespect. He resisted this unfair treatment through violence, leading to his dismissal or arrest. In the following example, Two Boy reacted to a racist slur at work:

One white guy called me a kafir and I hit him so hard that his teeth fell off. I was called into the office and there in the office I hit all the managers, and I was chucked out.

After these experiences of discrimination at work, Two Boy decided it was time for him to get back to his politics and to take up arms:

Then in 1981, I again began to get heavily involved in politics, and even the guns were not very far away from me at this time... I was thinking of ways to take up arms, so that's what made me go back to my meetings and my gatherings... I realized it's not only the company bosses and the other people that are ill-treating black people, it's most of the police, and people who are working for the government... I would hear that there had been terrorists that had been killed, 700, 500, 800, and I wanted to know what a terrorist was. By the end of 1981 I had already known what a terrorist is, and as far as my understanding of a terrorist, it's somebody that is fighting for his rights, that's what a terrorist is.

Two Boy Jack constructed his decision to "become a terrorist" and "fight for his rights" in opposition to the liberation fighters that left the country (the exiles). He described his training as an individual, divinely-sanctioned path, rather than being trained as part of a group:

I decided to be a terrorist! But a terrorist from within the borders, a terrorist that would never leave this country, a terrorist that will never go anywhere else for training. I trusted God, I knew that, actually, in order to be trained, you had to be mentally prepared, and that all comes from the divine powers, that all comes from God... he did that all on his own, because what would happen in those days, is if you feel you're strong, you would go on your own until you get people who have the same vision as you, and then you collaborate and you form forces there, you know, but it's more like each one of them started on his own and then met the others, started on his own and then met the others.

Two Boy Jack went to look for work in the city council in 1985. When he arrived there were too many other people looking for work, and some of them were taken to Nyanga where they were "scammed" into becoming part of the police force:

I told my friend that I don't think this is now what we came here for. Apparently people were being scammed here, if you go in, you cannot come out... When I submitted my form, I was given another form, and this form now had a police stamp on it, police emblem. And I said, no, this is not the work that I came here for. Actually he was forced to fill in that form, and apparently that was a police force form, so he said, no, this is not what he was looking for... He said, I'm not educated, I don't know what to write in here, so they filled it in for him. Then when we were done here, you open the car, and you go straight to a big police van, the others were there already... that's when I challenged the captain and told him that here I am going to leave, I am not going to stay for long. I stayed there for four months, and we were doing some military training.

Once in the force, Two Boy Jack strategically decided that this is a good opportunity to gather information about how the police operate. His previous experience with arms also meant that he did well in the force and was promoted to sergeant. However, when they

were not paid their third salary and were asked to give back their guns, Two Boy Jack believed they would not be paid and started to cause some trouble:

Then I decided to tell my group that we're not going to get our money, we're not giving back our guns, we're not giving back our bullets, let's cock our guns, we'll wait for whoever comes into the door, we'll just shoot and kill them. Around nine o'clock a helicopter came and they brought our money; they gave us our money, and we gave them the bullets. They started to investigate now about me.

In 1987 he was accused of a rape which he didn't commit. He believed that the accusation was part of a "conspiracy" to get him out of the police force and into jail. In 1990 he was released from prison, met Commander Zet in Khayelitsha and became a sniper for the Internal Forces. Two Boy Jack recalls his meeting with Commander Zet:

I asked him, "do you still remember our resolutions?". And he said, "yes of course". I asked him "do we have any tools?", he said "yes, we have the tools", and then he called the other soldiers... and that's when we really started to do our work then... So, I was appointed as a sniper... they would only call me when things were really getting tough, and then I would just go there to solve that. And then I became even a base for all the ammunition, all the ammunition stayed at my place. I would maintain them, repair them, there's nothing that I didn't do with a gun, and that's why, even unusual guns, I would repair them or maintain them, or do anything with a gun, so that's why the guns were actually kept at my place.

In Two Boy Jack's discussion of his involvement with the internal forces, he expresses varied and sometimes contradictory reasons and experiences of combat. At times he gives very individual-personal orientated reasons for involving himself in the struggle, and at other times community orientated reasons. In the following passage, Two Boy moves from asserting his individual vengeance against the police to the need to provide for poor community members:

So at this point, I still had the anger of them taking me by force and making me a police officer, and the second thing was being jailed for something I didn't do, so at this point in time there was no point of return, I'm going to kill whoever works for the government, if he carries a gun, he's dead. If government clothes, or government stuff comes in to the township, I take it and people can share that, coke, furnisher shops, all the shops everything and butcheries, bakeries, if they then would come, if a truck would come they would take it. And remember no one worked in the area during that time, there was no-body working, so the people had to eat, nobody goes to school and then we even open up a school on our own.

Two Boy Jack paints a varied and contradictory story about the nature of the experience of combat. On the one hand he paints himself as a proud, brave and untouchable warrior:

At one instance the whole army of police from the Bishop Lavis police station came and, you know, I hit them alone, with only one shot of the 303, one of the most powerful guns... Even the government tried to have some road blocks, and they tried to do a road block and I kind of like ambushed the whole thing, and that was me alone.

However, at another stage in Two Boy Jack's story he discusses the soldier's use of drugs and alcohol in order to induce numbness in the face of fight which was "too tough".

One thing that you haven't heard is that most of the soldiers, they used to take drugs, to get numb... Mandrax... because apparently the fight was too tough, so actually the commanders, they had what they called the soldiers' pills, whiskey; those that didn't take drugs, they took alcohol, like Zakuthini and the commander, but those who didn't drink they would take drugs. But every time they would drink, they would drink just to have no fear, so they would take drugs to have no fear and be able to fight against the white government.

Mandisi used the term "lone ranger" to describe Two Boy Jack, and I think this is an apt description. While Two Boy Jack converges with a general comrade identity position which values militarist masculinity, he also embodies a strong spiritualist construction of self. His reasons for joining the struggle paint an interesting picture of a spiritual lone-ranger doing God's work. Being in the presence of Two Boy Jack, I often got a sense that he was slightly removed from everyday influences, moving to his own beat and his own deeply spiritual motivations for action. I was not surprised to recently discover that Two Boy Jack is a traditional healer. His spiritual identity played a significant role in constructing his lone-ranger combatant identity.

Zakuthini's Story

Zakuthini Ndletyana was born in 1961 on a farm in Molteno in the Eastern Cape. His early childhood is constructed around experiences of a disrupted family life, economic hardships and how these impacted on his experience of school. Words like "struggle" and "suffer" are used to describe this period:

[I] lived with my grandmother, and my aunts... Then my father took another wife. That's when I also started to struggle. I would suffer even for clothes and some shoes to go to school. But it wasn't that bad, because at school there were other kids that wouldn't wear school clothes.

During his adolescence Zakuthini worked on a golf course as a caddie for the white men. He would "do his tricks" to ensure his white boss would win the game. During weekends, Zakuthini would be invited to their farms where he became friends with their sons and learnt how to hunt. Zakuthini was good with guns and soon became a "very fast hand". The farmers recognized his shooting abilities and started taking him along on their hunting outings and making him responsible for cleaning the guns:

We then went to go hunt bushbuck, and so I was being just given a number of how many of these bucks that they need. I shot 7 with 7 bullets. And they were all fat. I was a very fast hand. Then they started to trust me... they would go hunt and I was in the forefront. If they were going to clean the gun, they would go and take me from the township, bring me to the house, and I would do all the cleaning, that's where I also learnt how to dispatch guns and put them all together and all this. And I got some books from the farm houses about military, and that's where I also learnt about how to make bombs.

At the same time as Zakuthini was learning how to handle guns, he was also receiving a political education from a member of the PAC. However, his first resistant act against the apartheid police was more for personal/individual reasons, than for political ones:

One day when I came back home, I saw that my house was full of cops. My grandmother was being beaten up. His grandmother was selling sorgum beer, and the cops didn't want that. So, one day they raided his house, you know, kicked his grandmother and threw away all those litres of Sorgum beer that she had made. That's when I started to hate police. Then I started with my own toi toi, because I would be arrested for drunken noise; and one day I shot at them coming out of the bar, alone, and they all ran away... And the municipality police started to say that I'm a terrorist and I didn't care about that.

During the same year, Zakuthini became involved in working as a political messenger for the anti-apartheid struggle. He attended a meeting in Queenstown about the national strikes and riots planned for the 16th June 1976. The meeting was centred around the problems with the quality of schools, and a plan is launched to burn the schools. Zakuthini returned to Molteno, and together with the other comrades in Molteno they burnt their school. Zakuthini recounts his statement to the magistrate:

I actually asked the magistrate "can he buy a new pair of socks... while you have old shoes with holes in them". The magistrate said, "you are mad, you never wear a new pair of socks with old shoes, it's never going to last". Then I said, "I'm very happy you said that, and I have another question for you. At school they put in new desks every year, but the school is still in bad condition. The roof is leaking and, you know, we are being beaten all the time by the teachers, because they say we are the ones that are tearing off the chairs and tables. So that is why we burnt it, because we've been collecting money since I was in sub A. I am in Std 5 right now and the school is still not built yet, that's why we burnt it. And the other thing that made us burn the school is that we do not understand the language that the teachers are teaching us in, so better that there's not even one school, because if there is no school, nobody will be shouting at us.

In 1980 Zakuthini went to work in the Strand. He noticed that there were no active movements fighting against apartheid and formed a group called the Llwandle Western Dwellers. In 1983 this group formed a branch of the United Democratic Front (UDF) called LYCO (Lwandle Youth Congress). Under the pretence of being a soccer club, the LYCO branch of UDF would get together to fight against various expressions of

oppression such as the dcompass. It was during this time that Zakuthini did his “first hit” with the LYCO group, in response to the police destroying his shop:

I opened a shop in Strand, so the police came and destroyed the shop. Then I decided that, no, they are now looking for me, then I decided that I should deal with them. That’s when I first did a hit, and then I got a 38 special there, with its bullets, started to burn some cars in strand, of course with the other UDF people. the LYCO.

In 1985 Zakuthini went back to Molteno and became involved in mobilizing the community to fight against the racist policy of the apartheid government, to resist unfair treatment, and rid the community of informers. From 1985 to 1990 Zakuthini was involved in a great deal of activist and combatant work. His involvement in activism was mainly under the banner of the UDF. While his combatant work was often connected to his involvement with the UDF, his stories paint a picture of an individualist, lone ranger, combatant moving around the country and involving himself in political combat. This period is filled with combat stories, from blowing up a train, to killing police, to burning bars and municipal offices with the communities help, to engaging with communities’ in war against the apartheid police.

Zakuthini was arrested in the late 1980s in Strand while planning to burn a bar and was identified as a wanted terrorist. While detained in prison he was tortured. Zakuthini believed that a thunderstorm and surviving torture were signs that God’s miracles prevented him from dying:

After a week, they took me to this place actually, it’s just an open field and they put a towel over me and I thought I was going to be burnt, because I know that police burn people with tires, and say it’s the comrades that did it, and I was being beaten all this time, and I was being cuffed. They put me in the graveyard and they dug a big hole and they put me in it, and they put me there, you know I just stay there, and there was water in this hole... And what they would do, they would push me down the whole time, if I tried to come out of this hole, they would push me down...and then if I would come out I would just take one breath, and then once they push me down, again I keep my breath until they took me up there, and were beating me up... I collapsed, and the next time I woke up I was back in my cell, and this time I said maybe God really doesn’t want me to die...

In 1989 Zakuthini was released and he went to Kayelitsha because his cousin had been murdered and he wanted to find out what had happened. He found out that he had been murdered by the Intsaras (the gangsters used by the white police and black councillors). Zakuthini attended the ANC meetings, but was disappointed with the lack of combat

activity. He decided to introduce some of these comrades to guns and develop a more effective combatant force:

I started to attend the ANC meetings with them. And this time I wanted to see how they would fight against the police, but they were not doing anything, because they would just throw stones and they would run away, throw stones and then they would run away. And I told them actually, this is what we can use to fight against the police, I brought two guns, and then we started to develop more and more and more... So, what I also discovered that most of the guys couldn't use the weapons that we had, but at least the force was growing a little bit, even though there was not much knowledge of how to use the ammunition.

While Zakuthini was attempting to create an effective combat force in Khayelitsha, he decided to collect the Intsaras and convert them into freedom fighters:

Basically, you know these Intsaras were busy robbing people off, and we were tired of the whole thing... one Saturday morning early we went around the townships and next to the robots I found an old man selling shambocks, and what I did, I robbed him of his shambocks and I didn't even pay him... (Zakuthini gets loud and excited telling this story) Actually, what we did, we didn't want to kill the Intsaras, we just collected them all and with the Shambocks we beat them up, and we ended up converting the Intsaras into the forces, because most of them who had courage to fight, they were in the Intsaras and most of them in my forces actually didn't have that much courage to fight. So we had no choice, but to convert them into freedom fighters.

Commander Zet then came to Khayelitsha and helped Zakuthini develop a strong force. Zakuthini explains that "he brought the military side into the group... we made sure that one person is actually 100 soldiers". An effective resistance force was constructed very closely around weapons. Guns represent the necessary ingredient for an effective force. In order to maintain control over these valuable liberation struggle assets, regulations and procedures are developed around the use of ammunition:

At this time when we were now becoming a formidable force and we had all divisions and rankings, and you know we had all kinds of guns and we knew how to use and operate all these kinds of guns... So we had to put some laws and regulations around the use of guns. If you are to use one gun, then that's the gun you have, and if it's being used or something has happened to it, you've got to account for it. If you come back and see that the gun has been taken by the cops, it definitely poses questions. Why aren't you taken by the police if the gun was taken, so the commander came with the rules and laid down the rules around controlling our ammunition?

Zakuthini demonstrated great pride in the effectiveness of the internal forces based in the Trevor Villakazi section of Khayelitsha. The role of the forces was to protect the community from the police, as well as to actively seek out and attack the police:

If you're being chased by police, you run to the Trevor Villakazi. It's a no go area for any government, you know, government doesn't go into that area. It's a no go area, it's only the amabutho and the youth league that were controlling that area... We just took police as terrorists, because we knew that if they came into our township, into our community, you know, ah, trouble

is going to break out, so we had to defend ourselves, and we were very good, we would hit them all the time.

Zakuthini was by far the most difficult identity position to come to grips with, and in the end, the most useful in helping me to think past an easy categorization of comrade experience and identity. Zakuthini inhabited a variety of contradictory positions such as: ‘leader’, ‘follower’, ‘activist’, ‘outlaw’, ‘spiritualist’, ‘lone-ranger’ and ‘warrior-hero’.

Commander Zet’s Story

Commander Zet (Zwelitsha Mghlutwa) was born in 1956 in Lady Frere, Transkei. Reflecting back on this time, Commander Zet recalls the negotiations between the village leader (Mathanzima) and the “white man”, which split the community into those for and those against Mathanzima. Commander Zet’s father was one of the village members who were actively against these negotiations and the changes they implied for the people living in the Transkei. Commander Zet describes the political climate in the Transkei while growing up as “very confusing.” His father and the other members of his community were scared and angry with the police, but he didn’t understand why:

When I grew up, I was very confused when my father saw the landrover, the landrover of the police; he was furious, and then he (would) take the spear. I asked the question, why is my father fighting with these police; I was not aware what was happening, what was wrong....

One of the changes resulting from Mathanzima’s negotiations with the “white man” was the new school for the village children. Commander Zet did not attend the school for very long, as his father removed him when he heard they were going to give the children vaccinations:

Yes, when they were going to do that thing [vaccination], my father came. He called me, boy, boy, come, and he took me out that school, and Mam Godla was scared of him, that was the last day... He said they are putting the poison in. They want the man to be disabled.

In the late 1970’s Commander Zet went to work in the mines in Johannesburg. In the mines he experienced a white boss who was notorious for beating up the black workers.

There was a white man, his name was Connie Burger, but we called him Mahlalela (somebody who doesn’t work, who loves to stay at home all the time)... and that man, he hated black people in the mines, he liked to hit people. That man, he made me to take the decision to train martial arts, because I didn’t want to be hit by anyone.

Commander Zet decided to attend Karate lessons to be able to fight against his racist white boss. One day the white boss blamed commander Zet for something that went wrong with the work, and hit him. He decided to wait for his boss after work, and confront him. Below is his account of a conversation he had with another worker whilst waiting:

I met one of the guys who are working in the town, they know me. (He said) "Zet, what is wrong?". I said "Mahlalele hit me", and then [he] asked me, "where you going now?" I said "I am going to wait for him now". He said to me, "Zet please, that man is going to kill you"... I said "please don't tell him". Okay, I wait

Commander Zet confronted his boss and they started to fight. Commander Zet's karate training paid off and his boss came off second best. In response to his uncanny resistance, he was treated like a hero by his friends:

...I said, I'm not scared of no one, I'm not scared, I respect. I go outside, Maghlale is not there, they say they need me in the offices of the manager. Killer (a friend) gives me a cooldrink and a pie. all the people they are waiting...they said "the elephant has been killed by this ant, they said this is an ant".

After the fight, Commander Zet was approached by an old man, who thought that Commander Zet was fighting for political rather than personal reasons. This led to the beginning of Commander Zed's political education and awakening consciousness about the political situation in South Africa:

Now, to be honest with you, it was the first time for me to understand that we are living under whites... He said to me, he told me about the situation we live in South Africa, and the people who live in South Africa. I never even heard about apartheid, I only heard about the clan of Mathanzima and I hate Mathanzima because of my father... He told me about land being deprived, and then we are forced to work on the mines... Now to see, okay, he even tell me about the rules, group areas act, the forced removal, we not supposed to live, that's our land, because it's our land you have to consult us, to tell. That made me to leave the mine.

In the early 1980's Commander Zet left the mine and came to Cape Town with two friends. In Nyanga Bush, he came across a group of comrades, talking about the apartheid regime. He became interested in what they were saying and was impressed by the level of their commitment to their cause. He decided to attend one of their political "workshops" run by Melford Yamile and Oscar Mpetha where he learnt more about the oppression of black South Africans. He describes the amazing experience of resistance and empowerment that left him in a state of disbelief:

And then, you know, I was very interested, because these people, they came from Lady Frere, and what would surprise me was that they said this is our land...Now I can say now it was a workshop, it was a workshop...(with quite a lot of conviction) Said, said, when you decided to stay in the internal force, you do not mention any political organization, you say you are the citizen of this country. If Botha asks you for the pass, firstly he must give you the pass, then after that he must come ask you for the pass, he must not just come and ask you for the pass, when you were never given the pass.

Now, people said you had to say this, they said now, we are behind you, if you are arrested, we are there... said that whatever happened to us, he'll be with us, arrested he will be there. arrested, we must not change our way. Now, you know, to me, if you were doing things, if you said, if someone opened this door, you must not stand up, you must sit down. I want to make sure, are you sure, because I will do exactly what you are saying, that is why I said now, who are you?

Then tomorrow I heard the inspector, they were there destroying the shack, that tent, when they destroying, the people are building [sighs in nostalgic amazement]. No, it's like I'm clipping a stone, you here the thing from Yamile. When they say, the people that are building, what they say they will die for their rights, they are doing it... White people were very important at the time, now for them to take land forcefully and chuck people away from their land was something else, it knocks us out, completely. And at this time, I had not taken any decisions because I had seen this and I liked it, and it became more interesting.

Although the political training was loosely linked to the ANC, as the trainer (Melford Yamile) was connected to the ANC, the workshop was not in the name of the ANC, but rather in the name of the citizens of the country: "We are not belonging to any political organization, we said we are the citizens of this country, we are created from god, the land, educated by the... and also we belong to god". Commander Zet's political education flowed into combat education. Commander Zet learned from and worked with Yamile from 1982, and in 1984 he was appointed as the commander of the internal forces.

We were training physical training, how to use a firearm, AK47, R4, R2, R1 and hand grenade, and also learn the politics, become aware of the politics... and 1984 I was appointed as a commander of internal forces... and we know the reason we must fight, they tell you about the MK, then we are looking forward, because they say, one man, one vote.

Throughout his re-telling of his experience of being the commander of the internal forces, Commander Zet expresses the different roles the internal forces played in the struggle. These roles included protecting the community by fighting against the apartheid police and the apartheid spies, putting pressure on the apartheid regime from within the borders of South Africa, and making a blood sacrifice for democracy. Throughout these discussions, Commander Zet constructs the role of the internal forces in relation and comparison to the role of the MK exiles. This comparison is evident in the discussion of a "blood sacrifice" below:

Now to us, we said, we cannot even sit down and watch as a spectator... while our people are being killed by the apartheid regime. We said let's sacrifice, because even you want to be a politician, you are against apartheid, you have to sacrifice with your life, with your blood, we even said we don't want even a cent if we have democracy, that is why we said now liberation, education later, we don't work at that time, no education, nothing, we would rather die instead of working in this situation. That is the reason we have internal forces, external forces. External are those that are running outside the country. Those living inside we call internal forces. Internal guerillas, my training is not army, but guerilla warfare, hit and run... And you know, our thing is that we called all of them commanders, because, in the military, you have to wait, commander said change magazine and the commander said fire, but you, as a guerilla, you don't have to wait until I said fire, when you take your fire arm, put your firearm in fire, when you saw the enemy, you shoot.

During the period of 1986 and 1987, two events stand out as particularly significant in Commander Zet's experience of commanding the internal forces: the murder of the Guguletu Seven and the Burning of Nyanga bush. Both events are told through the thematic lens of "black on black violence" and "betrayal". Through telling these stories Commander Zet is telling a broader story about the apartheid government manipulating black South Africans to betray their comrades through a "divide and rule" tactic.

The Story of the Guguletu Seven involves Commander Zet's experience of being infiltrated by two members of the Liberation movement who had "turned" to become Askaris for the apartheid government. As a result of this infiltration, seven of his comrades were led by these two Askaris into a trap where they were all killed by the police. One of these Askaris leads the police to Commander Zet, and he was arrested and tortured "by an electric current in a most brutal manner." In an attempt to express the brutal experience of torture Commander Zet says, "Kim, I heard people that said, ah, I have been tortured, and what what, I listen and ask them how, because when you are tortured on the side of terrorist it is very difficult". After spending 30 days in prison under section 29 (the terrorism act) he was released.

The second big event for Commander Zet was the burning of Nyanga bush, and the relocation to Khayelitsha. Reflecting back on these two major events, Commander Zet connects them together by asserting that the reason for the murder of the Gugulethu Seven was to remove people from Nyanga bush. Commander Zet explains that Nyanga bush was a stronghold for ANC, therefore the apartheid government wanted to remove the people from Nyanga bush and re-settle them in Khayelitsha. Instead of forced

removal they used the strategy of “black on black” violence, instigating and supporting violence between Crossroads and Nyanga Bush, culminating in the use of “witdoeke” to burn down Nyanga bush.

What they did, the witdoeke is in front of them, when we fired the witdoeke came, when we run the witdoeke came, when we fired the witdoeke came, it was very sad.... it was very sad. When they fired, the police fired to us, it was very difficult. I remember one lady said to them, If God does exist, he can go and shit himself out... and the mothers put the kids down and they were crying. It was very bad, very bad... You know, I think it is very important, as I have said the purpose of the witdoeke was to remove us to Khayelitsha, because some one who doesn't know will take this as it was a fight between crossroads and Nyanga bush, but it was not like that. .. you know, it was a trick

Despite these acts of betrayal, Commander Zet empathizes with the Askaris and the Witdoeke, urging us to look deeper into the ways in which the apartheid regime purposefully manipulated these groups and individuals. While he recognizes the difficult position of Askaris who were tortured and the Witdoek who were manipulated and forgives them for their betrayal, he cannot understand or forgive the acts of apartheid spies.

As the soldiers, we are respecting the person who will become the askaris, because askaris was a freedom fighter and he was arrested and tortured and converted to be an askaris. Now the spy is the educated person who believes in money, they [the apartheid forces] give him money, they pay you to be a spy. A spy is a traitor. Askara... okay I can say I forgive him... but the spies I don't even want to hear about them.

In 1987 Commander Zet is arrested for possession of marijuana and sentenced to two and a half years on Robben Island. In 1990 he was released from prison. He met with Melford Yamile and requested permission to revive the internal forces in Khayelitsha through joining forces with Zakuthini to convert the youth into freedom fighters:

I ask Yamile for permission to come in here and establish the internal forces again... because although they are negotiating, the apartheid government is still using the third force. He agree, I come here in Khayelitsha, is where now I meet Zakuthini Letlghana, the vice chairperson of the ANC youth League... when I came here he told me he is working very hard and it's difficult because these people [the youth] are committing also crime, that's why I am saying, you need to be strong and a bit wicked when you are controlling the underground, because some of the things might happen behind you and then you will be killed. That's when Zakuthini said he is working but his working is difficult. I said to him, you know because of my experience, don't worry. I call all of them... I introduced to them myself.

The new recruits have a fighting spirit, but no military training: “Okay they can fight... they can kill you with the firearm, but they never trained ... they are not aware the way military work.” Commander Zet commenced with training the youth to become Internal

Forces. This training was centred around learning how to handle and clean guns, being willing to sacrifice for democracy, and being aware of the reasons for initiating an Internal Force in South Africa. While Commander Zet is able to provide the new recruits with military training, the political training was interrupted by the eruption of the taxi violence:

[I] said to them. I decided to sacrifice with my life, with my blood for the people of my country, I even said I don't want even a cent except a democracy... I show them what the AK47 looks like and the R4, difference between AK47 and R4... and then I can see they are very interested, very interested even to defend with sacrificing their life.... The taxi violence interrupts my training, because, we are supposed to be work shopping them with military things and politics. Now we never got to the workshop on politics because of the taxi violence.

Commander Zet inhabited a strong leader role in the Internal Forces. He demonstrates a deep concern for 'doing the right thing'. In relation to the rest of the characters represented in the Internal Forces, Commander Zet represents the character who is most driven by a concern for social justice. While I have attempted to paint a picture of the dominant identity role or character position inhabited by each of the members of this group, these are by no means fixed identity positions. Each individual fluctuated between different identity positions. In the following section I attempt to analyze the ways in which racism and resistance are being constructed in the narratives, but I also spend time further pulling apart some of the identity issues and positions presented in the conclusions of each of these narratives.

Chapter Five: Constructions of Racism and Resistance

Indirect Experience of Racism and Structural Violence

Apartheid attacked African families... husbands were separated from wives and fathers from children not as inadvertent by products of racial capitalism. They were part and parcel of the system that off-loaded costs of reproducing future generations onto the reserves and demanded that South Africa be kept white.

(MacDonald, 2006: 74-5)

These five life histories of the internal forces are all based in the context of extreme oppression and racial inequality. Each of these participants grew up under apartheid, and their stories reflect the everyday experiences of racial oppression. Evocative terms such as “tormented”, “struggle” and “tough” are used to describe the childhood experiences of family disruption and economic hardships. Fragmentation of families and communities represented a strong theme cutting across the childhood experiences of these former combatants. We see the experience of family disintegration markedly in Pam’s narrative illustrating the intense confusion, separation and abuse surrounding her family experience, but it is also evident in Zakuthini’s experience of circulating between his mother, father and aunts. Commander Zet’s community was deeply divided between those who supported and those who resisted Mathanzima. Furthermore, his family was separated when his father was forced to leave the village because of his resistance to Mathanzima.

MacDonald’s quote, positioned at the beginning of this section, draws our attention to the key role this family and community fragmentation played in maintaining the apartheid system. The combination of segregation and oppression represented a potential problem for apartheid, because it provided an ideal environment for the black majority of oppressed people to unite and rise up against white domination. To defuse this possibility apartheid imposed a form of indirect rule on black South Africans. Africans were governed by chiefs, and chiefs answered to whites; therefore Africans were indirectly subordinated to whites. Through this indirect and obscure rule, white South Africans further attempted to “weaken what unified Africans and to strengthen what differentiated them” (MacDonald, 2006: 13).

Economic hardships and family and community fragmentation are constructed as key hardships experienced by the Internal Forces while growing up. However, these narratives do not demonstrate recognition of the ways in which these hardships were built into the design of apartheid. This is precisely because indirect rule functioned to hide the role of racial domination in creating the hardships and disruptions in the lives of black South Africans. While these former combatants experienced the oppression of apartheid in their everyday hardships, they did not recognize the ways in which these hardships were a calculated part of apartheid's structural violence.

Direct Experiences of Racism and Violence

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression.

(Fanon, 1963: 21)

While the narratives of the Internal Forces did not connect experiences of everyday hardships to a calculated result of racist oppression, they instead focused on apartheid as it occurred in the racist white boss and the apartheid policeman. The most common symbol of apartheid represented in these narratives is the policeman. Despite “not knowing anything at the time” and “not being aware what they are doing”, Boy Boy and Commander Zet assert “hating” and “being scared” of the police. There was no need to be aware of the broader system of racism to be aware of the violent, dehumanizing threat of the apartheid police. Zakuthini describes coming home to find the police had “raided my house, kicked my grandmother, and threw away all those litres of sorghum beer that she had made”. Zakuthini asserts that “That’s when I really started to hate police”. Pam describes the nightmarish experience of being taken by the police in the middle of the night and being treated “like a rubbish, because we are just like dogs”. Experience of violence at the hands of the apartheid “go-betweens” represented a key theme expressed in these former combatants’ life narratives.

In contrast to the experiences of the black oppressed in the “native town” who are disciplined with “rifle butts” and “napalm”, the healthy, wealthy “settler town lies on the other side of the divide” (Fanon, 1963: 30). This sharp divide in the experiences of growing up in the “native town” and growing up in the “settler town” is demonstrated by the different experiences of growing up expressed by black vs. white former combatants interviewed in Foster, et al. (2005). White ex-combatants indicate a “normal” schooling process culminating in “enabling career prospects, with little recognition of the poverty and hardship of the black population”. In contrast black ex-combatants indicate experiences of “poverty, illiteracy, poor and disrupted schooling, everyday experiences of violence and little in the way of further training or career prospects” (Foster, et al., 2005: 277).

While apartheid was designed according to the ideology of separate development, it was also designed according to the ideology of capitalism. As Bundy (1979), MacDonald (2006) and Terreblanche (2002) illustrate, capitalism required an ultra-exploitable black working class for its mines and its farms. The racist white boss represents the second most common direct expression of apartheid in these narratives. Commander Zet retells his experience of the racist mine boss who “hated black people in the mines, he liked to hit people”. Two Boy Jack narrates numerous stories of being treated badly by white bosses, being called a “kaffir” and being severely underpaid. Boy Boy tells his experience of working at a farm called “Shoot Them” where he was worked like a “slave”. Therefore, in the homelands and the townships these narratives construct the policeman as the site at which racism was experienced. As these participants move into white spaces to find work, the racist white boss becomes a second site at which racism is experienced.

Local Acts of Resistance

Initial acts of resistance to domination were also enacted at these local, immediate sites of the “apartheid police” and “racist black boss”. In Commander Zet’s narrative, he learns Karate to resist the violence of his racist white boss. Similarly, Two Boy Jack “was dismissed... because one white guy called me a kaffir and I hit him so hard his teeth fell

off". Zakuthini's first act of resistance involved firing a gun at the police who raided his grandmother's house. These three acts of resistance are directed against local expressions of domination. Boy Boy and Pamela's narratives also locate their reasons for resistance in local experiences of apartheid. Boy Boy's initial involvement in the struggle is for reasons of self-protection against the police through forming an alliance with Commander Zet, and Pamela constructs her reasons for becoming an activist as deeply related to the pain she experienced growing under conditions of family abuse and police brutality. These narratives demonstrate that the initial acts of resistance executed by these former combatants were not against the apartheid regime, but rather they were an immediate response to everyday working and living conditions.

This is further illustrated when Commander Zet admits that, at the time he resisted his racist white boss, he was unaware of the racist system of inequality in South Africa: "I never even hear about apartheid". These resistant acts may not initially have been enacted with the aim of challenging the apartheid regime, but they did represent the shifts in consciousness that would bring the state to a standstill (MacDonald, 2006; McKinley, 1997). Within these life narratives, these initial acts of resistance can be seen as causing a narrative breach for each of these characters (Bruner, 1991). The initial resistant act represented the point at which the character's life story shifts from one in which they are passive objects of repression to one in which they become active agents of resistance. The emotive quality of these against-the-grain acts of resisting a powerful enemy is evocatively captured in the mine worker's response to Commander Zet's act of resistance: "the elephant has been killed by the ant".

These local acts of resistance occurred within a broader context of the rise of black consciousness. At the same time that these former combatants were experiencing a shift to resistant consciousness, many black South Africans throughout the country were experiencing a similar rise in resistant energy. Seekings (1988) and Swilling (1988) argue that the driving force behind black resistance in South Africa stemmed exactly from these kinds of local resistances to appalling living and working conditions. Black resistance in South Africa radiated from below as these everyday local grievances surrounding

education, rent, housing, township development, evictions, corrupt or uncountable councilors and repression” became increasingly politicized (McKinley, 1997).

Political Education: A Process of Interpellation

Emerging discourses of resistance drew on strands of ANC strategy and Black Consciousness methods to create forms of political education which spoke to the everyday experiences of ordinary people (MacDonald, 2006). A process of interpellation through political education is illustrated in Two Boy Jacks experience of political UDF meetings during the early 1980s where people were speaking about “real issues” affecting “real people”, “the things I had experienced, and I really saw that this is where I was heading all this time.” Because these meetings constructed anti-apartheid resistance in terms of everyday experiences, resistant youths were smoothly hailed into the “anti-apartheid activist” subject position, as if they were always obviously heading in that direction.

By “stepping into” the subject position of anti-apartheid activist in the context of the township revolts of the 1980s, these former combatants were also stepping into the broader “subculture” of the “socialization of courage” (Finnegan, 1986:196). Towards constructing courageous subjectivities, much of this political education focused on creating situated understandings of the workings of everyday forms of oppression and empowering people with the courage to fight against these everyday oppressions (MacDonald, 2006). In line with these aims, Pamela describes the new sense of awareness she gained from the political education she received in the union as an experience of her eyes being opened for the first time. Furthermore, Commander Zet describes the empowering experience of seeing the activists in the black tent stand up against the policeman who were tearing down the black tent.

Foster, et al. (2005) explain that much of this political education has to do with creating a sense of “reactive entitlement” through the belief of “equal deservingness” (2005: 303). Since colonialism, segregation and apartheid was constructed around discourses which denied the equal deservingness of black South Africans, the goal of liberatory education

was to construct counter-discourses of equal-deservingness. Within the narratives of resistance appearing in these interviews, counter discourses of equal deservingness emerge, but these are constructed in terms of local experiences of ineffective education, abysmal living and working conditions and having to carry a pass. It is the resistance to personally experienced hardships which first drew these former combatants to engage in the struggle, and their counter-discourses of resistance and entitlement were similarly formed in relation to these everyday struggles.

Fighting Apartheid: A Local Practice

“I respect the worker locals and their democracy, but they talk and talk. You can never judge their commitment. It’s only in the struggle where you find who is a sellout and who is a comrade. You quickly find out because the weak ones disappear”

(Sitas, 1992: 638)

This quote from a member of the Natal Comrade Movement researched by Sitas (1992) represents the “primacy of practice” in the resistance movements of the 1980s. The forms of political education discussed above were successful in mobilizing these former combatants precisely because of their practical base. However, as resistance against everyday hardships shifted into the realm of combat against the police and apartheid spies, the role of education took a back seat to the role of action. This “primacy of practice” is emphasized in the narratives of former combatants through the often quoted slogan “liberation now, education later”. The assumption behind this slogan being that the practice of a liberation struggle can and should be separate from education and knowledge.

One of the reasons for the “primacy of practice” is located within the context of increased state oppression and violence during this period. In response to black resistance, the state declared a state of emergency in 1984 and proceeded with a two-pronged strategy to greatly increase the presence of police and SADF troops in the township, as well as fuel internal conflicts from behind the scenes (McKinley, 1997). Both the training and the action expressed in the narratives of the internal forces is geared towards an immediate need to protect communities both from the violence of police and the violence of inflamed internal conflicts.

When Pam and Commander Zet discuss attempts at political education during this time, they demonstrate the ways in which self-defense and combative resistance was more urgently required than political education. While Pam spends some time discussing the situation of the country with the youth, this education moves quickly to “those things they were having at the moment, those serious problems” of providing the youth with practical self-protection tools from the “fire bullets” of the “boers”. Similarly Commander Zet’s training of the internal forces consists of “military training” in guns and combat. The “political training” about why there is a need for internal forces is interrupted by the taxi violence and an immediate need to fight. Both these examples represent the urgent need to react to the dual threat of increased police presence and inflamed community conflicts.

Motivations for violence within the borders of the country reflect the immediate, locally driven need to take action (Gear, 2002b; Foster et al., 2005; Marks, 2001). While the importance of acting against immediate threats is given primacy, political understanding of these acts and continuous reflection on them is pushed into the background. While praxis theorists emphasize the importance of resistance being based in relevant action and practice, they also emphasize the need for practice to exist within a constant dialectical relationship with reflection, education and understanding (Freire, 1972). The dangers of forms of resistance which are heavily based in practice and action, but neglect sustained reflection, are further brought to light when the central role of violence is brought into the picture.

The Centrality of Violence

Those lightning flashes of consciousness which fling the body into story paths or which throw it into an almost pathological trance where the face of the other beckons me on to giddiness, where my blood calls for the blood of the other, where by sheer inertia my death calls for the death of the other – that intense emotion of the first few hours falls to pieces if it is left to feed on its own substance.

(Fanon, 1963: 111)

The key to understanding the experience of combat for the internal forces is through understanding their relationship to violence and weapons. Mbembe argues that under

conditions of extreme repression, death is invested with a certain sense of freedom: “For death is precisely that from which and over which I have power” (Mbembe, 2003: 39). This recognition of the freedom in death sheds light on the many slogans in these narratives and the narratives collected by Foster et al. (2005) and Marks (2001) which emphasize the central position of a “blood sacrifice” in the struggle for freedom. Listening to these former combatants narrate their stories about sacrificing their lives to fight against the oppressor, I found myself amazed by the passion and excitement surrounding these experiences. These “war stories” were characterized by crazy sound effects, wild action, laughter, and shouting. At these times, the meaning of the words seemed less important than the energy produced in the telling of the story. In these moments, the interview room was filled with an atmosphere where anything and everything is possible. It is a feeling I can only think to describe as “something like freedom”... a “screw the rules, I can do what I want, I am in control and can impact my world”, kind of freedom... eye sparkling freedom. Fanon eloquently captures this sense of freedom in violence:

The intuition of the colonized masses that their liberation must, and can only, be achieved by force... the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence. This rule of conduct enlightens the agent because it indicates to him the means and the end

(Fanon, 1963)

For Fanon the oppressed man finds his liberation through violence. Violence is the ultimate act of resistance and freedom from oppression. This act is the means to liberation, but it also represents a certain kind of liberation in and of itself. This sense of freedom through violence is illustrated in Boy Boy’s assertion that his first act of violence demonstrated to himself and to the world that he “really hated being disrespected and ill treated in my own country”. Pam emphasizes a more practical significance: “even if you speak, to speak is nothing, someone will hit you”. In a context where violence is the only language that is listened to, you have to learn to speak it to be heard.

Violence is clearly an empowering and necessary part of the liberation struggle. However, Fanon’s quote at the beginning of this section demonstrates the dilemma of the seduction of violence which threatens to become a self justifying end in itself. Fanon only

endorsed the kind of violence enacted by a person who decides to resist armed domination with counter violence and who recognizes the full humanity of the enemy before he kills (Pithouse, 2003). In this case, killing should be a difficult but necessary act, rather than an easy gratuitous act. This critique and warning comes strongly to bear on Boy Boy's discussion of the strong desire to kill without thinking: "we didn't want that [peace] at that time, we just wanted to fight because we were being killed, you know we just wanted to kill... and there was little time for us to discuss anything, we would just act on things that are happening". In this passage there is a strong sense that the act of violence has become the end in itself. There is no clear sense of the broader reason for violence and it has become a self-serving act.

Militarized Masculinities

The emotional seduction of violence is heightened through the ways in which the construction of violence articulates a certain kind of militarist masculine identity which is intimately connected to construction of "the gun" (Cock, 1998). The powers of symbolic masculinity invested in the "gun" are illustrated in the common constructions of disarmament as an experience of emasculation (Gear, 2002a). Campbell (1997) captures the interconnectedness of constructions of violence with constructions of masculinity in her discussion of the "macho culture of resistance":

"The comrades characterise themselves as hard ruthless and disciplined with no time to rest and no time for pleasure, as living under the constant threat of death and prepared to sacrifice their very lives for the struggle if need be."

(Campbell, 1997: 624)

Guns act as central symbols around which a militarized masculinity is constructed. The narratives of the internal forces place huge importance on the ability to know, clean and use weapons. With a great sense of pride Two Boy asserts that "there's nothing that I didn't do with a gun". Similarly, while talking about training the internal forces, Commander Zet places huge emphasis on getting to know the weapons, and Zakuthini argues that the internal forces became a formidable force only when they "had all kinds of guns and we knew how to operate all these kinds of guns". Guns were invested with a

great aura of importance as they became a key symbol of masculinity, ability, and pride for the internal forces.

In this context of the “primacy of practice”, the construction of empowered militarized masculinities gets wrapped up in the construction of violence and freedom to produce an identity position which often loses sight of the broader purposes of the liberation struggle. Despite the central role gender plays in organizing the ways in which the struggle is constructed, it is hardly recognized in these interviews. Foster et al. argue that gender is not explicitly discussed in the narratives of former combatants, because it is such a salient identity characteristic it is taken for granted. Pam’s interview is the only one that explicitly deals with the construction of militarist masculinities, perhaps because of her ambiguous position as a woman-soldier. Reflecting on becoming a soldier, she equates this with negating her feminine body and becoming a man: “I taught myself [that I’m] supposed to be a man, I didn’t think of myself as if I’m a lady”.

Although the men-soldiers did not reflect on their gendered experience as Pam does, their construction of soldier identity in terms of masculinity is emphasized in the ways in which Two Boy Jack and Zakuthini insult the lack of courage they see in certain members of the ANC: “they are wearing panties” and “they are women”. These insults represent a system of meaning that constructs courage in terms of masculinity in opposition to weakness in terms of femininity. Therefore, violence was made doubly significant through the emotional experience of empowerment through violence, as well as the central role it played in the construction of soldier-masculinities. Through violence soldiers became free and became men.

A battlefield soaked in Contradiction

“There is a fragile connection between two contradictory ideas. On the one level, ‘comrades’ are fearless, they are death-defiers (the amadelakufa); they stand against the ‘system’ and its ‘puppets’ and ‘lackeys’. On the other level, this fearlessness needs treatment against fear: there is a proliferation of muti and war medicine in their daily lives and battles”

Sitas, 1992: 637

Fear has no place in the construction of militarized masculinities, yet it is a key part of the experience of combat. The narratives of the internal forces are careful not to express experiences of fear directly, for fear of negating their carefully constructed militarized masculinity. However, the presence of fear is indirectly expressed through the discussion of drug and alcohol use (Gear, 2002b & Sitas, 1992). This is evident in Two Boy Jack's narrative when he asserts that "the one thing you haven't heard is that most of the soldiers, they used to take drugs, to get numb" and later Mandisi asserts "they would take drugs to have no fear and be able to fight the white government". The silence around needing a fear treatment is demonstrated by both the assertion that I wouldn't have heard about it yet, and the ways in which Two Boy Jack deflects the experience of fear by asserting that "the soldiers" rather than "we" took drugs. Two Boy Jack is not directly admitting that he needed a drug treatment against fear, he is just saying that it did happen amongst soldiers. Furthermore, Commander Zet draws attention to the painful experience of internal community violence by constructing it as "very, very sad" and "very, very bad". Therefore, the dominant construction of the fearless war hero who lives to fight is often contradicted in the lived experience of combat.

The unspeakable emotion of fear can further be seen in the ways in which the internal forces reflect on fear producing situations. While the emotion of fear is not spoken of, it is sometimes implied through describing bodily reactions indicative of extreme fear. For example, when Commander Zet is arrested and shown the pictures of his murdered former comrade, he discloses: "I wet myself without knowing". The complex connection between militarist masculinity and fearlessness is again most explicitly expressed in Pam's interview. Mandisi exclusively asks Pam the question: "as a woman, were you scared". This question demonstrates an assumed connection between masculinity and fearlessness, and femininity and fear. However, Pam's experience of gender is not simple, as her soldier identity both highlights and negates her gender identity. As a woman she is not a complete soldier, and as a soldier she is not a complete woman. This ambiguity around gendered identity for Pam, expresses itself in the answer she provides:

I was a little bit scared of dying... My only worry was my child actually, I was scared only for my child, but being a soldier I wasn't scared... Even though it was tough, we had given our blood to the nation, we all told ourselves that our blood would sprinkle up the nation, so even though I was scared for my children's sake, but at the same time, I wasn't scared.

Pam starts off by saying she was scared, then backtracking and projecting her fear onto her child. She was scared for her child as a mother, but as a soldier she was not scared. She re-asserts her fearlessness through the masculinity discourse of the ultimate "blood sacrifice". Pam's reflection on her sense of fear demonstrates both the contradictory place of women in a masculine construction of soldier identity, as well as the way in which this identity silences expressions of personal fear.

Another key set of battlefield contradictions is emphasized in the duality of criminal-comrades (comtotsis). In the passage below, Commander Zet reflects back on the various criminal activities which were allowed to happen during the township struggle

If you are commander of the underground it is difficult... because there are many dirty cases, because maybe they [the soldiers are] forcing the girl to sleep with them, with force. I sit down, I said okay... I must be careful, because if they move away from us to working with the enemy, it will be a danger for us. We have to compromise. Most of the cases, we have to compromise, but others not... what I'm trying to say is if you are talking about underground, it is very difficult to control sensitive issues ...that police have been taking the alcohol and sharing the money, because to them, they are fighting, because if you are robbing the right people, you are the hero.

This quote demonstrates the juggling acts of compromise required in a context where corrupt police would easily co-opt criminal-comrades to do their bidding. In this context, the lines between "right" and "wrong" and "criminal" and "freedom fighter" become increasingly blurred. While various literatures recognize this "comtotsi" phenomenon (Marks, 2001), Commander Zet's quote points to some of the complexities surrounding this phenomenon. Contributing to the complexity of the "dangerous" environment of police criminality in which this phenomenon required careful treatment and compromise, these narratives fiercely resisted easy categorization of noble comrade vs. selfish criminal. Narratives would fluidly move from asserting noble reasons for combat, to asserting selfish reasons for combat, to asserting criminal reasons for combat and back again to noble reasons. While at one stage of the interview Boy Boy asserts that he was fighting for community protection, at another stage he asserts that he did not want peace, he just wanted to kill. The phenomenon of contradictory reasons for fighting existing within a single narrative was not a special case, but a common occurrence throughout

these narratives. Another strong example of this phenomenon can be found in Zakuthini's story about converting the Intsara gangsters to freedom fighters. On the one hand it demonstrates a process of bringing criminals into the liberation fight. On the other hand, we see a criminal element creeping into Zakuthini's story about robbing the old man's shamboks at the robots. Ironically these shamboks would later be used to discipline and convert the "criminal elements" into "freedom fighters".

For every motivation, emotion or construction I managed to neatly place, its opposite was likely to be around the corner threatening my clear head space. I found my picture of each internal soldier being constantly challenged as it fluctuated between categories of fear vs. fearlessness, violence as power vs. violence as pain, and noble hero vs. selfish criminal. Each time I felt the challenge I would cringe at realizing that once again I had climbed into that comfortable, familiar episteme of the homogenizing dichotomy. The term "homogenizing dichotomy" refers to the ways in which we set up neat either/or binaries such as noble vs. criminal to act as "catch all" explanations to describe all the actions of the individuals placed within each group. Post-colonial theorists argue that the homogenizing dichotomy represents a colonial way of ordering representations of the other, which has been inherited by the post-colonial era (Ochoa, 1996). Both "positive" and "negative" sides of the homogenizing dichotomy represent dehumanizing constructions of "the other", because they squash complex, dynamic selves into a pre-constructed homogenous mass.

These findings represent the ways in which the experience of combat within the borders of the country resists easy categorization. Throwing up this variety, complexity and confusion is not meant to devalue the contribution of the internal forces to the liberation struggle. Instead I hope to challenge easy and dehumanizing dichotomies such as: "noble liberation fighter vs. self-serving-criminal" or "violence as freedom vs. violence as pain". These seemingly contradictory motivations, experiences and identities are carefully balanced and negotiated in the context of intense police corruption, repression and violence. Recognizing contradictory variety allows for a deeper understanding of

motivations and actions without a quick classification, which in the end only allows certain actions or motivations to be included while others are silenced.

University of Cape Town

Chapter Six: Constructing a Joint Narrative of Betrayal

The Taxi Violence of the Early 1990s

During the early 1990s Commander Zet and Zakuthini were engaged in collecting and training the new internal force recruits. However, this training was interrupted by the violent threat of the “taxi wars” in the Western Cape. Between 1990 and 1992, political violence in the form of taxi wars erupted throughout the country, mainly along the political lines of IFP vs ANC. Dugard (2001:6) describes the “taxi wars” of the Cape Peninsula as “one of the most intransigent and most politically motivated of the wars” during this period. The taxi violence was related to the struggle over routes between two rival taxi organizations, the Langa, Guguleto, Nyanga Taxi Association (Lagunya) and the Western Cape Black Taxi Association (Webta) (Dugard, 2001; Minnaar & Pretorius, 1995). On the surface, the war was between the “more urbanized African Operators” represented by Lagunya and the “more traditional African operators from rural areas” represented by Webta (Dugard, 2001: 6).

A Sinister Force Lies Beneath:

The unfolding events of the taxi violence created strong suspicions of a more sinister force working below the surface to inflame taxi rivalries. The tale of the taxi violence as told by the internal forces includes peculiar instances of community members, rather than taxi owners, being the targets of attack. While attempts were made to forge peace by creating an amalgamated taxi association, these attempts did not seem to stick:

Zakuthini: We are just trying, as a community to tell them they must be one organization, because they are fighting against each other, and we do not know why they shoot at us. You know, probably them (WEBTA) and the police do not want to have one taxi organization. We tried to unite these taxi associations, but it never worked, you know, as they united, they split up again.

When community leaders start dying in taxi violence, suspicions of sinister forces reach boiling point:

Commander Zet: and then the community leaders had been dying in taxi violence, we don't understand, because we are busy fighting the apartheid regime... we asked ourselves, what is it now, we said okay, we know the side of WEBTA who disagree with the new association, okay, then the following week we heard that Zola Ntsoni (chairperson of two town) has been shot and killed in 1991. What is happening now? And then Michael Mapongwana (chairperson of Khayelitsha civic structure), he was arrested for unlicensed fire-arms and he was supposed to go in

Wynberg court. When he came back in the Landsdown Road near Crossroads we hear that Mapongwana has been shot and killed, aw!

Pam summarizes the general sense of confusion and suspicion surrounding the death of three prominent community leaders:

Pam: The question was that Mike [Mapongwana] didn't have a taxi, Pro Jack didn't have a taxi, Zola [Ntsoni] didn't have a taxi! How could they die in taxi violence?

The internal forces are approached by the Lagunya taxi owners and come to the conclusion that it is the Webta taxi owners that are working with the police to kill off community leaders. At that point they decide to join forces with the Lagunya taxi owners:

Two Boy Jack: What happened was that the LAGUNYA guys came to the commanders and said that they don't have weapons, and it's not them that are shooting at the people, it's the police and the WEBTA taxis. Then at that point, we decided to work together with the LAGUNYA taxis. Throughout the Western Cape all the taxis were being beaten up by the WEBTA and the police.

The suspicions of sinister forces lurking beneath the taxi wars are spun into a theory that the taxi violence is fueled by the "third force". The taxi violence was "infiltrated" by the white police and turned into a substitute for Inkhatha in the Western Cape:

Commander Zet: Now afterwards I sit with Zakuthini and Two boy Jack, because this, we must open really our eyes, this is another thing this, this is not a taxi violence, there is someone behind this, we call it third force, because you can see in Kwa Zulu Natal, people are dying, fighting ANC and IF now in Western Cape, there's no Inkhata here, but the government, what he did now, he make Inkhatha by using taxi violence.

Dugard's (2001) analysis of the Western Cape Taxi Violence supports the suspicions of these internal forces. She demonstrates that:

in the course of the conflict, attacks became increasingly focused on the residents of Nyanga and Khayelitsha rather than on drivers and passengers and, despite countless cease-fires and peace initiatives, each time there was a lull in the conflict, violence would flare up again, suggesting there was more to the violence than taxi-related commercial competition

Dugard, 2001: 7

After three prominent community leaders, Mapongwana, Zola Ntsoni and Mziwonke Jack, were assassinated in the taxi violence, "accusations of police involvement and allegations that a "third force" was "worsening the conflict caused by the taxi feud in an attempt to provoke "war" to destabilize the community" (South, 1991, August 15, cited in Duggard, 2001: 8).

The internal forces believe that the taxi violence was fueled and mobilized by the apartheid state as part of a broader strategy to disrupt community cohesion and create fragmentation within ANC aligned communities. This violence succeeded in instilling suspicion and fear in the internal forces, and causing a rift between the internal forces and members of the ANC national executive committee in Khayelitsha. In the following section, members of the ANC national executive committee are woven into the taxi violence within a context of deepening suspicion, and a broader narrative of betrayal is constructed.

The R5 Betrayal

During this time of the taxi violence, suspicions were high, as community leaders were being killed off. The events that follow resulted in the internal forces suspecting that the regional offices of the ANC were also working with the police against them. Commander Zet was given a tip off from one of the internal force spies in the police that the police together with the WEBTA taxis will attack the BM section of Khayelitsha. The community, along with the internal forces, decided to collect R5 from every household in order to buy ammunition for the protection of the BM section. While the money was collected by certain leaders within ANC structures, the money was never handed over to the internal forces. When the BM section was attacked, the internal forces were not prepared because they never received the money for the ammunition. The internal forces suspected that the money was withheld purposefully, and these ANC leaders were working with the police to ensure the members of the internal forces were killed off:

Commander Zet: we have been calling the leaders to collect the 5 rand each and every house to the community, then the community give that money, but these people, they did not give the money to us to buy the weapon...and then we now know, I know the apartheid regime was with those leader who have taken this money. They have already changed to the community, helping the apartheid regime, they are against us, because the BM section has been burnt down by the taxi violence, by the police. They know that we don't have a weapon.

After the attack on the BM section Zakuthini told Commander Zet that he was tired of getting attacked by the taxis and the police, and that it was time to retaliate. This retaliation took two forms. First, when Commander Zet came across one of the people

who betrayed them by not handing over the community money for the ammunition, he tries to “hit him by car, under the lorry, but he survives.” People question this action, but he justifies it by asserting that it was this man’s fault that the BM section of Khayelitsha was attacked. At the time of this individual retaliation, Zakuthini becomes restless, because “he is tired of getting attacked all the time, we should go do something now... when we saw the taxis together with the police vehicles, then we started to launch an attack, shot and threw some hand grenades and hit them good”. As the attacks on the community increased, Pam described how the internal forces created “one entry no exit areas” where the internal forces would attack and kill rival Webta taxis and police:

So, this violence led to us having to take arms as well, because there was just no way of now stopping it, so what happened is that we created one entry, no exit areas, so that if they come into Khayelitsha, we would beat them up, we shoot them, we kill them, and then we just leave them now, so we had to make sure we fight back, so what they were doing is to come more into our houses, raid peoples houses, burn peoples houses all the time, so that’s why the internal forces took up arms and protected the people against that. So since the taxi war, there was no more peace, no happiness, no nothing, it was fights all the way.

The taxi violence and the deaths resulting from this violence unfolded within a deepening backdrop of suspicion and confusion. Within this environment a rift developed between the internal forces and the structures within the ANC in Khayelitsha. In the midst of peace negotiations, the taxi violence coupled with power struggles within community leadership structures, led to serious allegations and accusations. On the one side, Commander Zet was accused of being the leader of the notorious Balaclava gang. On the other side, the members of the internal forces began to suspect that members of the ANC structures here working with the police in an attempt to get rid of internal forces.

Zakuthini: Actually, the other thing that stirred up this whole thing was that there was going to be a meeting for the ANC in this area, and some of the leadership actually was fighting against each other, because some of them didn’t want the then chairperson to again take over as chairperson, so there was this problem amongst the leadership of fighting over positions. What they were saying there is that the (current) Chairperson Makeleni is using the Balaclavas lead by commander Zet, you know. And then they starting to accuse Amabutho (internal forces) of being the Balaclavas, you know, and commander Zet leading the Balaclavas and all of that... We also figured out that ... the big (ANC) guys, these ex combatants they were also, you know, spies, they were working with the police. During this time, you know what we did, is kind of like now, to look back at what really is happening, what’s going on, you know, that’s when we discovered, you know, that there are more spies than, you know, freedom fighters...

Disarmament: The Ultimate Betrayal

Disarmament can be an incredibly difficult experience for a soldier, especially when – as is the case for the internal forces – empowerment, freedom and masculinity are intimately constructed around “guns” and “violence” (Cock, 1998). In the context of the internal forces the trauma of disarmament is compounded by an environment of suspicion and betrayal. The events that follow present a narrative reconstruction of the ultimate betrayal of disarmament.

The internal forces find it difficult to understand why they were disarmed in a context of continued war-like violence. Two Boy Jack constructs the disarmament as an illogical mistake in a context where the internal forces are the “ones who are protecting” the community. Commander Zet told the ANC members that “today you disarm us, but the enemy will be aware of this”. Furthermore Boy Boy and Zakuthini construct the disarmament as not only illogical but also illegitimate. They had never before taken orders from the ANC. They saw these ANC members as their allies, but not as their leaders. Boy Boy describes the emotional experience of what he believes to be an illegitimate disarmament:

Boy Boy: We started to see, okay, there were some other people now who called themselves “the regional office of the ANC” and they would now come at times and stop us, and even want to disarm us, and we hated it... you know we were just being told to give in our ammunition and we hated it big time, we didn't like it a lot... The one thing that we hated was for a person to come and want to disarm us when he didn't arm us in the first place and how did they even know we had guns and all of that? So we were all angry at the same time, you know, we just wanted to kill these people, but the commander was there so we couldn't do anything, you know, we were being led by his command.

Soon after the traumatic and seemingly illegitimate experience of disarmament, members of the internal forces (including Pamela's boyfriend, Vido) started turning up dead. The remaining internal forces were enraged at the murder of their comrades. With a deep sense of pain, anger and confusion, Commander Zet re-lives the memory of an attempt on his life, which resulted in the death of his mother:

Commander Zet: The decision was taken, I must be killed. That day I feel drowsy. My mother asked me what has happened. I heard: “Bo! Zet, you are going to shit today” they started to fire dadadadadadadada. now this door, now my door was straight. My mother's kamer (bedroom) was this side. my kamer was that side, my uncle was there, with my mother and the daughter of my brother, she was there... She was 6 years old. When they fired, I said to them don't stand up, don't

even move, lay down, they fired... Ye, they fired. Unfortunately, my mom was thinking it was the stability unit, because the stability unit kicked the door three times. She said, "I'm tired, for a long time, killing my son, killing me" she stood up, got her in the stomach, lying down... You know, the guy... he said, we finished them, Jesus, I feel like I can cry, you understand, but I took the hand grenade and threw, they said he's still alive, and carry on shooting...

Boy Boy describes the atmosphere after the attempt on Commander Zet's life as "chaos" and "haywire" causing deep "frustration" for the internal forces. The Women's League demanded that the weapons were returned to the internal forces. Commander Zet had marked all the bullets with an "African lipstick". This was a method of keeping count of the bullets by using a tar-like substance to mark the bullets. Out of 35 marked bullets, only 14 remained which was an indicator to commander Zet that the bullets had been used. Two Boy Jack elaborates on the process of linking the missing bullets to the attempt on commander Zet's life. He argues that they collected and counted the bullet cartridges outside Commander Zet's house and the number of cartridges added up to the number of missing bullets:

Two Boy Jack: what they did was they found the cartridges of the bullets that were shot outside commander Zet's house. And when the guns were returned, we saw the cartridges and we added up the cartridges with the bullets that had returned with the guns and they added up exactly, and we know our cartridges because we always mark them.

This narrative of betrayal weaves itself into the tale of the taxi violence and the sinister forces behind it. It then continues through the experience of disarmament and the attempt on Commander Zet's life. Finally it ends up at the argument that the ANC members who disarmed the internal forces were in fact working with the apartheid regime to ensure the internal forces are killed off and to cement their positions within a post-apartheid government. As Mandisi summarizes:

Mandisi: So the thing is that Kimi neh, while the guys were fighting, the other's were busy preparing suits to go to parliament -remember that statement- so it's now these guys that were calling themselves the regional office of the ANC. That were busy preparing to go to parliament, so they made sure that they do conspiracy amongst the people that were fighting internally, because they had no information about anything with regards to the people that remained within the country, fighting with the apartheid government, so they made sure that they conspire against them to such an extent that some of them die, so they literally killed some of them, they paid of people to kill some of them.

These interviews covered a variety of time periods, events, experiences and emotions from childhood and adolescence, through experiences of resistance and political education, through combat and democracy, and finally into democracy. Through all those

experiences, emotions and time periods, the one that emerged as the most significant for the internal forces was the period of the early 1990s and the “narrative of betrayal” unraveled above. This narrative was surrounded by a sense of urgency, and I continually experienced a feeling of pressure to understand and retell this particular part of the life stories of the internal forces. Where other events seemed more part of the past, this one seemed very much part of the present. Wrapped up in confusion, frustration and anger, the narrative of betrayal during the early 1990s was both the most difficult and most necessary part of the narratives to interpret.

On the one hand one can delve into the factuality of the story, trying to piece together evidence to understand the truth of the accusations and allegations. This is no doubt an important exercise in a context where many of the messy and underhanded goings on during the struggle have been swept under the dominant constructions of history. However, my intention is not to evaluate the factuality of this story. Instead, I aim to look at how this narrative is functioning as an attempt to make sense of the present situation in South Africa through emphasizing past stories of betrayal. It is not just the story of betrayal that become important here, but rather the ways in which this story is part of a broader discourse of betrayal mobilized to make sense of continued inequality and oppression in South Africa. This theme of being betrayed in the early 1990s feeds through into the interpretations of the present democracy, and becomes part of a broader discourse of betrayal operating among ex combatants and other groups.

The Narrative of Betrayal Continues into Democracy

The internal forces’ reflections on post-apartheid South Africa are heavy with a deep sense of betrayal. This betrayal is expressed through strong feelings of being “side-lined”, “rejected” and ignored by the government they fought for. For example, in the passage below Pam expresses these sentiments:

Pam: But what killed us the most was being rejected and side-lined by the people that we fought for, that is what killed most of the soldiers.

These feelings of rejection are coupled with a sense that the situation in South Africa has deteriorated for the majority of the citizens who fought for the liberation of South Africa. In the passage below Commander Zet illustrates that the people suffering in the New South Africa are the children of the comrades who fought for liberation. For Commander Zet, as for all the internal forces, the experience of this betrayal is infuriating. Commander Zet's emotional rage is reflected in his need to wear glasses to hide the anger in his eyes:

Commander Zet: When looking at your comrades children walking around, smoking tik, selling their bodies, unable to go to school, you realize that, when his father carrying AK47 fighting for liberation, but today, what is happening again to the black people, the citizens of South Africa... that is burning, really, that is burning us, it is burning us, you know, you can see, you know I used to wearing this [his dark glasses], you know, when I think about this, I become angry, and my eye change this, now I don't want people to realize, or notice that I'm angry, I decided to use this, because if I'm angry, you will notice the way my eyes fume, and the way I walk, you will see (Mandisi: his eyes flare and they get red).

There is a general feeling among the internal forces that the ANC leaders are the only group who are benefiting from liberation, while the majority of black South Africans remain poor and oppressed. Commander Zet asserts that the ANC are the only ones "enjoying the freedom in the leader shabeen". Furthermore, often the betrayal accusations against political leaders are articulated through the same "spy" and "askaris" interpretations of disarmament. A connection is made between the spies who betrayed them during disarmament, and the spies who continue to betray them during liberation. This connection is made explicit in commander Zet's assertion that:

Commander Zet: The people who are in government, the time of apartheid, they are also involved in this [commander Zet points to an article on the wall about one of the internal forces who was killed during the disarmament] this is the bullet, this is the blood, the people who are busy doing this are in parliament nowadays.

In the passage below, Zakuthini blames the "so-called ANC" for the reality that most of the people who fought for liberation are in the same situation as they were during apartheid. The "so-called ANC" is a reference to the belief that some of these leaders were actually spies:

Most of the people that fought for the liberation are still where they are today; they never gained access even to the opportunities, because the ANC, so called ANC, took over everything.

Similarly, Pam expresses a deep sense of frustration towards members of the ANC because she knows how they got into parliament. Like Zakuthini she is referring to the fact that they got in to parliament not through deservingness but through their connections as spies for the apartheid regime:

It's more difficult having to face them there in parliament, cause when you face them that thing always comes back, how these guys got into parliament, and sometimes you just feel like clapping them, you know, kicking them in the you know what.

The deep emotion Pam attaches to this belief that the wrong people got into power is echoed by Boy Boy when he admits that he "was starting to lose his mind" knowing that "the people who did nothing and actually conspired against us are benefiting from what we fought for". This belief that there are corrupt members of the ANC who are responsible for the continued oppression of the citizens of South Africa who fought for liberation is further illustrated in Two Boy Jacks discussions below:

Two Boy Jack: Actually it was really tough, that's when I also discovered that there was something wrong with our government, because you cannot promise somebody something and yet you don't give them that thing. So the government lied to us... so that's when they discovered that no, there's corruption and something wrong amongst the government.

The narratives of the internal forces represent a strong belief that the reasons for the continued oppression of the majority of black South Africans can be located in corrupt members of the ANC government. The betrayal narrative constructed by the internal forces is clearly located in the current situation of continued poverty, inequality and oppression that effects the majority poor, black South Africans. This is evident in the continuous assertions that nothing has changed, the situation has worsened, and the ANC leaders are the only ones who are benefiting from liberation. Furthermore, this sense of a bad situation gone worse is coupled within strong feelings of being sidelined and ignored by the very government they fought for. The internal forces locate the blame for this unjust betrayal firmly on the ANC government, and in particular on the spies in the ANC government. They feel deeply betrayed by a government they fought for, which they believe is corrupt.

Chapter Seven: A Critical Analysis of the Discourse of Betrayal

The joint narratives of the internal forces carry this theme of betrayal from their construction of disarmament, and into their attempt to understand continued oppression and inequality in South Africa. This theme of betrayal can be located within a broader discourse of betrayal operating among a variety of former combatant groupings, as well as among some of the more radical factions of poor, black, South African communities. While this theme of betrayal as it expresses itself in the narratives of the internal forces has a unique “conspiracy” flavor, it shares with the broader discourse a sense of being betrayed by one's own government (the government we fought for and/or support).

Groups of ex-combatants interviewed by Everatt & Jennings (2006), Gear (2002b) and Swarts (2007) illustrate a pervasive sense of betrayal felt by ex-combatants in post-apartheid South Africa. Everatt & Jennings show that 73% of former combatants agree or strongly agree to the statement that “political leaders in South Africa did not care about me after 1994”, demonstrating that this sense of betrayal felt by ex-combatants is firmly attributed to political leaders. This is further illustrated in the more qualitative interviews conducted by Swarts (2007) on anti-apartheid activists and Gear (2002b) on former MK/SDU members. The following passage from one of the former activists interviewed by Swarts (2007: 75) mirrors the discourse of betrayal narrated by the internal forces:

I think, I feel we were sold out you know at the negotiation table, not me myself, I'm talking about the people who are suffering at the hands of poverty still today, and there hasn't been a lot of changes...especially within the economic situation in our country, people are still suffering you know, it's only the top political people who has been empowered economically now and that was not the principals and policies of socialism that was preached during the Apartheid years by the ANC

Similarly, former MK/SDU members interviewed by Gear assert “today our cadres are lying in the streets... they find themselves being regarded as rotten rubbish which may be thrown away into a dirty bin”, and “the ANC has thrown [us] outside like morning

mucus” (Gear, 2002b: 16). Many of Gear’s MK/ANC respondents feel that they are “still oppressed, even now” and the feelings of betrayal are compounded by the huge inequalities between the few ex-combatants who have benefited and the majority who are still oppressed (Gear, 2002b: 10). As one of Gear’s ANC/MK respondents asserts:

The disparities that exist are not only between ourselves and our white counterparts but our comrades as well, they have become, overnight bourgeoisie and they are driving flashy cars and sleeping in very expensive hotels; they fly over our heads.

Gear, 2002b: 11

The discourse of betrayal is emerging as one of the strongest discourses amongst former combatants. Furthermore, this discourse of betrayal is not limited to former combatants, but represents a broader discourse of resistance feeding various forms of community struggles (Ballard et al., 2006; Desai & Pithouse, 2004; Gibson, 2006;). The workings of this discourse can be further unpacked once it is placed within the context of the political-economy and identity politics of post apartheid South Africa. In the next section, I aim to unpack and contextualize this discourse of betrayal in order to further understand the complex role it plays in the broader politics of post-apartheid South Africa.

The Politics of the Counter-Discourse of Betrayal

The discourse of betrayal emerges as a counter discourse to the ANC’s discourse of a common “racial-nationhood” within a context of deepening inequality and the severe lack of liberation for the poor, black majority of South Africans. The discourse of racial nationalism assumes that the black ANC and black bourgeoisie will act in the interests of black South Africans because of their shared race identity. In opposition to this assumption, the discourse of betrayal argues that a few black elite have benefited from liberation at the expense of the majority. This discourse expresses deep feelings of being betrayed by “our people”. In contrast to the ANC’s racial nationalism discussed above, this discourse highlights the class differences between the black elite and the poor black majority, and questions the assumption of common racial interests.

The discourse of betrayal indicates the existence of an ideological dilemma developing within South African discourses of racial nationalism. Ideological dilemmas occur when contradictory narratives of nationalism co-exist (Billig, 1995). The betrayal discourse

forms part of a broader ideological dilemma/debate around nationalism in South Africa. Hart (2007) argues that the discourse stems from the contradictions inherent in the ANC's racial national discourse. Racial nationalism evokes a sense of a common struggle and a common vision, but at the same time calls to question the reality that this common vision has not been achieved. The contradiction between a common African vision for liberation and the reality of deepening poverty, inequality and oppression for the majority, makes the discourse of racial nationalism potentially vulnerable to charges of betrayal.

One of the features of ideological dilemmas is that they provoke debate around the meaning and content of nationalism, but they do not challenge the terms of the debate (Billig, 1995). This is true for the discourse of betrayal. In the case of the internal forces, the dominant narrative emerging through their constructions of the transition is the narrative of betrayal. This betrayal is constructed through the lens of "informers" and "spies" colluding with the white government during the struggle to betray their fellow comrades. This narrative of betrayal set up through the construction of the transition reaches back into understandings of informers and forward into understandings of black elite betrayers. There is a sense of continuity in the narratives of the internal forces as they continue the discourse of betrayal from the struggle through the transition and into the present. While in some ways the discourse of betrayal attempts to resist a sense of racial nationhood, in other ways it functions to re-affirm a sense of common racial identity being betrayed. Black South Africans who collaborated with the enemy could never become the enemy, as they could not escape the political obligations implicit in their race (MacDonald, 2006). Therefore the discourse of betrayal denies the assumption of the racial national discourse that elite blacks will operate in the interests of all blacks, but reinforces the salience of race as a prime identity for black South Africans in post apartheid South Africa.

These uncontested assumptions about the nature of racial salience have implications for larger racial politics. As explained, the primacy of racial identity functions to downplay the intra-racial class inequality and legitimize capital. While the intra-racial class

inequalities are contested in the discourse of betrayal, the place of white South Africans in this debate over racial nationalism remains invisible in both discourses. Whiteness, in fact, plays a key role in structuring the terms of the debate over nationhood. Despite the appearance that whiteness is somehow operating in a separate zone from the ANC vs. the majority poor black South Africans debate, it is intricately and invisibly connected to it. In the following section I aim to widen the lens of understanding to illustrate the ways in which whiteness is invisibly implicated in this debate.

The Invisible Force of Whiteness

In the post-apartheid historical context, a system of white privilege is no longer built into racial laws. However, due to interconnecting systems of race, class, and cultural privilege worked into the system during colonialism and apartheid, white South Africans no longer need legally enforced privileges (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). Their privileged status is maintained through their combined economic and cultural privilege (MacDonald, 2006). Therefore white domination thrives in South Africa because the systems of economic and cultural privilege are allowed to continue. The new black elite play a crucial role in ensuring these economic and cultural systems for white privilege remain legitimately intact. The passage below was collected during earlier research I conducted on white, wealthy South Africans and indicates the crucial role played by the new black elite in legitimizing white privilege:

I think affirmative action is very good, but has to happen very quickly. We need a very strong black middle class if this country is not to go the way of Zimbabwe. If you empower a lot of previously disadvantaged where they don't want to change the status quo; they've got good lives where their kids can go to good schools and they've got their salaries; they won't want a radical black government to come in.

(September, 2005)

This white South African explicitly recognizes the link between creating a black bourgeoisie and maintaining a "status quo" which privileges white capital and culture. Strategies of Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment play an important role in changing the complexion of capital. However, these strategies are not connected to a broader process of transforming the "culture" of capital, nor the quality of lives of

the majority of South Africans citizens (Terreblanche, 2002). Therefore, these policies amount to mere assimilatory practices that function to legitimize continued white privilege in the face of rising black poverty and oppression (MacDonald, 2006). Racial nationalism comes into the mix to legitimize policies which legitimize capital and white privilege. The ANC mobilizes a sense of racial solidarity through discourses of racial nationalism, which allows them to paint black economic empowerment as functioning to benefit all black South Africans, when in reality it is functioning to legitimize white cultural and economic privilege. MacDonald explains these connections and contradictions as follows:

Racial solidarities do influence elections in spite of formally “non-racial” political institutions, and the ANC does trade on racial identity, representation and politics. But the material interests of whites benefit from the emphasis on representing African identities. Africanizing state leadership serves as the condition/camouflage for stabilizing the state, recognising the power of business, and instating the material interests of prosperous South Africans (predominantly white)

(MacDonald, 2006: 133)

In order to bring whiteness into the frame of the debate on racial nationalism, it is necessary to construct a broader picture of the ways in which systems of privilege and domination, systems of meaning (discourses) and subjectivities intersect with one another in the historical context of a post-apartheid South Africa to form a “complex of power”. Within intersecting systems of capitalism and whiteness, discourses of racial nationalism and discourses of betrayal function to interpolate identities situated at the intersection of racialized and classed experiences. The discourse of racial nationalism mobilizes racial identities in a way that downplays the significance of class inequality and legitimizes the whiteness/capitalist intersecting systems of domination. In an attempt to counter this discourse, the discourse of betrayal uncovers the first hegemonic layer of this “power complex” by bringing to light the class inequalities hidden under the discourse of a common racial identity. While resisting the unjust class positionings of the black bourgeoisie, this seemingly counter-hegemonic discourse hides the ways in which white wealth is legitimized through the creation of a black bourgeoisie. Intersecting systems of Whiteness/Capitalist systems of domination act as the crucial organizer of this power complex. However, the role of whiteness in this “power complex” remains unrecognized and unchallenged.

Mechanisms of Invisibility

The invisible role of whiteness in the debate over nationalism comes into focus through drawing attention to a broader “power complex” in which it operates. A key strength of whiteness as a system of domination is its ability to operate in secret. The invisibility of whiteness ensures that as a system of domination it is not challenged, because it is not seen (Statman, 1999). Furthermore, white subjectivities continued to reap the benefits of unequal racial privilege, but do not need to take responsibility for reaping these benefits. One of the most pervasive and powerful privileges of whiteness is precisely that whites are absolved of any moral conscience for the ways in which they are privileged at the oppressed “other’s” expense (Steyn & Foster, 2008). In short, whiteness’s motto is: ignorance is bliss!

The invisibility of whiteness, and the lack of responsibility for the privilege it implies, requires work at the level of discourse. The invisibility of whiteness is actively worked into meaning making practices in ways that ensure that invisibility is maintained through discourse. These discursive mechanisms of maintaining the invisibility of whiteness are actively operating through the discourse of betrayal. Despite the fact that this discourse is not spoken from white subjectivities, these discursive mechanisms of invisibility look very similar to the resistant strands of white discourse referred to as “white talk”(Steyn & Foster, 2008).

One of the key strengths of whiteness as a system of domination is its invisibility. The construction of White South African identity is characterized by a denial of white privilege (Steyn, 2005). This denial of white privilege can be described as a discursive strategy mobilized by white South Africans to deny the ways in which they were implicated in the apartheid system, and to deny the effects of this system that continue to structure post-apartheid South Africa (Ansell, 2004; Ballard, 2004; Statman 1999; Steyn, 2001, 2005, Steyn & Foster, 2007). By making the continued system of white privilege invisible through the discourses of denial, white South Africans are absolved from taking responsibility for continued racial privilege.

It is troubling to recognize that these discourses which deny the continued privilege of white South Africans are not restricted to white South Africans. Some of the discourses the internal forces mobilize to reflect on post apartheid South Africa share some strikingly similar features to the “white” way of seeing the world, and function in similar ways to maintain white privilege. This white discourse of denial was surprisingly prevalent in the internal forces’ interpretations of post-apartheid South Africa as seen through the lens of the discourse of betrayal. Two Boy Jack argues that the reason that the socio-economic situation did not improve for the majority of black South Africans is because “the government lied to us...there’s corruption and something wrong amongst the government”. Similarly Zakuthini argues that most black South Africans did “not gain access to the opportunities” stemming from liberation, because “the ANC took over everything”.

Despite the reality that the continued inequality and oppression experienced by the internal forces is intimately linked to whiteness, all the blame for the current state of affairs is placed directly on the shoulders of the ANC government. The internal forces construct the member of governments as selfish and corrupt. Often the charge of corruption is connected to the betrayal narrative set up during the joint construction of the early 1990s. Internal forces believe the reason for continued oppression is that the informers of the apartheid regime managed to insert themselves into government and disturb the process of liberation.

Furthermore, the invisibility of white privilege in the post apartheid regime reaches back into a denial of white privilege during the struggle against apartheid. By locating the blame for apartheid at the level of the apartheid government and police, the broader system of racial privilege and oppression at work during apartheid remain invisible. The localized, immediate experiences of racism and the reactionary resistance to these localized experiences, did not allow for a broader understanding of the systemic nature of racism. The invisibility of the systemic nature of white privilege is carried through to the current discourse of betrayal and results in a lack of engagement with continued white privilege. The ways in which white South Africans are absolved from taking

responsibility for their role in the systems of oppression and privilege during apartheid, and continuing into post apartheid South Africa are evident in the passages below:

Commander Zet: the struggle was not against the white people, but it was against the apartheid government.

Boy Boy: I hope was to liberate the country and benefit from the government that we were fighting for. Because the then government of the apartheid we didn't benefit anything from, so that's why we were fighting, so that we could get our own government that we could benefit from the wealth of the country.

The apartheid and ANC governments represent “scapegoats” for the system of unequal racial privilege and oppression. Continued injustice in post-apartheid South Africa is epistemically removed from the systems and structures through which it operates and placed into the corrupt intentions of the ANC government. There is a general lack of recognition that an inherently unjust system remains intact in post apartheid South Africa. Instead the New South Africa is assumed to be a just world (Furnham, 1985; Lerner & Miller, 1978) with a few unjust members of government. Through blaming the ANC government for the lack of liberation in post apartheid South Africa, the role of whiteness as a continued system of domination is made invisible.

This lack of engagement with the role which whiteness continues to play in maintaining oppression in post apartheid South Africa has implications for the discourses of hope expressed in these interviews. If the reason for the lack of liberation lies in a few unjust individuals who managed to become part of the ANC government despite their selfish intent, then the solution lies in resisting, challenging and overcoming these few unjust individuals. Furthermore, along with the problem of a few unjust individuals in government working against the greater good, a second reason for continued oppression is located in the trauma of combat. The hopeful discourses expressed by the internal forces paint a picture that anything will be possible as soon as the challenges of post-traumatic stress and a few bad apples in government are overcome. Often interviews construct “youth for change” as the key to solving all the problems the internal forces continue to face. The following passages represent the two changes often expressed as necessary to enjoy the fruits of liberation. Firstly it is necessary to rid the ANC government of “wrong people,” and secondly it is necessary to let go of the trauma of the past to “build *my* nation” and enjoy the benefits of safety, freedom and equality:

Two Boy Jack: Our vision for youth for change is to make sure that all the liars, all the wrong people of our government we take them off their seats, so that people that can go in there are people ready to serve the community.

Two Boy Jack: If I look back I see that if I can get stuck in the past I wouldn't mature in mind, so that clearly shows that whatever happened in the past, I must just forgive, I must just build my nation, just like it's supposed to be, just like the freedom charter says, here we want a rainbow nation. said we will all benefit, we shall be safe, we shall be free, we shall be equal.

Bits of racial nationalism creep into these discourses of hope. There is a strong sense that the benefits of liberation (freedom, equality, safety) are just around the corner. All that is required is getting rid of the corrupt members of the ANC and healing the internal wounds of the past. Similarly Pamela's reflections on her experience of going to "counseling and work for trauma release" paint a picture of hope and trust stemming from releasing her internal trauma:

Pamela: I would be hypnotized at times, because what was in me couldn't come out, so they had to find ways and means of creating that...But I'm free now, because what I'm doing, I'm doing it freely now...even if there is something that is hurting me...I came again saying to myself, why are you quarrelling, you must just go on, because you are going to get something, so I always having that trust now, I build that trust.

By locating the problem within these localized sites of the ANC government and self-trauma, a discourse of hope can arise. It is easier to overcome a few bad apples in government or release the trauma of the past than it is to challenge the continued system of racial inequality and oppression. While this discourse of hope in the future seems positive, it is based in the invisibility of the continued and pervasive nature of whiteness. These feelings of hope in the future function as part of the power complex of whiteness. Unfortunately the continued system of privilege will not be overcome through getting rid of the selfish members of government or by releasing trauma, because it requires a deeper structural transformation.

Throughout the interviews, reflections on post apartheid South Africa share with whiteness discourse a tendency to deny continued white privilege in South Africa. This interpretation precludes the possibility of challenging the continued unjust system of white privilege. An ideological strategy of dissimulation is at work here, where the nature of oppression is presented as something other than it is (Thompson, 1984). The true

which his comrade's children grow up in. He is distressed by the unjust reality that the children of men who died for the liberation of this country are "smoking tik, selling their bodies, unable to go to school". He asks: "what is happening again to the black people, the citizens of South Africa?" There is a strong sense that the real losers in the war against apartheid are the black South Africans majority who feel that they are worse off in the post-apartheid regime. The critique of the ANC government from this position of continued oppression represents an attempt to challenge the reality that the socio-economic situation for most black South Africans has not improved. The discourse of betrayal represents a counter-hegemonic discourse in the ways that it challenges continued economic inequality in South Africa and the legacies of apartheid, which have not been addressed.

The criticism of the ANC government expressed through the discourse of betrayal is attempting to bring to light continued poverty, inequality and oppression for most black South Africans, despite the shift in political power from a white to a black government. These strands of resistance are vitally important in challenging the ways in which relationships of domination and oppression have re-settled back into the fabric of post apartheid South Africa. However, the invisible ways in which whiteness feeds into these debates and co-opts their terrain, needs to critically be brought into the framework of understanding political contestations within South Africa.

Conclusion

A continuous theme which emerged through the analysis of these life stories was the crucial role of praxis in any attempt to resist everyday forms of oppression. While it is important that resistance is grounded in everyday struggles, it is equally important that these everyday struggles are continuously linked to forms of reflection which attempt to understand the workings of the broader structures of domination. The narratives of violent resistance during the internal revolts of the 1980s represent a “practice” heavy form of resistance, in that their focus is on the urgent need for immediate action. The everyday acts of violence against everyday forms of racism come to be self-serving and to take the place of a broader ideology of liberation.

Nigel Gibson demonstrates the ways in which this separation between action and theory is partly responsible for allowing the unequal structures of apartheid to reproduce themselves in a post-apartheid context:

The problem is that these expressions of direct democracy, however flawed and limited in their practice were celebrated but not translated into a radical rethinking of liberation theory for a post-apartheid society. This ideological pitfall was exploited by the ANC which was able to capture these narratives and celebrate the idea of “peoples power” while remaining the self-appointed future negotiator. While it was hoped that such a participatory democracy could become a basis for a post-apartheid society, it never became a challenge to political theory

(Gibson, 2001: 383-384)

The phrase, “expressions of direct democracy” refers to the process through which ordinary black South Africans realized that they could influence their lives and take active control of their futures. It was with this sense of direct democracy that various UDF civic groups and street committees were formed to resist everyday forms of oppression. Gibson argues that if these local expressions of democracy had been in continuous and challenging dialogue with political theory, that it might have been possible to resist the ways in which the negotiation process functioned to co-opt and silence a democratic civil society.

The discourse of betrayal, as it emerges in these interviews and in various forms of local resistance against the ANC, represents the breaking of this silence. These new struggles,

which draw on the lineage of the anti-apartheid township struggles, seem to have also inherited some of their baggage. In terms of the narratives of the internal forces, the implications of “practice” heavy resistance without reflection arise with particular relevance to the understandings of racism. An absence of engagement with the structural nature of racism in the past is reproduced in present discourses of betrayal, resulting in the easy co-option of these discourses to work for hegemonic forms of whiteness. The importance of fostering praxis in general and forging a critical understanding of shifting forms of racism in particular indicate a key role for “activist-intellectuals” in nurturing new forms of resistance.

Gibson (2006) and Desai & Pithouse (2004) emphasize similar conclusions about the role of intellectuals in helping communities to construct theoretical visions for the future based in their everyday local struggles. These writers further emphasize the difficult terrain of the “activist-intellectual” in challenging the forms of power which result in “intellectuals” monopolizing and distorting the ‘theoretical space’ of everyday struggles. Gibson (2006: 42) poses a difficult question: “how might “outsiders” intervene without, for example, reinforcing paternalistic relationships and/or otherwise undermining the people’s subjectivity, agency and dialogue”. My own engagement with this question indicates that it is more complex than it may first appear. This power dynamic never occurs in an easy either/or fashion (either the intellectual monopolizes power, or she manages to give power to people). Instead, this dynamic unfolds as a complex process of negotiated give and take, requiring continuous and sustained reflection.

In sum, the discourses of resistance to present experiences of oppression re-produce a general absence of engagement with the systemic nature of racism inherited from the “practice” heavy experiences of the township struggles. These findings have implications for present constructions of racism, as well as for the role of “activist-intellectuals”. There is a role for “activist-intellectuals” in nurturing forms of praxis within the rising energy of resistance emanating from local community struggles. Furthermore, these discourses require a recognition and sustained critique on the ways in which invisible whiteness threaten to co-opt resistant discourse.

nature of oppression in South Africa is hidden, and is therefore allowed to continue its operations from the protective space of invisibility.

Traces of Resistance

The discourse of betrayal demonstrates the ways in which the meaning of discourses can shift depending on who is mobilizing the discourse. An understanding of the functioning of discourse can only be gleaned from a situated perspective. Discourses are spoken from bodies, from identities, and from particular places in power. The meaning of a discourse can not be fully gleaned if separated from the subjectivity from which it is spoken. The discourse of betrayal as it is spoken by white talk and the internal forces, functions to delegitimize the power of the new black bourgeoisie. Despite the similarity in form, these discourses function slightly differently depending on where the speaker of the discourse is in relation to the ANC government. The ANC government represents black South Africans who have gained status, power and wealth in South Africa. Due to shared race solidarity with black South Africans and shared class interests with white South Africans, the ANC is situated within a “buffer position” between poor black South Africans and wealthy white South Africans.

While white South Africans maintain race privilege through intersecting economic and cultural forms of power, black South Africans have won political power in the New South Africa (Steyn & Foster, 2008). White talk attempts to backlash against the new found power of the ANC government, because politics represents a place where white South Africans have lost their monopoly on privilege. Therefore, de-legitimizing the new found political power of the ANC government from a position of whiteness represents a hegemonic attempt to maintain race privilege in post-apartheid South Africa through backlash against attempts to re-distribute power.

In contrast, the critique against the ANC government from the perspective of the internal forces is grounded in experiences of continued oppression despite so called “liberation”. These sentiments are clear when commander Zet discusses the oppressive environment in

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Appendix A: INCUDISA Interview Agreement



I, _____ (name), agree that I am participating willingly and voluntarily in a life story interview with _____ (researcher name) on this day _____ (date) at _____ (place).

I understand that these interviews form part of a Masters Thesis in Diversity Studies, towards the completion of a bona fide Masters degree in Sociology at the University of Cape Town (UCT). This thesis is conducted under supervision by Melissa Steyn at the Institute for Intercultural and Diversity Studies of Southern Africa (iNCUDISA) and Don Foster at the Department of Psychology (UCT).

I understand that I will be participating in a life story interview. The information from this interview will be used by Kim Wale for her thesis on the life stories of former combatants re-told in the context of post-apartheid South Africa.

I understand that the interview will be recorded so that Kim Wale may more accurately reflect my views in the report.

I understand that my name will remain anonymous, if I choose this. I also understand that I may choose to have my name reflected in the reports, if I choose this. I choose to remain anonymous / have my name reflected in the report.

I understand and agree to the above terms and conditions.

Signature (participant) _____ Date: _____

Signature (researcher) _____ Date: _____