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# **A HOME FOR ALL?**

EXPLORING DISCOURSES THAT INFORM THE CONSTRUCTION OF  
BELONGING IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA

by

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February 2012

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree M.Phil, Justice and  
Transformation, Department of Politics, University of Cape Town

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis, "A Home for All? Exploring discourses that inform the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa", submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MPhil in Justice and Transformation, is my own original work and has not been submitted previously by me for any degree or examination at this or any other University. Sources used or quoted in this thesis are indicated and referenced.

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Jean Ann Elliott

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Date

University of Cape Town

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and express my deep gratitude to the people who made the completion of this research and thesis possible. I wish to extend my thanks to the focus group participants, who bravely and candidly shared their personal experiences, interpretations and views with me. Without the generous gift of their time and input, this research would not have been conducted. I gratefully acknowledge my supervisors, Professor André du Toit and Professor Jane Bennett, for their insight, guidance, encouragement and supreme patience. I wish to thank UCT for generously waiving my international student fees for the past two years in support of my non-academic, time-intensive, social-justice related work commitments. Finally, I wish to thank my parents for their support throughout the journey to complete this thesis. It is my greatest wish to make them proud.

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis is concerned with the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa and how it is reproduced, challenged and negotiated within the social action of language. This is explored by investigating the situated meanings individuals assign to events, places, institutions and people in relation to their experiences of belonging and exclusion. Poststructuralism, phenomenology and social constructionism shape the theoretical framework of this study. Multi-disciplinary discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis are used to explore how the construction of belonging is reflected and produced in everyday language. The texts analyzed in this study are the product of five focus group discussions with 23 residents of Cape Town. The focus group texts are read for how individuals' lived experiences, memories and imaginations inform the process of constructing belonging. The analysis identifies dominant and competing discourses that reproduce, legitimize and challenge the politics of belonging. The overlapping and contradictory discourses identified in this exploratory research illuminate the complexity and fluidity of belonging and the intricate relationships between belonging and notions of migration, nation, 'race' and ethnicity, resistance and identity. While this study speculates about wider implications of the research findings, the size and scope of this thesis make it more realistically a pilot-study for a more in-depth research project that could yield reflections on the relationship between discourse and dominance, power and inequality, and motivate belonging based on inclusion through critical understanding.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Chapter 1 – Introduction and context for research.....	1
Aim of research.....	2
Research Questions .....	3
Introduction to fieldwork and analysis .....	4
Research context.....	5
Organization of the study .....	6
Chapter 2: Context of research.....	7
Literature review.....	8
Belonging .....	8
Identity.....	10
Race, ethnicity and indigeneity.....	12
Nations, borders, citizenship .....	14
Migration.....	18
Conclusion.....	21
Chapter 3 – Theoretical and Analytical Framework.....	23
Theoretical framework .....	23
Social Constructionism.....	23
Phenomenology .....	25
Methodology.....	26

Focus group interviews and data collection .....	27
Table 1: Focus group demographics .....	29
Discourse analysis.....	32
Chapter 4 – Analysis.....	36
Theme 1: Belonging to a place, a location.....	38
Discourse: I belong at home .....	38
Discourse: Geographical borders denote borders of belonging.....	42
Theme 2: Something greater than ‘us’ constructs belonging.....	43
Discourse: The Government is corrupt and instigates division .....	43
Discourse: The government promotes inclusive belonging.....	45
Discourse: Democracy shapes belonging.....	45
Theme 3: We should feel Pride and shame .....	47
Discourse: ‘We’ should feel proud of what has been accomplished.....	47
Competing Discourse: ‘We’ should feel Shame for what South Africa has failed to accomplish.	48
Theme 4: Africanness.....	49
Discourse: race, culture and ethnicity as belonging .....	49
Discourse: Resistance and struggle ‘earn’ one belonging .....	52
Discourse: The notion of Africanness propegates xenophobia .....	54
Theme 5: Migration .....	55
Discourse: ‘Foreigners’ are Others and only the indigenous belong.....	55
Discourse: Xenophobia is painful, and is someone else’s doing.....	57
Conclusion.....	59
Chapter 5 - Conclusions .....	61

Personal and methodological reflexivity .....	61
Limitations of the study .....	64
Recommendations for future research.....	65
Conclusions .....	67
Bibliography .....	70
Appendix A: Informed consent document.....	83

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## CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT FOR RESEARCH

On December 16, 2004, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of democracy in South Africa, the Western Cape Government launched their vision of the province – a ‘Home for All’ (Western Cape Provincial Government, 2004). The Provincial Government aimed to transform the Western Cape into a place where “the principles of diversity, change, dignity, humanity, respect, community and passion drive the everyday lives of those living in the province,” (Western Cape Social Capital Network, 2007). Giles Griffin, a copywriter and marketing specialist hired by the Western Province Government to strategize the ‘Home for All’ campaign, explained that all elements of the initial advertising campaign are “nourished by a singularly powerful thought” that alludes to the role of identity, difference and the perception of Others in the creation of belonging in language:

*I am Seen. I am Heard. I Am.*

*When I am seen, and when I am heard, I am affirmed.*

*A common tenet of most psychological discourse is that:*

*I can only respect and honour others, when I myself am respected and honoured.*

*If we begin this journey with a celebration of individuals we plot a course towards an inevitable destination:*

*I see Others. I hear Others. I affirm Others. (Griffin, 2011)*

Ebrahim Rassol, appointed Premier of the Western Cape by Thabo Mbeki in 2004, highlighted the multiple meanings attached to a day or event in his speech at the launch of the ‘Home for All’ logo. He reflected upon the contested nature of the date of the launch, a day to which colonialists, resisters and participants of the liberation movement attached different meanings and histories (Western Cape Provincial Government, 2004). Rasool said that the ‘Home for All’ vision was a reflection of “our deep wish to build a sense of a shared community in our Province, by putting a value on every citizen and making her or him feel a part of and a contributor to, this place we call “Home”. It is about acknowledgment. And it is about creating a collectivity of interests and shared dreams for our future” (Western Cape Social Capital Network, 2007). The history and politics behind the phrase a “Home for All’ illustrates how complex and multifaceted the construction of belonging is in South Africa.

The historical and political context of the language of the slogan is referenced in speeches and literature about the provincial ‘Home for All’ campaign. Chief Albert Luthuli, Nobel Peace Laureate and ANC President, described his vision for South Africa in 1962 and alluded to it being a process,

stating that “the task is not finished. South Africa is not yet a home for all her sons and daughters. Such a home we wish to ensure...there remains before us the building of a new land, a home for men who are black, white and brown from the ruins of the old narrow groups, a synthesis of the rich cultural strains which we have inherited,” (Luthuli, 1962; van Schalkwyk, 2003; Department of Social Development, 2007). Luthuli refers to the ‘task’ as a process, and envisions the re-construction of South Africa as a ‘home’ in which belonging is based on inclusion rather than exclusion.

The provincial goal to create the Western Cape as a ‘Home for All’, and the aim of securing equality and human rights for ‘all’ in South Africa envisioned in the liberation movement, are found in practice and experience to have contested boundaries. The nation, informed in part by discourses of race, culture, indigeneity, and entitlement shape these boundaries. This gap between vision and practice motivates crucial questions explored in this text in relation to the construction of belonging in South Africa.

## AIM OF RESEARCH

In this thesis, I argue for a grounded approach to examining the discourses that both construct and police the spheres of belonging and exclusion in contemporary South Africa. I employ an interdisciplinary approach combining methodologies from discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis to explore the perceptions and ideologies that shape the construction of belonging, and investigate how individuals and groups position themselves within a perceived hierarchy of belonging. The focus of this research is the dynamics of fluid categories of ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ as illustrated in the politics of everyday life. This study explores how residents of Cape Town identify their own and Others’ positions in relation to belonging, based on socially constructed realities and lived experiences, informed in part by notions of culture, migration, politics, nationality, ‘race’ and class.

This study removes the imaginary boundary separating the views and experiences of citizens and non-citizens in South Africa to argue for an inclusive construction of belonging which begins by listening to the everyday language, experiences and views of a small but diverse group of Cape Town residents. This does not intend to minimize the realities of inequality, discrimination and power, but rather challenge the perceived binary sources of information for an exploration of belonging – either citizen *or* immigrant. This thesis argues that one of the hindrances to transforming the construction of belonging to be inclusive is a lack of research that unpacks the complex, overlapping, fluid histories of migration, culture and race in relation to authenticity, indigeneity and entitlement. By

exploring the construction of belonging in spoken language between friends and colleagues who share experiences of the privileges and disadvantages related to nationality, race, class, education and culture, the complex nature of social construction begins to come into focus. The interest in the imagined and experienced borders of belonging is motivated in part by my work with the Department of the Premier's xenophobia intervention strategies and collaboration with think tanks and social justice organizations writing and facilitating conflict resolution curriculum and safety audits.

Belonging is experienced, negotiated and constructed in the context of what our socially constructed realities tell us about who we are in relation to other people and institutions, and where we and others belong and do not belong. The boundaries of, and qualifications for, belonging are as multiple and fluid as the individuals whose words construct the focus group texts. Belonging is constructed in the social action of language and this study specifically explores the way focus group participants use everyday language with friends and colleagues to reproduce and negotiate belonging. This research attempts to unpack the discourses that are both reflective and instructive in the focus groups' discussions about what it means to belong in South Africa. Just as belonging is a social construction, so are the discourses that shape the way participants view their position in the hierarchy of belonging in South Africa. The focus of the study is groups of peers who have similar intersectional identifications who represent but a minute slice of the diverse population of Cape Town. I have designed and executed this research as a pilot study for a more in-depth exploration of the discourses that inform the construction of belonging, with a more diverse group of participants, who offer examples of the complex tapestry of belonging experienced and reproduced amongst those who live within the state. The analysis examines how the groups reproduce and resist inherited discourses of race, class, politics and culture as well as notions of difference, exclusion and the construction of Others.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study explores the discourses embedded in the social action of spoken language between friends and colleagues who identify as similar in a number of intersectional axes (for example, gender, 'race', education, nationality). The specific inquiry driving this research is: How is the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa reflected in the everyday language of residents of Cape Town? What dominant discourses and competing discourses emerge in the social action of language and how do these reproduce, challenge and construct the politics of belonging?

What do these discourses illuminate about the construction of belonging in South Africa? This research aims to explore the above questions through analysis of five focus group texts. The analysis investigates the situated meanings participants assign to events, places and institutions in relation to their everyday experiences of belonging. The focus group texts are read for how individuals' lived experiences, memories and imaginations impact the constructions of belonging.

## INTRODUCTION TO FIELDWORK AND ANALYSIS

The analysis performed in this research explores focus group discussion texts complimented and contextualized by participant observation. I chose focus group interviews as a medium to explore these processes because I found through participatory observation that the richest data was elicited in conditions in which similarly situated individuals interacted with each other, rather than just with me, the interviewer. I also elected to conduct focus group interviews in part to "give a voice" to marginalized groups" and position the everyday language of Cape Town residents as a source of knowledge production (Morgan, 1996, p. 133). I facilitated five focus group interviews with between four and six members each.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding data analysis, I utilize the interdisciplinary approach of discourse analysis (Foucault, 1969; Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Potter, 1996; Burman and Parker, 1993) and critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1997, 2001; Meinhof, Hann, Galasiński and Dariusz, 2005; van Dijk, 1993, 2001). Poststructuralism, social constructionism and phenomenology inform the theoretical framework that allows me to engage with lived experience, memory and emotion conveyed in the social action of spoken language. The goal of exploring and describing the complexity of belonging "is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience, is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience," (van Manen, 1990, p. 27). It is not my goal to provide tangible or quantitative results in this thesis but rather examine the assumptions and beliefs that construct the political and historical context for 'belonging' in South Africa. I am neither qualified, nor is it my aim, to suggest a 'solution' to any presupposed 'problem'. It is my hope instead that this exploratory thesis illustrates

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<sup>1</sup> The focus groups consisted of individuals whose identifications overlap in a number of ways. The participants of one focus group are women in their 40s who are friends as well as colleagues. They described themselves as mothers employed as primary school teachers who live and work in Gugulethu. Another focus group consisted of participants who shared the experience of being young, unmarried professionals and students from Zimbabwe living in Cape Town. One focus group is bound by being members (and spouses of members) of a Cape Town branch of an international service club. They identify as white, married and born in South Africa and Holland. Another focus group consists of men in their 30s who identify as 'Cape coloured' and who are childhood friends from the neighborhood of Retreat. The final group of participants are women who met in an English language class after moving to South Africa from Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. They are now colleagues at a beadwork design company.

the complexity and fluidity of belonging and, in dispelling the myth of a singular or fixed belonging, highlights possibilities for constructions of belonging that are inclusive.

## RESEARCH CONTEXT

The backdrop for this text is the contrast of two major processes under way in post-apartheid South Africa—the ‘inclusive’ project of ‘post-racial’ nation building on the basis of equal citizenship celebrated in public discourse and policy and the complex and layered process and history of migration in and out of South Africa, both before, during and after apartheid. A perceived hierarchy of citizenship has come to be a part of, and interact with, the economic, social and political spaces of South Africa. This study positions the processes of migration and nation-building as overlapping, intersecting and influencing each other in the terrain of belonging, where all focus group participants expressed both belonging in South Africa, as well as having experienced exclusion politically and socially.

In surveying literature on the politics of belonging, the majority of which is produced in collaboration with Western academic institutions, there appears to be an underrepresentation and marginalization of African indigenous knowledge in this area - Africans writing about the experience of belonging in African spaces. Additionally, knowledge production in this arena is often the result of an academic ‘expert’s’ analysis rather than the ‘subjects’ deemed the ‘experts’ of their own experience. This study situates the participants as not only capable of being at the source of knowledge production about the construction of belonging in South Africa, but also relates to them as observers and analysts of their own experiences and realities. This investigation is grounded in lived experience and concerned with notions of entitlement and belonging in relation to several Others, as constructed by focus group participants. I approach researching belonging in this context by examining the politics of everyday life, focusing on the routine dialogue and experiences in the political, cultural and historical landscape of South Africa.

Most research on the nation building project in South Africa is insular – focused primarily on notions of identity or belonging in terms of the conceptions and experiences of South African citizens. Since the beginning of the nation building process, which is both incomplete and contested, South Africa has transformed into a modern immigrant society, but has failed to incorporate the views of immigrants and citizens in a holistic exploration of belongingness. Instead, immigrants’ experiences and views are almost exclusively presented in the media and academic literature focused on migration and xenophobia. While I acknowledge the need for those topics to be explored, literature

of that nature reproduces the position of immigrants as 'outsiders' and focuses on the political, social and economic consequences of inequality. More specifically, the distinction between discrimination among South African citizens (often still aligned with apartheid-era racial classifications) and xenophobia (targeting sub-Saharan Africans living in South Africa), seems unambiguous based on conversations about each rarely, if ever, overlapping in the media, academic writing or political discourse. The arguments brought forth in this thesis blur the lines between the seemingly divergent categories of 'outsider' and 'insider', citizen and 'foreigner', and African and Other.

It is my aim that this research contributes to a re-imagining of what it means to 'belong' in Cape Town and that it inspires deeper research in the field. On an individual level, it is my goal that those who read this study are inspired to observe and deconstruct their own experiences of belonging and exclusion, to recognize one's own agency in experiencing belonging, and to empower individuals to challenge discourses that inform the construction of a belonging based on exclusion.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis is organized into six chapters, the first of which, above, introduces the topics explored in this document and identifies key research questions. Chapter two provides a context for this study, positioning this research in relation to literature on belonging, identity, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, nations, citizenship, nation building and migration. The third chapter outlines the theoretical and analytical framework utilized in this study. An introduction to social constructionism and phenomenology provide a context for this research exploring language as a social action that facilitates the constructs belonging. The methodology section examines focus group interviews and the process of data collection and analysis, borrowing from discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. The chapter also reflects on the ethics of performing research of this nature and the specific ethical considerations of this study. Chapter four explores the themes and discourses identified in the focus group texts. The final chapter reflects on the research process, including limitations and recommendations for future research, as well as personal and methodological reflexivity.

## CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT OF RESEARCH

This chapter provides a context for the study through the exploration of academic literature dedicated to the concepts investigated through discourse analysis as well as through the positioning of this poststructuralist research in a wider socio-political framework of contemporary South Africa.

Literature that explores and problematizes belonging is vast. The topics, discourses and disciplines that contribute both to the experience and conceptualization of belonging ranges from identity to nation-building, from psychology to anthropology to politics. This exploratory study rests upon previous academic inquiries both directly into the construction of belonging as well as topics that inform participants' views of themselves and Others and their place in groups, communities, nations and the world. I am interested in exploring and beginning to unpack the linguistic expressions and constructions of belonging while "disrespecting disciplinary boundaries" (Bell, 1999, p. 2). This involves unpacking the narratives and co-narratives related to the experiences, memories and consequences of belonging.

The purpose of the following sections in this chapter is to provide a framework for the investigations and findings presented in this thesis and to position this study within the social, political and historical context of South Africa as well as locate this thesis within the existing body of theory and research related to and informing belonging. Due to the multidisciplinary and intersectional nature of this research, the topics that could arguably be relevant to explore are endless. The following literature review, therefore, attempts to succinctly summarize existing theories and points of view relevant to this research. These topics include an academic exploration of belonging as well as identity, citizenship, nation, indigeneity, ethnicity and 'race'.<sup>2</sup>

A historical and political context prescribes how belonging is constructed in South Africa and it is imperative to explore how those living in South African spaces construct and share their experiences in everyday language. It is within these social actions that experiences of belonging and exclusion transform from individual experiences to weave a collaborative, co-narrative illustrating how belonging is constructed in South Africa. When focus group participants negotiate, contest and

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<sup>2</sup> Within those categories, this chapter secondarily explores the socio-political context for this research by situating this study in relation to two processes that have uniquely shaped the construction of belonging in democratic South Africa: migration and democratization. There are of course an abundance of political, social, economic events and processes that have been as influential in the construction of belonging, but migration and the creation of a democratic state are specifically explored in this chapter as a result of their presence in the focus group texts, in which participants frequently referenced those two processes in relation to their experiences of belonging and exclusion.

reproduce discourses related belonging, an agreement-reality about belonging becomes mistaken for a fixed reality. To explore the construction of belonging in South Africa through exploring spoken language, is imperative to situate the discourses of belonging in a wider context of theories that inform this research as well as socio-historical aspects of South Africa.

With respect to the scope of this research and length restrictions of this document, although the topics explored in the following sections are limited, they do not represent the full body of authors and topics that informed and shaped this research.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### BELONGING

One's experience and construction of belonging is informed in part by the way the participant views his or her position in groups, communities, countries and in the world. The focus group participants who provided the data for this investigation, expressed belonging and their position in relation to nationality, race, class, gender, ethnicity, language, culture, education, and stage in life-cycle. Belonging is a process, socially constructed, often contested and always subjective. By engaging with the multiple overlapping voices representing intersectional identities in the five focus groups, I begin to unpack how experiences and boundaries of belongings are constructed in contemporary South Africa. In the analysis of the focus group texts, the construction of belonging is explored in the context of socio-linguistic encounters between group members. Participants map their realities in relation to belonging including where they position themselves, their group(s) and Others .

This exploratory research aims to unpack how belonging, embedded in identification and affiliation, is situated in relation to history and politics. Belonging has been defined and described in a vast number of ways, including feelings of connectedness (Vallerand, 1997); regular, long-lasting and stable contact (Baumeister & Leary, 1995); and positive regard from peers (Rogers, 1951). Baumeister and Leary (1995) further draw a distinction between social contact and belongingness, with the latter identified as the stronger force. Kelly (2001) avoids homogenizing subjects by noting the diversity of individuals' experiences of and motivations for belonging. Fortier (1999) examines the relationship between the 'construction of identities of places' and the 'construction of terrains of belonging'. She defines belongings as practices of group identity accompanied by a process of "manufacturing cultural and historical belongings which mark out terrains of commonality that delineate the politics and social dynamics of 'fitting in'," (Fortier, 1999, pp. 41-42).

Bell (1999, pp. 1-2) argues that “identity and affiliation are always complex, often surprising, and politically unpredictable” and describes the beauty of the term ‘belonging’ as providing a space for interdisciplinary researchers to consider and explore both philosophical and sociological issues concerned with the “ways in which technologies, discursive deployments and power/knowledge networks produce the lines of allegiance and fracture in the various orders of things within which people and objects move”. An alternative description is provided by Marshall (2002, p. 360) in which belonging is composed of attraction, identification and cohesion. Belonging is a step past membership, when memberships become solidified, potent and secure.

Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011, p. 2) describes belonging as always multiple and at its core, an “an emotionally -charged social location” in relation to three things: perceptions and performances of commonality; a sense of mutuality and allegiance; and attachments, both material and immaterial that are related to notions of entitlement.<sup>3</sup> Belonging is also related to exclusion in which the grounds for belonging “forge a strong and binding sense of naturalness – that is obvious to the insiders and that keeps the outsiders at bay” in which “protecting one’s home, keeping migrants at bay, or engaging in rivalries regarding who is more deserving to make a new place his or her home are all entailed in politics of belonging” (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, pp. 7, 15-16). Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) reinforce this idea while framing belonging in post-colonial democratization, in which discussing one’s sense of place and home creates belonging, stating that individual and collective belonging is in a constant state of creation, protection and negotiation, and that the more it is contested the more closed its borders become. This speaks directly to the construction and maintenance of borders of belonging expressed in focus group texts explored in this study. In this thesis, belonging is considered a process that “evolves in social life worlds where collective knowledge reservoirs are perennially recreated in social interactions” (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, p. 5).

The view that belonging is a process that is always under construction rather than fixed and pre-existing offers insight into the greater context and inspiration for this research project, namely that new experiences and perceptions of belonging have the possibility to be constructed that are less exclusive and focused on insiders and outsiders, and constituted instead on shared values of

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<sup>3</sup> Commonality in this context is a perceived sharing of everything from culture and values to experience and memory. As in this research, she argues that this is “individually felt and embodied while collectively negotiated and performed”, (2011, p. 3). The second aspect of belonging, mutuality, is simply acknowledgment of the Other and is often related to social norms (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011). Mutuality may impact familial, organizational, institutional, local, national and global conceptions of what is socially expected of an individual. Third, attachments are defined in this context as what link individuals to both material and immaterial worlds (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011; hooks, 2009) that may include memories of things and places as well as literal and tangible things and places.

inclusion. Pfaff-Czarnecka expresses this optimism by stating that “the more boundary-constructions, boundary-restrictions and boundary-protection become part and parcel of global reflexivity, the more wide-spread is also the awareness of the possibilities to mould boundaries and to create new spaces for possibilities of our living together” (2011, pp. 15-16).

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## IDENTITY

Both the experience and research of identity is highly contested, and yet crucial to an inquiry into the construction of belonging. In this section I will draw a distinction as well as a relationship between identity and belonging and illustrate how identity is relevant to this exploratory study into the constructions of belonging in contemporary South Africa.

This research is grounded in the view that an individual does not ontologically ‘belong’ to any group and that identity is the effect of performance rather than performance being the effect of identity (Bell, 1999: 3). In this study, the ‘performances’ analyzed consist of the focus group narratives of residents of Cape Town. In these linguistic performances, belonging is constructed, negotiated and contested in the context of memory, experience, history and imagination.

Identity is ongoingly constructed within the socio-political environment in which one is socialized. The way in which one perceives himself dictates what settings and situations will confirm that auto-acknowledged identity. Individuals construct self-images that fit within their environment and also construct situations and contexts to validate the images they have of themselves (Fitzgerald, 1993). Hall (1993, p. 395) describes identity as a positioning rather than an essence explaining that “cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture”.

Overlapping, contested and validated identities expressed in the focus group narratives are described by participants in references to thoughts, actions, and ways of interpreting the world. In relation to belonging, this does not propose that individuals who construct similar identities have the same thoughts and actions, but rather acknowledges patterns in the expression of identity, group and belonging by individuals who claim membership in overlapping groups.

Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011, p. 4) presents the differences between identity and belonging, with the latter being a ‘thicker’ and more engaging prospect for social and political research. She makes the distinction that identity is a relational, categorical concept preoccupied with boundaries and homogenizes populations as it promotes “dichotomous characterizations of the social”.

Alternatively, belonging is conceptualized as stressing commonness without homogeneity and may result in both social exclusion and inclusion. It is described as relational in regard to social ties and “highlights its situatedness and multiplicity of parameters forging commonality, mutuality and attachments” (*ibid.*). She suggests that academic inquiries focused on belonging rather than identity allows researchers to explore the many fluid modalities of creating and experiencing the ‘collective dimensions’ of social relatedness and boundary negotiations.

Brubaker and Cooper (2000) problematize ‘identity’ arguing it has become used in such a wide variety of ways that it has connotations for both analysis and practice and that it often attempts to account for far too much or far too little of the human experience. A singular or collective identity leads to homogenization whilst failing to capture the meaning and essence of one’s experience of self in relation to belonging. Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011, pp. 3, 15) warns researchers of ‘methodological ethnicization’ when relying on identity to define the boundaries of that which is innately social and highlights the politics of belonging as motivated by identity politics that reference origins. This is particularly relevant in the analysis of focus group texts in which the argument for participants’ belonging and the exclusion of Others is evidenced by claims of indigeneity and entitlement based on being ‘true’ South Africans.

Like belonging, identity is multiple and fluid as individuals self-identify with particular roles, groups and social categories situated in time and space and informed by social interactions. The act of negotiating identity is rooted in both identity theory (Stets & Burke, 2000) that argues an individual’s identity is prescribed by society, and social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1970; Hogg et al., 1995) in which identity is constructed as fluid and influenced by group belonging.<sup>4</sup>

The myth of a singular ‘South African identity’ is one both constructed and contested in the focus group narratives. Hall (1996, p. 4) problematizes a singular, fixed notion of identity stating that “identities are never unified and, in late modern times, are increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions.” Shared identity and social networks refer to a sense of belonging, but the identification of “otherness” or “difference” also shape identity. Identity can be as much constructed by notions and experiences of exclusion and difference as likeness and

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<sup>4</sup> Identity negotiation is distinct in that it presents identity as constructed in social interaction as one’s identities are either affirmed or contested by perceived members of those groups. These negotiations produce compromised identities (not compromised as in weak, but negotiated) (McNulty & Swann, 1994) in which the individuals occupy both the role of group member impacting others’ identities, but also an individual constructing his or her own identity influenced by group members’ perceptions. Chen et al. (2004) asserts that individuals attempt to validate and verify the views they have of themselves as belonging to a group, from the group members themselves.

affiliation. As Hall (1996) points out, identities are constructed through difference, not outside of difference.

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#### RACE, ETHNICITY AND INDIGENEITY

The concept of ethnicity is often evoked, imagined and argued during social actions in which belonging is constructed. Writers and researchers exploring race, gender and class often engage with the 'performativity of belonging' in which the norms that constitute a group are recreated and reproduced thereby constructing the belonging they appear to define (Bell, 1999, p. 3). These norms are often imagined and fictional, given that the positionality and social location in terms of gender, class, location, culture, religion, sexuality and politics of individuals who 'belong' to the group are often not a perfect match for the constructed attributes of a group member (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2011, p. 9).

Ethnicity is one social construct that provides guidelines for an individual or a group to form notions of "otherness." The American sociologist David Riesman coined the term 'ethnicity' in 1953 to refer to 'racial' characteristics. While ethnicity was once erroneously viewed as a biologically based absolute, its fluidity is now more accepted. Eller (1997, p. 552) describes ethnicity as a process that is social and psychological in nature, in which individuals feel affiliation with a group including aspects of its culture. Banks (1996) warns against a reductionist view in which ethnicity is defined by qualities of a group; he instead chooses to relate to it as analytical tool both constructed and used by academics. In this study, ethnicity is viewed as an aspect of a relationship which individuals view as contributing to commonality and relatedness between themselves and group(s) with which they feel belonging. Cornell and Hartmann (2007) provide a historical context in which to engage the terms 'ethnicity' and 'race', with the former being a more recent concept constructed in part to move analysis away from 'race' that was bound in the imagination to Nazism.

Geertz (1973, p. 268) defines ethnicity as the "world of personal identity collectively ratified and publicly expressed". Where race historically emphasized the myth of biological differences, ethnicity attempted to refer to a sense of belonging to a community with shared cultural traditions. Ethnicities are as unstable and changing as the cultures with which they are affiliated. It is essential to note that the term 'ethnic group' often brings to mind a minority group, however that is a result of power dynamics and everyday usage as opposed to an inherent link; everyone belongs to an ethnic group(s) (Edwards, 1985, p. 6). I am careful in this study to move away from the American perceived connection between ethnicity and minority groups and marginalization and instead use

the term ethnicity as a descriptive term invoked directly and indirectly by focus group participants that points to a feature of a group that makes it distinct (Cashmore, 2003).

Brubaker (2004) offers a helpful description of ethnicity, conceived of as a way an individual sees and organizes the social world and positions him or herself in that reality. Central to the concept of ethnicity used in this study, I related to it as fluid and socially constructed between people in language, always situated in a particular place and time.

Smith (1986) makes the distinction between ethnic groups and nations. It is clear in my focus group data that belonging to ethnic groups is often as, if not more, influential in the politics of belonging in contemporary South Africa. Smith additionally makes the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism. The ethnic-based (sometimes conflated with race-based) inclusion and exclusion articulated and illustrated in focus group narratives could be the conflicts and contradictions between the competing 'ethnic cores' in this nation.

Viewing democratic South Africa as an imagined community (Anderson B. , 1991) requires an examination of the socio-political climate of this post-colonial space in the context of belonging. During apartheid, citizens with full access to the accompanying rights were the minority. The majority was viewed by the state as multiple and divided ethnicities governed by customary law. Although post-apartheid South Africa has transformed the law to be 'nonracial' or 'post-racial', disenfranchisement of and denial of rights to individuals living in South Africa is still largely based on indigeneity, race, ethnicity, culture and political identity. Mamdani (2001, pp. 663-664) argues that the only way out of this dilemma is to "rethink the institutional legacy of colonialism, and thus to challenge the idea that we must define political identity, political rights, and political justice first and foremost in relation to indigeneity". The suggestion is to move beyond belonging and personally identification as something other than the binaries of native or settler, indigenous or immigrant, insider or outsider.

Yuval-Davis (2004, p. 19) contends that the ethnocization of identity and the politics of belonging is multi-layered. The latter she argues is reduced to binary roles of 'victims' or 'perpetrators' of racism, ignoring the tensions and contradictions when those roles are assumed to be mutually exclusive. 'Race' and ethnicity are inherently political. The law makes the distinctions between racial and ethnic belonging based on affiliation or identification to either an ethnic group or racial group. One's legally prescribed identity, be it racial or ethnic, provides the context for understanding one's relationship to the state as well as access to or exclusion from rights and entitlements.

Reinforcing as well as resisting the politics of belonging is the analogous politics of indigeneity. The question of who is indigenous and who is non-indigenous was central to nation-building on national and local scales in democratic South Africa. Mamdani's (2001) exploration of the link between rights and indigeneity in mainstream nationalist discourse are particularly relevant to the inquiries in this study. South Africa is a prime example of his description of mainstream and radical nationalism's attempt to de-racialize civic rights. In this post-colonial space, belonging that used to be accessed or denied based on race now is in part informed by notions of indigeneity. Mamdani comments that in privileging the indigenous over the nonindigenous, the colonial world was shaken but remained unchanged and, as a result, "the native sat on top of the political world designed by the settler...[and] indigeneity remained the test for rights", (2001, p. 658). Although seemingly a backlash against colonialism, nationalism in post-apartheid South Africa advantaged indigenous over non-indigenous citizens and residents.

Mamdani (2001, p. 656) dispels a myth of binaries by making the distinction that colonizers and colonized did not follow the lines between ethnicity and race and that while all natives were necessarily colonized, not all non-natives were colonizers with 'natives' constructed as belonging to ethnic groups whereas non-natives were racially identified and mythologized to be void of ethnicity. Pfaff-Czarnecka (2011) and Comaroff and Comaroff (2009) explore belonging in the context of First Nations People, or what Pfaff-Czarnecka calls the 'global indigenous people's movement' (2011, p. 13) exploring historically marginalized 'indigenous' groups' resistance, agency, and demand for cultural, political, legal and territorial rights. This is relevant to the focus group narratives as participants map the complexity of ethnic, cultural and racial belonging in a post-colonial space.

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#### NATIONS, BORDERS, CITIZENSHIP

This research is situated in relation to 'nations' in terms of modernist and post-modern conceptions, affirming that nations are modern social constructions in which imagined pasts are evoked to authenticate the existence and actions of nations (Smith, 1994). Political and geographical borders of nation-states are an vital way in which boundaries of belonging are imagined, and determine who are 'insiders' and who are 'outsiders'. In a broader context than just territorially, borders can be experienced, resisted, reinforced, transformed and imagined differently depending on the individual, location and time. Nugent and Asiwaju (1996) point to the dissonance between the way borders are constructed by official discourse, and experienced by those living on the border.

Borders are sites of national belonging in which national distinctions are articulated; they play a crucial role in discourses of states and nations (Yuval-Davis, 2004; Sahlins, 1989). National borders are significant in relation to nation-states, used both as evidence supporting myths of national origin and also expressing the legitimacy of the state itself. "The myth of common origin and a fixed immutable, ahistorical and homogenous construction of the collectivity's culture and/or religion as an encapsulating totality" is central to constructions of ethnic boundary maintenance (Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 17).

Being that this research engages with residents of Cape Town who have a variety of national affiliations and the process of Othering<sup>5</sup>, it is important to examine the role of citizenship and nation-states in the construction of belonging. In academic literature of the previous three decades, as citizenship began to be related to as gendered, classed, raced and cultured, studies have more frequently explored closed, exclusionary citizenship as it relates to the politics of belonging. In my analysis I explore the relationship between the participatory aspect of citizenship and the emotional aspect of identification in the context of national policies focused on multiculturalism (Yuval-Davis, 2004).

Belonging cannot be reduced to citizenship or a formal relationship to the nation-state involving entitlements and responsibilities; it also consists of the emotions related to membership (or non-membership). "Belonging is a deep emotional need of people...[and] is where the sociology of emotions interfaces with the sociology of power, where identification and participation collude, or at least aspire or yearned to" (Yuval-Davis, 2004, pp. 5-6). The political character of belonging is exposed in instances of contradiction and resistance, when the real and imagined consequences of inclusion and exclusion are spoken. My focus group participants' narratives of self provide insight into the construction of belonging through accessed through the personal accounts of their affiliations, identifications and experiences.

Yack (1999) offers a distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism, in which respectively the political ideals or the ethnic group composing the constituents constitute the grounds for feelings of patriotism and nationalism. Both civic and ethnic South African nationalism are expressed, contested

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<sup>5</sup> One of the processes central to the construction of belonging in the narratives of Cape Town residents is identifying and relating to the Other, who is deemed 'different' and whose perceived existence is both defined by and helps define boundaries for belonging and exclusion from a dominant group (Connelly, 1991). Othering is a process entrenched in discourse; it is inherent in an individuals construction of self (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2004). The Other is constructed as having a different and less 'authentic' myth of common origin and as a potential enemy who threatens the borders of belonging.

and constructed in the focus group narratives based on a collective memory including history, language and customs. Billig (1995) presents a theory of 'banal nationalism' in which national identity is constructed in everyday social actions and practices. This is particularly relevant to this study in which belonging is viewed as a process that is in constant creation and negotiation during social interaction.

Castells (1997) offers a term relevant to this study, 'defensive identity' which explores in the context of the construction of identities for collective resistance. Many moments in the narratives of the focus group participants examined allude to defensive identities, what Castells describes as those identified as 'excluded' take the action to exclude those who put them in a place of marginalization and exclusion. This process informs constructions of belonging in which the binaries of 'victim' and 'perpetrator' are reversed in terms of exclusion. This construction of belonging and identification resists and contests boundaries for belonging constructed by national discourse, which serves to legitimize belonging and entitlement for only those with citizenship.

The politics of belonging in South Africa is distinct as it is a developing state in which one's position in the hierarchy of belonging is not solely determined by citizenship but also informed by his or her degree of activism before and during the transition to democracy in the struggle to gain access to the political, economic and social rights of citizenship. Focus group participants often provided narratives of resistance during apartheid (personal and familial) that served to legitimize their current defense of belonging, even when experiencing exclusion from others. Citizenship during apartheid offered varying degrees of rights and privileges, abuses and restrictions, to citizens based upon state-determined racial classifications. Exclusionary citizenship and conceptions of the nation-state encourage the distinctions and tensions between 'locals', 'citizens' and 'insiders' in relation to 'foreigners', 'strangers' and 'outsiders' (Nnoli, 1998; Werbner, 2004; Nyamnjoh, 2006).

The notion of a participatory citizenship in which the rights of a few cannot be trumped by the rights of the majority is a possible site of resistance against the politics of belonging (and exclusion). Lister (1997) suggests an analysis of citizenship that addresses its exclusionary nature. She argues that citizenship can be a fundamental theoretical and political tool if reconceptualized to embrace an international or transnational agenda and negotiate the universalism and demands of the politics of belonging. Yuval-Davis (2004) highlights the debate between 'liberals' who argue citizenship is a relationship between individuals and a state, and 'communitarians' and 'republicans', who construct citizenship as belonging to a national community. She points out that the failure of theories of citizenship to acknowledge the overlap between a national community and civil societal community

is at the root of what is problematic in the politics of belonging and acknowledges this as having influenced her to relate to “analyze citizenship as a multi-layered construct where people are citizens, with rights and obligations, also in other political communities” (Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 4).<sup>6</sup>

There is a gap between the promises of citizenship on paper and the lived reality of citizenship. Citizenship in democratic South Africa is designed to provide equal rights and opportunities to all citizens. In practice, however, belonging in terms of citizenship is as much defined by those who are ‘outsiders’ or non-citizens as much as those who are included. The movement from ‘ethnic’ identification to larger scale civic citizenship is seen as a shift from exclusive belonging to inclusive belonging (Mamdani, 2000). The hierarchy of citizenship and politics of belonging is informed by, among other things, ethnicity, ‘race’, class, gender and location. The gap between theory and practice in terms of citizenship is often overlooked because post-apartheid constructions of citizenship seem to be less oppressive than during apartheid. The consequences of this gap between theory and practice, however, are intensely real, especially for citizens still unable to realize the promises of socio-economic citizenship and for non-citizens living within the state’s borders. The personal narratives in the focus group texts explore these realities and offer a multidimensional view of one specific geographic area within South Africa, Cape Town.

In addition to notions and hierarchies of citizenship, an examination of the relationship between the nation-state and the politics of belonging is critical to theoretically and politically situating this study. Favell (1998) suggests that the construction of boundaries that determine who is an ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ shapes the meaning of belonging. He also suggests that a mythologized notion of an inherently fair national political identity is used in the discourse of romanticized multiculturalism. This relates to the ‘container model’ of the nation state in which an individual’s cultural belonging and political participation are defined in relation to boundaries (Brubaker, 1989, Faist 2000). Vertovec (2001: 6) theorizes the nation as representing ‘territorialized cultural belonging’ and the state as setting boundaries and policing legal membership. Although the flaw of multiculturalism’s tendency to essentialize culture has been exposed in practice and in literature, the relationship between multiculturalism and the nation-state has largely gone unchallenged (*ibid.*) According to Nyamnjoh (2006), the relationship between a nation-state and citizenship involves political, social and economic inequalities which can be defined and explored through the experiences of those who

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<sup>6</sup> Relating to citizenship in this manner allows this study to explore both the micro and macro perceived boundaries of belonging. At the micro level, the multi-layered construction of belonging includes, but is not limited to, individual affiliations to ethnic, religious and social groups and at the macro level may be constructed in relation to trans-national or supra-national affiliations or those bound to a particular nation state.

are deemed outsiders. One of the complexities of analyzing the focus group narratives is unpacking the multiple and overlapping identifications of insiders and outsiders, individually and as an imagined cultural, ethnic or racial group.

Robinson (2003) suggests nation-state paradigms must be abandoned within the current context of globalization. He argues instead that social structure is increasingly transnational and interdisciplinary studies must tackle social inquiry by not only focusing on the nation-state, but exploring transnational social structures. Robinson (1998, p. 565) offers the definition of the nation-state system as the “historically specific correspondence between production, social classes, and territoriality – a correspondence that led to a given political form that became the nation-state,” adding that “the material basis for the nation-state is presently being superseded by globalization”. Robinson explains that the terms ‘nation’ and ‘state’ are used interchangeably in nation-state paradigms and problematically implies a static, immutable nation-state structure.

Anderson (1991) describes nations as imagined communities, inherently limited and sovereign, and similar to kinship or religion in that it is perceived of as fated rather than chosen by individuals. In Anderson’s version of nation-states, individual members rarely know each other and yet feel intrinsically connected. The focus groups are diverse, but do not represent the vast diversity of Cape Town or South Africa. The focus group participants do provide, however, intimate and first-hand narratives of belonging with multi-layered and contested affiliations. It is in the analysis of these narratives, between co-members of groups that I investigate the construction of belonging, and how that construction is negotiated, expressed and transformed by spoken word. Anderson (1991) explores the importance of Othering and difference in constructing belonging by describing the nation as imagined as limited because there are nations (and people) who lie beyond the borders of the nation. The nation is imagined as sovereign, so no other nation may claim authority over it.

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## MIGRATION

The construction of belonging in South Africa is framed within histories of migration, both within and beyond the nation’s borders. All participants in this study have a relationship to migration expressed in narrative, be it personal, historical, lived or imagined. This study is positioned in relation to Hall’s (2004, p. 108) ethnographic vantage point described as being increasingly focused on the “broader historical and cultural processes in which these worlds are embedded [which] brings to light forms of politics that challenge traditional ways of understanding immigrant incorporation in modern nation-

states". This section offers both a theoretical background for engaging with research on migration as well as a historical context of migration in South Africa.

In this study, migration is conceptualized as a process involving the movement of people across and within borders. Mafukidze (2006) argues there is no single definition of migration and that the process loosely involves a change of residence and the crossing of a boundary of a migration-defining region. Skeldon (1990) offers consideration for motivations for the movement of people, defining migration as the movement of people through space, throughout their lives, for various reasons.

Exploring the construction of belonging in the context of migration and the relationship between the state and society, notions of 'incorporation' and 'disengagement' have been helpful to conceptualize social responses to the actions of a state. Social anthropologist Jul-Larsen (1994) provides a view of migration, the state and the dominant society that both motivates and guides this investigation of the construction of belonging and the intersection of migration, the state and society. Through the analysis of how a state responds to and affects societal processes, it is possible to grasp a greater understanding of the relationship between the state, migrant communities, and the dominant society (*ibid.*). Throughout this study, I relate to the process of migration and the construction of belonging as both influenced by discourses of Otherness, xenophobia and difference as much as affiliation and relatedness.

The history of migration in South Africa is complex and overlapping, including (among many others) isiXhosa and isiZulu speakers moving from the Great Lakes region, the arrival of the Dutch and the wave of Indian migration in the mid-1800s. Although it may seem irrelevant to discuss pre-democratic migration to South Africa, in the context of the construction of belonging, there is great relevance in terms of the meaning attached to migration. This includes the way one's real or imagined history of migration is offered by focus group participants as evidence of authenticity or grounds for exclusion. Migration is a topic that frequently came up in focus group interviews to identify who is 'really' South African, who has the power to decide who does and does not 'belong' here and in identifying contradictions of belonging. Notions of origin and migration are referenced in focus group narratives both in relation to 'foreigners' as well as to a hierarchy of citizenship amongst South African citizens.

South Africa's return to the international marketplace at the end of apartheid brought democracy and celebration as well as pressure for the government to secure borders and limit access to goods

and political power.<sup>7</sup> Increased pressure on policy makers was due in part to the need for new immigration policies. The most recent Immigration Bill still focuses on control and regulation rather than management and advantageous utilization of the flows of people in and out of South Africa's borders. Klotz (2000) offers a concise description of the 1998 Refugee Act, which he states was in part an attempt to avoid future claims of abuse of asylum claims. The state's migration policy is rooted in the Immigration Regulation Act of 1913 which grew out of apartheid-era laws and restrictions (Maharaj, 2004, p. 4). The apartheid government removed the ban on black immigration in 1986 but continued to police the movement of people, both citizens and foreigners. The 1991 Aliens Control Act, the last piece of apartheid migration legislation tightened control over the movement of people across national borders (The 1991 Aliens Control Act [South Africa], 1991). Surprisingly, the 1995 Aliens Control Amendment Act, which replaced the 1991 Act, increased rather than decreased the state's control of migration.

Since the democratic election of the ANC in 1994, South Africa has seen an unprecedented influx of migration from other African nations (Sinclair, 1998). Sinclair argues that migration research in contemporary South Africa has largely related to the process of migration as a "societal response to state policies and actions," a phenomenon to be controlled and exported. Reitzes, similar to Sinclair, notes that the realist approach to migration provides a partial and inappropriate framework in which to write policy on 'trans-boundary migration' adding that this "state-centric premise delineates a territorially bounded sovereign actor, and attempts to divorce domestic from regional and foreign policy [disallowing] the consideration of human agency," (1997, p. Section 3).

Immigration into South Africa has become an issue of great concern, particularly following the 2008 and 2010 events largely referred to as 'xenophobic violence'. These events were not without warning, according to researchers who have noted that the unprecedented migration into South Africa over the past 15 years, during the nation-building project, has been accompanied by increased xenophobia and violence directed toward refugees and migrants (Nyamnjoh 2006, Cross, 2006, Kok 2006). The causes of these attacks, as reported by media and government and NGO spokespeople, are largely said to be based on resentment against foreigners from other African countries, who are

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<sup>7</sup> Posel (2003) explains that legislation governing entrance into South Africa changed little with the beginning of democracy stating that the focus of migration studies in the 1990s shifted from migrant labor to immigration in part due to an assumption that migrant labor would no longer be relevant in post-Apartheid South Africa. He proposes, however, that circular labor migration did not end, and perhaps did not even decline post-1994 (*ibid.*). Posel notes that restrictions on African urbanization were removed in the late 1980s, creating opportunities for families to migrate at a unit.

perceived as a social and fiscal threat. Stereotypes persist that foreigners take jobs and women, and spread crime and disease (SAMP, 2008). This over-simplified explanation fails to examine the factors underlying these beliefs and has led to few meaningful or practical responses to create greater understanding or transform stereotypes that may lead to discrimination or violence.

Adepoju (2003) argues that traditionally, Sub Saharan African societies were hospitable to foreigners, welcoming them into communities and sharing their resources. He says this is no longer true in many countries where political leaders use ethnicity and religion to identify long-term nationals as no longer belonging. Foreigners have become scapegoats during economic recessions, accused of stealing jobs from citizens, stigmatized as criminals, and blamed for disease (Adepoju, 2003; Campbell, 2003). Democratic South Africa has been branded by the rest of the world in recent years as increasingly xenophobic. Human Rights Watch noted as early as 1998 that attacks on 'hawkers', police brutality, and the burning of homes and business belonging to foreigners had occurred in South Africa (Human Rights Watch, 1998).

Nyamnjoh (2006) examines xenophobia in South Africa in a wider context of globalization. He argues that xenophobia existed during apartheid, but that the phenomenon is now felt more intensely due to the rise in immigration to South Africa since 1994. Nyamnjoh offers a history of internal and external migration in South Africa and examines the belief by members of dominant society that foreigners are responsible for the high unemployment rate, particularly in the informal work sector. He also notes the stereotype that foreigners are associated with drug dealing, internet fraud, and the spread of HIV/AIDS. These stereotypes are both reproduced and contested in the focus group interviews of this study. A political analysis of xenophobia is also provided noting the government's promise to tighten immigration with the backdrop of assault, theft, arrests and humiliation of outsiders. His theory of the politics of difference and claims to recognition, which accompany rising migration and fear of foreigners stealing resources, largely inform my theoretical and historical perspective on the relationship between migration and the construction of belonging in South Africa.

## CONCLUSION

The above sections highlight literature that shaped the design and execution of this investigative study into the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa. The literature that informs belonging is much wider than the scope of what was explored in this chapter, however, the main topics of belonging, identity, nation, citizenship, class, race and migration were identified as most relevant to this study and most prevalent in the focus group narratives. The academic work of

anthropologists, political scientists, sociologists, philosophers and psychologists inform this interdisciplinary study. The topics investigated in this chapter underlie the participants' experiences of belonging as well as the analysis conducted in later chapters of this thesis. In the previous sections of this chapter, a context for this research project was outlined and the authors and researchers who shaped my personal and academic relationship to the construction of belonging were identified and briefly explored.

University of Cape Town

## CHAPTER 3 – THEORETICAL AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis presented in this thesis engages with the discourses that inform focus group participants' constructions of belonging. This chapter locates the research within a theoretical context and explores the methodological framework utilized to unpack the discourses that impact the experiences and constructions of belonging in Cape Town. The theoretical framework is poststructural and rooted in social constructionism and phenomenology, both defined and explored in relation to this study in the sections below. The method of analysis utilized to analyze the focus group narratives collected in this study is interdisciplinary, borrowing from discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section explores the theoretical framework that informs this study. Social constructionism provides the context that realities are the product of the human mind rather than 'objective truths' while phenomenology allows room for the participants' own experiences and views to be positioned at the source of knowledge production. This research is aligned with the postmodern stance that reality is socially constructed in social actions, such as language, and allows room for the multiple and often conflicting realities expressed in focus group texts regarding belonging and the experience of living in Cape Town. In this study, language is regarded as producing meaning, not just reflecting a pre-existing reality.

The theoretical background described below positions social construction as both informing and creating broader worldviews, as well as perceptions related to belonging. This thesis posits that the situated meanings of belonging are socially constructed and negotiated in the context of everyday life. Spoken word is regarded as social action through which speakers assign meaning to their multiple, overlapping and conflicting accounts of the world and their position in it.

### SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM

Perhaps most central to this study is the social constructionist view that knowledge and persons' realities are constructed in social interactions. In this study, the social interactions explored and analyzed are focus group narratives, in which individuals share and retell experiences of previous social interactions and world views as they negotiate and construct belonging. Burr (1995) argues that according to a social constructionist viewpoint, as adopted in this study, when individuals have

perceptions about a subject, that those views are externalized in action such as language. In the context of this research, social constructionism informs the view that when individuals talk about their experiences of belonging or exclusion, the words they use, when they are repeated and retold, become regarded as reflecting a truth existing independent of human construction. This can be applied to the ideas, views, social practices and histories individuals inherit from others, and make their own by reproducing in language. In this study, the construction and experience of the borders of belonging are socially constructed within the multiple, overlapping and contradicting realities of focus group participants. Via social interaction, individuals and groups construct notions of their own identity, as well as others', and corresponding positions of belonging.

An additional aspect of social constructionism that shaped this research is the notion that all views, information and knowledge are specific both historically and culturally (2003). This speaks to the diversity of experiences and views of belonging expressed in the focus group narratives and positions this research within the specific context of contemporary South Africa. This also allows room for qualitative research, such as this study, that is interested in the process and construction of an idea or experience, rather than an erroneous definitive 'truth' about a culture, community or nation. In addition to social constructionism's objection to homogenizing the experiences of beliefs of a group of people, it also argues that processes and constructions are constantly changing and transforming (Gergen, 1973).

When performing research from the position that knowledge is historically and culturally specific, relative to place and time, voices that are often marginalized are reframed as sources of knowledge particular to that individual. In this study, the sources of knowledge are focus group participants who all identify in some way as marginalized. Participants' notions of belonging shaped by their historical and cultural context which is constantly in flux; truth, validity and accuracy become less important than documenting constructed realities.

Social constructionism shapes the research questions, as well as the analysis, allowing a fresh perspective in regard to how an individual is influenced by notions of history and culture. One aspect of the complexity of this study is that the research perspective assumes that individuals construct the world in language informed by cultural and historical backgrounds, and much of the focus group text content consists of individuals reflecting on just that – how their histories and cultures prescribe their relationship to belonging in contemporary South Africa. The theoretical background of social constructionism thereby becomes central to this study, in that it not only informs the theoretical

standpoint of the research, but that aspects of the theory (the role of cultural and historical context) are the subject of much of the focus group narratives.

The focus group participants widely agree that their histories and cultures prescribe their definitive place in society, regardless of if they think things should be some other way. Social constructionism asserts that culture and history influence the way one constructs reality, but is distinct from the notion that there is a tangible truth or reality about 'the way things are'. This alternative view that social constructionism offers allows me speculate about how the belonging might be constructed to be more inclusive than exclusive.<sup>8</sup>

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## PHENOMENOLOGY

A phenomenological approach to qualitative research is focused on the experience of the individual and entails representing research from the perspective of the subjects or participants. Preconceptions and assumptions that are usually taken for granted in research are replaced by thoughtfully 'trying on' the perspective and perceptions of participants who provide the data for the study. A phenomenological framework is ideal for this research as it is focused on describing rather than explaining, as this study is designed to unpack and explore the way residents in Cape Town construct belonging in spoken language.

In this study, phenomenological research specifies that the findings cannot be widely extrapolated to represent a broader population than the participants themselves. The investigation of the construction and experience of belonging in Cape Town in this study is only specific to the individuals and groups of friends or colleagues interviewed, although wider implications are speculated in the analysis and conclusion chapters. Although discourses analyzed in the participants' narratives could inspire further specific research to explore in greater depth a specific aspect of constructing belonging, the same results cannot be expected or assumed if the participant body, socio-political context or time period changes. Rather than aiming to yield results that can be applied to a wider

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<sup>8</sup> If the way individuals construct their realities prescribes what actions to take and what views to have (Burr, 2003), then I am encouraged to speculate that if social constructionism were adopted as a practical world view outside of research spaces that constructions of reality could be altered in a way that fundamentally shifts power and resists the 'status quo' of people and institutions regarded as having power in relation to belonging. A theoretical shift of this nature could lead to actions in line with the commitments that groups have in common, contributing to belonging constructed based on inclusion rather than difference and exclusion. Put more simply, if an individual or 'group' can relate to inequality related to belonging as something that is socially constructed rather than a fixed reality, perhaps that conceptual shift that would transform the way residents of South Africa experience their lives and other people.

population, this investigation explores the realities, experiences and views expressed by individual participants to begin to unpack how belonging is constructed in language between people.

In this research, a phenomenological approach encouraged disregard for assumed explanations for social phenomena, and encouraged me to investigate research questions with fresh eyes. Like this study, phenomenology is more interested in documenting and exploring process than searching for a definitive truth or explanation. The focus group narratives are the tangible examples of experiences in which belonging is constructed and negotiated. From analyzing the focus group narratives together, patterns of experience and perception offer insight into how belonging and exclusion are experienced and constructed in Cape Town.

Wertz (2009, p. 7) who has written directly about phenomenology as well as applied it in his own research, makes the distinction that phenomenology “does not passively repeat the discourse of research participants, draw on common sense interpretations, or test prior psychological explanations but aims for original knowledge”. Given the scope of this research project, Wertz’s description provides a context and goal rather than methodological instructions.<sup>9</sup> The discourses participants reproduce in focus group narratives are explored in this study, and the phenomenological framework encourages me to search for the meaning in the experiences and discourse, not simply identify them. For each of the experiences revealed by participants, I reflect on what it reveals about the multi-layered, constructed realities in which belonging, inclusion and exclusion are constructed and negotiated in Cape Town.

## METHODOLOGY

This section explores the methodology employed in this study and the research design, data collection and analytical framework are outlined. Despite having experience in quantitative analysis as a forensic economic analyst, I designed this research project to collect and analyze qualitative data in order to produce findings that are richer and more flexible in terms of reflecting participants’ multiple, overlapping and conflicting realities, experiences and views. The strength of qualitative research in regard to this study is its focus on broad, holistic engagement with a topic, exploring a

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<sup>9</sup> Although discourse analysis is the primary method of analysis in this study (discussed below) a number of phenomenological approaches and methods have also informed the analytical framework for this investigation. Performing a ‘slow’ analysis, each moment or event focused upon sheds light on the construction of belonging, and a focus on the meaning of objects and places rather than the things themselves (Giorgi, 1985). Phenomenology offers researchers an approach that is rooted in experience rather than beginning with a pre-existing theory and finding experiential evidence to support or refute that notion.

process such as the construction of belonging in the 'natural' setting of groups of colleagues and friends (Stainback, 1988).

Performing qualitative, interpretive research, as in this study, aims to organize and unpack the ways in which individuals express their realities and experiences, not to provide a one-dimensional analysis in which findings about a small sample are erroneously applied to a larger population. This fundamentally qualitative and exploratory research called for the focus group interviews to be facilitated in a way that encourages discussion that illustrates how participants construct belonging in the context of democratic South Africa. A challenge that accompanies qualitative research is that validation or authenticity of data collected is difficult, however, the theoretical framework that informs this study posits that there is no single or 'right' interpretation, making that limitation mute. Engaging in qualitative research allows room for participants to have multiple and even conflicting realities and provide me with a methodology to explore the discourses that shaped the participants' constructions of belonging during focus group interviews. I believe that more meaningful research into the complex and ever-changing process of constructing belonging is accessed through subjective, qualitative explorations.<sup>10</sup>

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#### FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS AND DATA COLLECTION

The data analyzed in this study consists of the texts of five focus group interviews consisting of between four and six participants in each group. I conducted the focus group interviews in English with a total of 23 individuals, which took place between August 2008 and February 2009 each lasting between 1.25 and 2.25 hours. Each group member participated in only one focus group. Before each focus group interview, the participants and I discussed this study and what ways this data would, and would not, be used. The participants are identified in the analysis chapter with their first letter representing their unique group identifier, and the second letter representing their focus group, described in Figure 1 below (for example, 'L1' is participant L in group 1). The participants were

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<sup>10</sup> The views and biases of a researcher are too embedded in a qualitative study of this nature to suggest that 'objectivity' can or should be striven for. Throughout this fieldwork, I shifted between roles as student, anthropologist, political scientist, researcher, friend, foreigner, insider and outsider. Underlying the methodology of this study is a tension regarding what I 'could do' and what I 'should do' in reference to the often uneasy relationship between researcher, practitioner and activist. I grappled with the relevance and power of this study and "how the incommensurateness of liberal ideology and practice is made to appear commensurate" (Povinelli, 2001, p. 327). The need for relevance persists in both practice and theory, despite a shift in rhetoric towards 'empowerment' when working in areas, such as xenophobia, where violence, poverty and discrimination call for change (Gardner & Lewis, 1996, p. 116).

encouraged to ask and express concerns before they chose to sign consent forms (discussed in the following ethics section). At the beginning of each focus group discussion, I asked the participants to introduce themselves, providing whatever information they feel paints a picture of them. The interviews were semi-structured and I engaged in conversations to a greater degree than only posing questions, although I did not contribute to the discussions as a full-fledged participant. I tape recorded the interviews and had a notepad and pen in front of me to take notes about interactions and our surroundings that would not be captured in an audio recording.

Given that this research explores the social occurrences which construct realities as well as belonging, the focus group participants guided the topics discussed at least as much, if not more than I did. This led to great variety in the interview group narratives as some topics were discussed in certain focus groups and not in others, as well as topics covered for different lengths of time. Focus group participants were not required to answer every question or to comment on each topic, although I took special care to ask if focus group members who had not contributed to a discussion on a certain topic would like to share anything. Discussion topics were guided by broad questions regarding their experiences living in South Africa, and reflections on interactions with the physical, social and political landscape and people around them. The questions were designed to be open-ended (with the exception of biographical questions such as age and nationality) and elicit rich and multi-layered answers as well as promote interaction, debate and discussion between group members.

The focus group participants were selected via the snowball sampling method, growing focus groups from the networks of key participants with whom I had pre-existing work relationships, friendships or mutual friends (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). I asked five original participants who their friends and peers are and with whom they discuss current events and their personal lives. After learning the details of proposed focus group interviews and the research topic, the participants suggested friends and colleagues who they believed would be interested in and willing to be in a focus group.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Snowball sampling provides researchers with specific groups from loosely mapped social networks. In this study, one advantage of using snowball sampling is that the focus groups consisted primarily of individuals who had familiarity and pre-existing friendships, which facilitated more discussion during the interviews, as opposed to taking turns answering questions. Although one limitation of the snowball sampling technique is that it may not offer a 'diverse' group, because this study is focused on exploring the construction of belonging in everyday language, having focus groups members who were already related was ideal.

The following table provides insight into the focus group participants and how they describe themselves at the beginning of the interviews.

TABLE 1: FOCUS GROUP DEMOGRAPHICS

	Focus Group 1	Focus Group 2	Focus Group 3	Focus Group 4	Focus Group 5
<b>Background</b>	Primary school teachers in Gugulethu	Childhood friends who are employed in the music and events industry	Members (and spouses of members) international service organization	Beadworkers who met in English language classes	Zimbabwean university students
<b>Relation to each other</b>	Friends, colleagues, two are cousins	Friends, two are cousins	Friends, spouses, colleagues in service	Coworkers and friends	Friends, acquaintances, 2 are family members
<b>Gender(s)</b>	Women	Men	Men and women	Women	Men and women
<b>Marital Status</b>	Unmarried	3 unmarried; 1 married	Married	Married	Unmarried
<b>Age</b>	40-55	32-38	45-85	28-43	22-34
<b>Self identified 'race'</b>	Black	Black (Coloured)	White	Black	Black
<b>Employment</b>	Teachers	DJs, event promoters and planners	Architects, retired judge, real estate developer, bed and breakfast owner	Beadweavers	Students, part-time jobs in service industry
<b>Education</b>	Teaching certificates and University	University (some)	University	University, technical school	University
<b>Nationality</b>	South African	South African	South African, Dutch	Rwandan, Burundi, Congolese	Zimbabwean
<b>First Language(s)</b>	isiXhosa and English	English, Afrikaans	Dutch, German, English, Afrikaans	French	Shona, English

General contextual observation provided more in-depth data as it distinguishes between a researcher's direct interactions with informants and detached observation of settings and exchanges between participants and other individuals. For example, the focus group interviews were conducted at participants' homes, places of work and social gathering locations, which provided me with information that could not be gathered in a formal interview setting in a neutral location, in which neither the researcher nor the participants have an attachment.

The recorded focus group tapes were transcribed in Microsoft Word and captured in normal text format, rather than a more complex transcription that would, for example, indicate emphasis on certain words or length of pauses. Complex transcription notes would certainly create a richer body of data to analyze, but were not employed given the size and scope of this study. Notation was made of occurrences of laughter, when participants spoke at the same time, or when the dialogue could not be understood due to background noise.

Between March 2008 and the present, it is important to note that I have actively and passively engaged in participant observation, through my ongoing friendships and work relationships with focus group members. This greatly influenced my context for analyzing the focus group narratives in that the participants' experiences and views shared in the interviews were read during discourse analysis in relation to my now wider intersectional positioning of them in relation to their socio-political and cultural identifications and in relation to other group members. This was especially informative in analyzing group power dynamics, which would have been impossible to map without engaging in participant observation over a period of time.

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## ETHICS

Pat Caplan (2003, p. 27) has observed that when ethics are discussed, all aspects of the discipline are under inspection, including epistemology, fieldwork practices, and a wider institutional and social context. In this study, I am committed to conducting research with integrity, investigating and interviewing with sensitivity and making every effort to neither compromise the comfort and safety of the participants, nor the ethics of the research project. It is imperative that qualitative research which engages with human participants must hold ethics as an even higher commitment than the goal of the research.

The research conducted in this study was designed and executed according to the University of Cape Town's Guide to Research Ethics: Research on Human Subjects. I took every reasonable measure to

avoid the participants being in harm's way – physically, emotionally or otherwise. DeVos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005) identify eight main ethical considerations in fieldwork which informed the design of this study, namely: avoiding harm; informed consent; honoring privacy and anonymity; being truthful with participants; being a competent researcher; cooperating with participants; debriefing participants; and releasing findings. I am committed to abiding by each of these ethical considerations. Regarding the final ethical consideration above, this document will be made available to the participants who expressed an interest in reading the finished product. I look forward to their feedback that will surely enrich my relationship to the focus group narratives and impact future research design.

I made a conscious choice to refer to 'participants' rather than 'subjects' or 'informants' to make clear that I do not relate to focus group members as subservient, but rather the source of knowledge about their own realities, views and experiences which they so generously share with me (Boynton, 1998). Before each focus group interview the participants and I had a discussion about the purpose and focus of this research and they were encouraged to ask questions and express any concerns both before and after the focus group discussion. All participants provided their informed consent for participation by reading and signing a voluntary consent form which entailed the scope, purpose and goal of my research as well as the confidentiality<sup>12</sup> of their identity (see Appendix A). Participants were given a copy of the consent form to keep for their own records. The consent form expressed my academic intention to utilize the focus group data for this thesis and promised anonymity both in this document and with regard to the focus group discussion recordings.

Special care was given to formulating interview questions that are sensitive to individuals with diverse backgrounds and experiences. The questions were purposely constructed to avoid causing any psychological harm. One focus of interview sensitivity regarded questions and discussion topics that could have led to participants discussing their experiences and views on xenophobia and the transition of moving from one's country of origin to South Africa. Sensitivity during the interview process around the area of xenophobia proved important not just for participants born outside of South Africa, but also for South African citizens who expressed emotionally charged responses and debate about xenophobia and its implications for belonging, identity, poverty and safety in South Africa. Research involving refugees is particularly sensitive due to concerns about legality and safety.

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<sup>12</sup> All markers of participant identity have been changed and it was important to a number of focus group participants that they not be identifiable in the data. Interactions with the informants were treated as strictly confidential to ensure their comfort discussing sensitive topics as well as to protect their identity.

During the focus group interviews, if a participant expressed discomfort discussing a topic, then the focus of the conversation was gently redirected.

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### Discourse analysis

This study explores the social representations presented by focus group participants and how those notions inform the way they construct belonging and locate themselves and others in that terrain (van Dijk, 1993, p. 251). Discourse is a mode of narrative and its political terrain is at the core of this study. Discourse is understood in the context of this study as how knowledge is produced in language in relation to power (Hall S. , 1997).

Language constructs, regulates and challenges the ways individuals and groups categorize and relate to Others. Herman and Chomsky (1988) distinguish that dominant discourse is constructed to legitimize dominance. In this study, discourses were identified in focus group narratives that not only illustrate the participants' views of who or what yields power in relation to belonging, but also the context and function of those discourses. For example, exploring if a discourse normalizes, legitimizes or resists the power or dominance being referenced. This exploration of the discourses associated with the politics of belonging in contemporary South Africa seeks not to represent the focus group narratives as expressions of reality, but to rather highlight the complexity, fluidity and contestation of belonging as expressed through the location of self and Others.

Discourse analysis can be used to analyze and understand social interactions. In this research it is used only to explore qualitative focus group interview data (a social interaction), but it can also be used to analyze other forms of text such as literature, policy or media. The analysis portion of this study is shaped by a combination of tenets from both discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis (CDA), which van Dijk (1993, p. 249) calls 'sociopolitical discourse analysis' and explores the role of discourse in both reproducing and resisting dominance. Discourse analysis is interdisciplinary and an ideal method for this study because it is a tool that enables a researcher to unpack how language is used to reflect, reproduce and construct a hierarchy of belonging and how it is connected to power relations experienced and imagined in the past, present and future. CDA specifically engages with discourses that result in the abuse of power and inequality embedded in a specific socio-political context.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This is not to imply that this study or any research that performs CDA creates an artificial binary of protagonists and antagonists, victims and perpetrators. On the contrary, this method of analysis allows room for the complex, overlapping and contested discourses that produce a constantly changing power relation between residents of Cape

There is not a singular or fixed way to perform discourse analysis; it is instead a theoretical framework within which a number of authors and researchers have suggested techniques to perform the analysis (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Given the multidisciplinary nature of discourse analysis, I use aspects of methodological frameworks for both discourse analysis and CDA in this research. The analysis portion of this study was informed primarily by the methodological frameworks of Gee (1999), Parker (1992), Fairclough (2001A), and van Dijk (1993, 2001).

The two main sources for discourse analysis methodology that proved instrumental in this study are Parker (1992) and Gee (1999), whose 'stages' and 'building blocks' of analysis provided a framework for questions I formulated to engage with and unpack the data. The following questions guided the analysis of the focus group texts: What discourses present in the focus group texts that address the key research questions of this study? What are the meanings participants assign to belonging and the objects, events and discourses related to belonging? How do participants speak about themselves, each other, and Others in the focus group texts? What themes emerge in the texts? What relationship do the discourses that inform the construction of belonging have to one another? What is the particular location of the discourses in the focus group texts in relation to time and place?

I read the texts closely for the language used by focus group participants as being politically, socially, historically and culturally situated. Locating the discourses historically, politically and geographically is essential to my analysis, as the context for this exploration is a nation, and more specifically a city, with a rich and contentious political history, including memories of race-based boundaries of belonging during apartheid and more contemporary debates about race, culture, nationalism and migration. Engaging with academic and historical texts enabled me to contextualize and unpack participants' contrasting representations of the past and to map how those memories (both experienced and imagined) inform the construction of their present reality.

Critical discourse analysis relates to discourse as historical and as a social action that performs ideological work and constitutes society and culture. Power relations are by nature discursive and

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Town in relation to belonging, entitlement and exclusion. Van Dijk (2001, p. 361) states that recent discourse studies have "gone beyond the more traditional, content analytical analysis of "images" of the Others, and probed more deeply into the linguistic, semiotic, and other discursive properties of text and talk to and about minorities, immigrants, and Other peoples." To avoid falling into the trap of victim/perpetrator binaries, this research maps and unpacks the social actions (language) of participants, who in their own words individually experience and locate themselves in overlapping and contested roles as both 'insider' and 'outsider', minority and dominant, both immigrant and indigenous.

the relationship between society and language (or text) is mediated. Discourse analysis is both interpretive and explanatory and critical discourse analysis specifically addresses social problems such as inequality.

Fairclough (2001A) provides a step-by-step analytical procedure that is one expression of CDA methodology loosely utilized in this research project.

First, a topic or social problem that is informed by discourse is identified, in this case, the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa. The second step is to research the specific topic, the politics of belonging, and to locate the subject in a wider socio-political and historical context. This is explored in part in the literature review sections on belonging, nation-building and migration and expanded upon in the following analysis chapter.

The third step is to inspect how the topic is located in relation to the social order in which the participants operate. In this study, belonging is constructed in the context of discourses that speak to culture, race, ethnicity, indigeneity and authenticity, among others. After multiple readings of the focus group texts, the transcripts were coded to organize the data followed by an identification of themes and patterns in the narratives that uncover the discourses relevant to the process of constructing belonging (Miles & Huberman, 1994). When reading the focus group texts, I looked for markers of discourse, including recurring themes, contrasting and contradicting narratives, and noted the subjects and topics discussed in the interview (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). I analyzed the focus group transcripts as whole units, as well as breaking the transcripts into smaller entities and locating themes and discourses that are highly prevalent in the texts or contradictory (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). When I identified discourses present in the text, it was imperative that I locate the discourses in terms of socio-political, cultural and historical contexts that inform that discourse and the ways it is reproduced in language. However, the allowed length of this thesis prevents the analysis chapter from exploring those contexts in as great a detail as the analysis warrants. I paid particular attention to the situated meanings of concepts used to illustrate likeness or difference, as well as ways in which the focus group participants located themselves in the hierarchy of belonging in Cape Town, the Western Cape and South Africa.

Fourth, Fairclough suggests exploring modes of transformation in which the inequality reproduced and reflected in the discourses could shift. The final stage of Fairclough's CDA methodology is to reflect on the research and how the analysis can facilitate social change and is explored in both the conclusion and the personal and methodological reflexivity section in the final chapter. These last

two steps of CDA highlight what van Dijk states as the purpose of CDA, to contribute to “change through critical understanding” (1993, p. 252). Given the scope of this research project, these final two steps are at best modestly speculated on, and engaging with these steps more deeply is one motivation for future research on this topic.

The techniques for performing discourse analysis suggested by Fairclough (2001A, 2001B), Fairclough and Wodak (1997), and van Dijk (1993, 2001) inspired a secondary set of questions that perform discourse analysis at a deeper level, both relating the discourses to power and contextualizing them in a wider framework of dominance and action. The questions that guided the second layer of discourse analysis are as follows: What do the discourses do in the social action of spoken language? How do discourses reproduce, challenge and negotiate the construction of belonging? What power is legitimized or rationalized in the discourses? How do the discourses negotiate contradictory and conflicting realities of participants?

As a researcher, engaging in participant observation both before and after the focus group interviews enables me to read the texts at a deeper level. My experiences both socially and professionally with focus group members over two years has provided me with a context for the participants contributions in the focus group texts and better equipped me to analyze the texts for underlying meanings and motivations. It has also afforded me the opportunity to witness the relationships between focus group members outside of the structured interview, which helped me to unpack the social interactions in which belonging is constructed in the interview texts.<sup>14</sup>

In summary, this study attempts to unpack and make sense of focus group texts one by one, as well as in relation to each other in an attempt to identify and unpack the multiple, fluid constructions of belonging occurring in Cape Town. This includes exploring how past and recent experiences, memories, histories and stories produce different discourses that inform the construction of belonging. The data collected in the focus group interviews is particular to the participants and their socio-political, geographic and temporal context at the time of the interviews. The captured narratives are not representative of ‘all Capetonians’ and I have been careful to not homogenize participants with their identified groups. Shaped by discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis, the aim of this study is to illustrate the fluidity of meanings and constructions informed by culture and history and to attempt to reveal something about the complex social relations in the context of belonging (Bottomley, 1992).

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<sup>14</sup> The way I analyzed the text to locate discourses that inform the construction of belonging surely would have been different had I been a ‘member’ of any of the focus groups (if I shared the same identifications).

## CHAPTER 4 – ANALYSIS

This study illuminates the gap between what residents of Cape Town expect and experience in relation to belonging by exploring a South Africa that is discursive and representational, with tensions and negotiations. The discourses that inform the construction of belonging straddle the past, the present and the imagined future. Engaging in critical discourse analysis positions the researcher as necessarily biased, and in the context of this study, I am concerned with the effects and consequences of the politics of belonging, which build “higher walls around the boundaries and borders of the national collectivity” and reproduces exclusionary politics. (Yuval-Davis, 2004, p. 7).

This research relates to discourse as a lens through which one may examine contested cultural and political realities that both influence, and are influenced by, the politics of belonging. This involves being cognizant of different manners of making sense of discourses of belonging, including resistance, complicity, and disengagement. This inquiry into the construction of belonging unpacks how individuals situate themselves and Others in relation to belonging and exclusion. My use of the concept of ‘belonging’ is in part informed by Gustafson who describes it as “subjective and discursive dimensions of commitment, loyalty and common purpose,” (Gustafson, 2005, p. 6).

This chapter explores the multiple, overlapping and contested discourses that inform the focus group participants’ constructions and experiences of belonging based on Fairclough (2001B), Meinhof, Hann, Galasiński and Dariusz (2005) and Gee’s (1999) models for discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. The focus group texts were read for themes and patterns, which allowed me to begin to map the fluid and contested notions of belonging in South Africa. Although the participants all reside in Cape Town, the focus group discussions explored belonging on a national level, which is why this exploratory research unpacks discourses informing the construction of belonging in South Africa rather than only in Cape Town. The themes that became apparent throughout the process of analysis have both complimentary and contested examples in the data, again illustrating the complexity of the process of belonging.

The following sections identify the discourses found during the process of discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. The discourses discussed are informed by statements made by focus group participants in which events, experiences and actions are both evaluated and described (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). The aim of discourse analysis is to contextualize the conversation in situated meaning and explore the function of the discourses identified, however given the length

limit of this thesis, the discourses and themes are presented with only minimal commentary and re-interpretation.

It is assumed in this study that the language of the focus group participants does not reflect their layered realities as much as it constructs and shapes those fluid realities (Gee, 1999; Weedon, 1997). In relation to the texts speaking to perceived power, much of the content of the focus group texts speak to the participants' perceptions and experiences regarding who and what has power in drawing and policing the borders of belonging in South Africa. Discourse analysis is subjective and interpretive; both the discourses identified in this study, and the interpretations assigned to them, would be analyzed differently by another researcher. I do not assert that this analysis is 'correct', and it certainly is not the only possible analysis of the texts. Considering that the participants' narratives are themselves interpretations of the world around them, this analysis section is a reinterpretation.

This study explores the discourses embedded in the social action of language among friends and colleagues who identify as similar in a number of intersectional axes. The aim of my research is to uncover discursive realities relating to the construction of belonging. I explore this by investigating the way people (both as individuals and as members of groups) living in contemporary South Africa talk about belonging, as voiced by their multiple, overlapping and contradictory notions of themselves and their place in the city, the nation and the world. These constructed realities of self in flux, positioned in terms of their intersectional identifications, and the focus group interviews captured only a snapshot of what the participants said and constructed in those moments. The discourses presented in the following sections illustrate how the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa is reflected in the everyday language of residents of Cape Town as discourses are reproduced and challenged.

Although the focus of this study is belonging in the particular political and historical backdrop of democratic South Africa, it became apparent during the process of analysis that many more discourses were present in the focus group texts than just the dominant discourses that inform the construction of belonging. Considering the length specifications of this thesis, I have chosen to discuss only themes and discourses that were most consistent in the texts and most directly speak to the experiences and constructions of belonging. The five main themes that emerged in the focus group texts related to the key research questions explored in the following sections are as follows: belonging to a place, a location; the government constructs and polices belonging; pride and shame; Africanness; and migration.

## THEME 1: BELONGING TO A PLACE, A LOCATION

Focus group participants used language to construct and experience belonging in relation to real and imagined places, including 'home', nations, and the continent of Africa. Their reproduction and negotiation of discourses that frame belonging in the context of 'home', nation, and Africa offer one entry point to examine politics of belonging. While the wide variations in conceptions of South Africa of 'home' reflect the diversity among focus group participants, the recurring references to 'home' as defined geographic spaces such as country, province and neighborhood confirm the central role of the notion of 'home' in one's perception of belonging.

### DISCOURSE: I BELONG AT HOME

Home is often imagined as a physical space, but the meanings individuals attach to notions of home inform one's experience of belonging and locate them in relation to Others. This exploratory research engages with conceptions of home as broadly as possible. When conducting the discourse analysis, the recurring discourse of 'I belong at home' was informed by participants' experiences, imaginations and memories of home. Situated in the ongoing and contested nation-building project of South Africa, notions of home are prevalent in everyday language of residents of Cape Town.

Home was often constructed by focus group participants as the physical and political space in which one lives, and is bound geographically, temporally and politically. The relationship residents of South Africa had to a national home during apartheid was distinct from current democratic South Africa. When 'home' is described as a nation or province, it was often expressed as a point of pride by interview participants and something to protect. For residents who were born outside of South Africa, the discourse of belonging at home was related to a longing for home and a deep sadness for the state of the nation they left.

Representations of the city of Cape Town as home include reflections on its physical beauty and its role in relation to the continent. C3 describes Cape Town as *the mother city of the continent* and P3 remarks that he is *magnetized by the mountains*. These are contrasted by memories of what home meant growing up during apartheid, to which P3 states: *Me, I have memories as a child as going to school. Get home safe. Don't get stabbed in the neck.*

Another participant offers an alternate point of appreciation for South Africa being 'home', in that he celebrates what is available to him in terms of resources and opportunities.

*I have a great life in South Africa. I'm able to live here with a quality of life that I'm not able to have in any other parts of the world. I understand that because I have been to other places. And I like what I have seen around me. And what I get from a food point of view, and what I can get out of work. I like beautiful surroundings. So for me, I know people are struggling out there, but for me, you know, I don't think I'm struggling. (P3)*

The discourse of home also offers narrative that hint at a hierarchy of belonging in South Africa. C3 describes the responsibility of the nation and the order in which support should be offered.

*First for those at home and for those abroad. But first for those at home. You can't be looking after other people when you can't look after ourselves. (C3)*

An alternative conception of home is relayed in narrative that defines home as related to citizenship and the need to bridge the social gap between historically divided populations.

*I think that the most difficult thing that you can do when you are in a simulated society, is with so many groups of people who striving to survive on their own...the difficult and the most important thing is to stretch forth the hand of friendship between on group and another. I think that my wife and I are bringing up our children in this country because this is our home, this is where we live...this is our place of citizenship. We abide by the law, we vote and we bring our children up here...those are basic things you would find anywhere. (J1)*

The constructions of 'home' amongst focus group participants were described or referenced often in contrast to an alternative deemed inferior or more troubled. One participant, expressed concern for me, stating, *I tell you what I'm terrified for you, for the Americans, they going to have a tough, tough time here (L1)*. She expresses her relationship to South Africa as home by juxtaposing the imagined experience a foreigner might have in the Western Cape versus Gauteng (specifically Johannesburg) adding:

*If I was an alien and I landed on the Western Cape I would be the luckiest alien in the world because I would be well looked after. Would you eliminate me because I'm alien? God forbid you landed in Joburg you'd be killed. (L1)*

This is particularly interesting given the parallels that could be drawn between the experiences of fictional 'aliens' and immigrants, both arriving in South Africa from a 'foreign' land. The fictional scene she describes alludes to the danger an 'alien' would face in Johannesburg. It is not too far of a jump to consider that violence in Johannesburg is perceived as targeting individuals based on their identity/origin, whereas the participant constructs her 'home' as the Western Cape, characterized as not just tolerating, but caring for residents regardless of whom they are or where they come from.

Similar to L1 who explored the nature of her provincial 'home' in contrast to the undesirable character of another province, other participants described their national 'home' as consisting of members who possess contrasting values. J1 describes South Africa as occupied by those who love

the country, regardless of race, in contrast to a population outside of 'civil society' who are characterized sinisterly.

*The biggest issue for me is that without civil society this country would have fallen apart after the last so-called xenophobia crisis, if it was not for people like us who have a love of this country. I don't think that's nationalism but I do think that's our humanistic response to being South African. I think we reacted in a way that our ancestors would be very happy black white, green or yellow. We reacted by saying adversity to one to adversity to all. We have come through not beautifully because the politician's have other ulterior motives. (J1)*

This description of a national 'home' is ascribed a set of shared values that the speaker expresses possessing and feeling pride for, as well alluding to individuals and groups that fail to embody the national values. Here, the participant identifies himself as part of the group who embody a set of South African values that are aligned with a love of one's country and cross boundaries. These values qualify one to belong in a group referred to as 'civil society' whose members cross racial boundaries, represented in the text as skin color, including fictional colors that may serve to minimize the current impact of the construction of 'race'. Members of this group, defined as 'civil society' and characterized by their love for South Africa, are alluded to 'belonging here' as they are said to share a collective ancestry described as 'our ancestors'. The implication is that if one loves South Africa and is humanistic, rather than nationalistic, he or she will protect and stand for marginalized populations such as those affected during the xenophobic violence. The antagonists who are excluded from belonging are identified as politicians who J1O suggests have motives in conflict with loving one's country and making 'our' ancestors proud. The same participant later declares:

*I think the ties that bind us are far greater than the ties that separate us. I think the problem with politicians they don't look to the ties that bind us. They look to the rifts. (J1)*

He further characterizes his national 'home' not in contrast to other nations but in terms of what there is in common, stipulating the qualities of someone who belongs in South Africa.

*I think that my wife and I are bringing up our children in this country because this is our home, this is where we live this is our place of citizenship. We abide by the law, we vote and we bring our children up here those are basic thing you would find anywhere. I also think that there is a special pressure on us as a young family to actually express a bridge to other communities not to be evolved (check transcript for questionable word 'evolved') but to be a lot more aware. (J1)*

Other interview participants expressed similar feelings of pride related a national interpretation of home.

*We've had people protesting more and more and the outcome has been this split where they once again want to get back to the basic principles...there are many people propagating the respect for other people. I foresee a good future! (K1)*

Other focus group members respond to his comment by contextualizing what it means to be privileged in South Africa.

*You know, if you have to think about whether you are struggling, then you're not struggling. (R3)*

*Struggling... did I have something to eat today? Did I have something warm to drink? Do I have clean clothes on? Did I have a shower? In this day and age, if you've got any of those things, you are privileged. (C3)*

This exchange highlights the perceived hierarchy of belonging in South Africa, with class being a major variable in one's access to resources and the imagined entitlements of belonging.

For many of the focus group participants who were born in other countries, notions of home are bittersweet, reflecting both a romanticization of their country of origin and also a deep sadness for the push factors that motivated their immigration to South Africa.

When a participant was asked if she believes her daughter, growing up in South Africa, will have a sense of Zimbabwe being home, she responded referring to the xenophobic attacks of 2008:

*I don't think what I understand about being a Zimbabwean my daughter will understand, that she only turned eleven...I don't think she will know what it means; I think she will appreciate life now that she has all this suffering that was beyond her age. (C4)*

Focus group participants for whom the notion of home reaches beyond the borders of South Africa express a romanticized view of their country of origin in the context of the discrimination and exclusion they have experienced living in Cape Town.

*Things at home are just tough. (K4)*

*Me, I don't have any news from home. I don't know if they are alive. I don't know if my sister's children are alive. Nothing. The phone number I used to have, they are not working. I used to make a call, no answer. (B5)*

Most consistently, they expressed a desire to return home.

*Yes, yes yes. If things are better I must go back. I must. I must. (B5)*

*We are all waiting for things to get better back home. For me that's best and I really feel comfortable being at home. I wish I could be living in my apartment at home doing the job I am doing and affording life and everything owning my own car and house and being hopeful. But at the moment home is not the best place to be for now. (K4)*

*It not relevant to be back home... Everyone is everywhere. And where I am I must call it home. (M4)*

*Even if I know I have a better job, I prefer my country. It is better even if there is no food in the fridge if you are happy. In my country you don't have to, you don't say give me your phone! You just walk around with your bag. (L5)*

*My children sometimes, my first, he have 7 years now, all day he told me, "If they close school I must go back to Congo. Me, I don't want this country."...You don't feel at home, you feel foreigners. Even if I have a good job here, I going to stay here to make sure on my side everything is better. Even if I know I have a better job, I prefer my country. It is better even if there is no food in the fridge if you are happy. (L5)*

The gap between the expectations of South Africa being similar to 'home' was present in a number of narratives, including M4 who stated:

*I thought it would be like home you know coming home speaking your own language. Hey but at work it was worst because I was not used to speak English the whole day.*

T4 offers a different relationship to home, stating, *this became my home more than Zimbabwe. I know I am Zimbabwean but when I go home I feel more strange than I do here.* She shares her thoughts on negotiating both Zimbabwe and South Africa as home:

*You are in a better position than the people at home. So when you home it is very painful...As much as it used to be paradise it's not anymore and it's not home either. I always feel like an outsider you always feel to some degree that this is not really my home. I mean because I'm on a study visa so it will help get permanent residence here. So, ja, it's my home but it's not my home. (T4)*

T4 also explores in the focus group narrative her conceptions of home. She describes not feeling at home in England, sharing her perceptions of what constitutes home as continental and related to race, culture and land rather than a national construction of home. She also locates her own agency in the construction of home:

*I think home is geographical. Firstly, I think I must be in Africa. And when I was overseas I wanted to be around black people. I don't want to be in a place where I'm questioned to why I am there. I got a lot of bad treatment from immigration as to why I was there. I feel I'm not begging to stay here and I don't have to stay here. And I think Africa is way more beautiful than what you're offering so I'm going home! I think also home is where you make it and I am independent women so wherever I want to go that will be my home...I know a lot of European people move to Africa and feel at home. And they feel they have a right to be there as a global citizen and they feel they have the right to be there. So it a very complicated and layered issue it is very difficult. For me personally, some connection with the land...But there is also hope. Zimbabwe is still within reach. Zimbabwe it is still an African country. There are still my black people around me I can still relate to it. (T4)*

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#### DISCOURSE: GEOGRAPHICAL BORDERS DENOTE BORDERS OF BELONGING

A secondary discourse present in the focus group texts is related to geographical borders as governing belonging. When a focus group was asked to speculate on their actions if they were in charge of writing the immigration policy for South Africa, they debated if the borders should be more open or more tightly controlled.

*I say our borders must be closed. And, look here, if there's conflict where you're from and you really must come here, you must come here and go to a special place that is government funded. (R3)*

When asked if by 'special' he means a refugee camp he said yes. When I inquired if I or W3's girlfriend, who is French, should be allowed in South Africa, he said, *yes, because you're not here under duress*. This illustrates a perceived relationship between the reason for a 'foreigner' residing in South Africa and his or her entitlement to be here.

There were also participants whose response showed the tension and contradiction between notions of an inclusive Africa and the perceived influx of immigrants to South Africa.

*There should be stricter access control on our borders. And not allowing people from all over Africa, I believe. And yes, for sure, I agree Africa is for the Africans. (W3)*

C4 and T4 build onto that comment, showing how discourses of borders, Africanness, 'race', and colonialism overlap in the construction of belonging.

*And being the right to be anywhere, I don't understand what it means because I really feel everyone has the right. Like being an African for example I am an African, I have the right to be in Africa. But regardless of color. Different colors we are one people. (C4)*

*Nobody can tell you where you belong or don't belong. I find it interesting that now a lot of Africans are trying to move to Europe they trying to control and build walls. That's exactly what you did in colonialism; you came and did whatever you want creating that relationship, and now Africans want to go there and you put your hands up and I think that's very unfair. The whole idea about borders and nationality it just unfair. We have to change the way we think about nationalities, citizenship and boarders. (T4)*

## THEME 2: SOMETHING GREATER THAN 'US' CONSTRUCTS BELONGING

Prevalent in the construction of belonging within focus group texts is a relationship to institutions and organizations perceived to have more power than individual residents of South Africa. The roles, actions and goals of the government and politicians are negotiated in competing discourses that construct the government as promoting division and exclusion and the government as promoting transformation and belonging based on inclusion. More abstract than the tangible government and related politicians is the notion that democracy itself shapes belonging in South Africa.

### DISCOURSE: THE GOVERNMENT IS CORRUPT AND INSTIGATES DIVISION

The first discourse explored within this theme that positions the government as a powerful instrument in constructing belonging is the discourse that the government is corrupt, ineffective, and creates belonging based on exclusion. J1 positions politicians and the government as instigating and facilitating war and unrest, romanticizing a pre-apartheid system of belonging not based on race in which everyone struggled, but alliances were in tact.

*You know if you were here the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> century, black, white, green and yellow, you had a difficult time. You know you had a group of Europeans with huge technological advantage over the local people...And those people who put the bridges out between the two groups of people actually did...the original Afrikaners actually bridged that very, very well. The politicians came along and said the Eastern front here kills black people. And then all of suddenly the English decided they don't like all the Afrikaners, broke all the promises. So, South Africa has been tarnished by a lot of war and very few politicians seek to bridge, bridge the divide and bring people together. (J1)*

In relation to the contemporary government of South Africa, focus group participants reproduce the discourse that the government controls business and economic opportunities as well as instructs individuals how to live.

*I wanted to do all sorts of events involving the government. I must come with my ANC t-shirt on and my ANC card I would go right through. But because I'm not part of the conspiracy, and the conspiracy to keep money within themselves. Even if it might be a good thing for the community... Viva ANC! That's the only way you're going to make money. (C3)*

*It comes from them. They are playing the top down approach. The government is playing the top down approach. You, I'm going to tell you what to do. You do what I say. (T2)*

Focus group participants attribute the 'xenophobic violence' to a corrupt government, both in terms of a perceived plot to promote division, and as a result of poor service delivery. In this line of conversation, although members of the government did not attack 'foreigners', they are the systemic root of xenophobia by withholding service delivery from the population who exacted the violence.

*They thought that, ok, fine, I'm not working, the 'kwerekwere' are working and what is the government doing for me? He thinks the problem starts with him. But it doesn't, it starts with the government. (W2)*

*People were getting even burnt and how long did it take to announce state emergency. He [the president] said nothing like it normal for them. Here killing is nothing. (K4)*

*[Politicians say] I'm the one in power so you're my subordinate, you cannot advise me. Come back to the people and ask them "What do you want?" Houses. How would you like us to utilize this money? Not sit on your high chair there and tell us how you're going to use it. There's this lack of service delivery. (N2)*

Participants also express resignation about the power and domination of the government. Constructed as distinct from civil society, the government is positioned as autonomous, and its authority as inescapable by those who live here.

*It doesn't really matter. These political things are all external. And of course it means something, but deep down, it really doesn't matter. (P3)*

The government, and government departments, are constructed as corrupt and immoral, marked by secrecy, stealing and manipulation.

*You cannot believe how low they come when they want to get the vote. (W2)*

*Everyday there's a new scandal about it, about our government, about stealing. Cause, unfortunately, that was because of apartheid. They never had the chance. (W3)*

*In this time they can just catch on their own things and do what they want to with government money, with people's hard earned money from people who don't fucking have any money. (C3)*

*The beat people at the home affairs. They don't want people to get in. Now if you want to get in there you must give R100. Yes, it's become like this. It's awful now. (L5)*

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#### DISCOURSE: THE GOVERNMENT PROMOTES INCLUSIVE BELONGING

A competing discourse to the one just addressed was also prevalent in focus group texts. The discourse of the government promoting inclusive belonging and being a source of pride is largely contextualized in relation to freedom from apartheid. This discourse speaks to the nation-building project and the government laying a foundation that transformed the prejudices of white South Africans during apartheid.

*It [post-apartheid South Africa] was built bit by bit. I think apartheid changed the pass laws even before 1994. A new South African flag; a new South African anthem. They removed those 'white only'. So you can see the change; non-Europeans. (N2)*

L1 offers another example of how the government is believed to have influenced discrimination. She suggests that most white South Africans have changed since apartheid. The transformation of some is attributed to an ability 'to socialize with us' and others are described as having changed to capitalize on the opportunity.

*I mean, the government is forcing them [white South Africans] to work with blacks. The government, they're doing the same thing our mothers did. I think it's time. It's the same thing our mothers and father did. They had no choice; they had to go work there. (W2)*

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#### DISCOURSE: DEMOCRACY SHAPES BELONGING

Within the theme of something greater than individuals constructing belonging, the transition to democracy is also cited as a force that has shaped what it means to live and belong in South Africa. J1 positions himself in relation to apartheid and to what group he experiences belonging in relation to accountability, framing revolution as a natural outcome of democracy.

*The most important thing about South Africa as a youngster was is although I don't feel like I was responsible for apartheid; I was part of it I am as tainted as the next person. The TRC has served as the most important starting point where you are able to engage people who went through the struggle who were tortured and imprisoned and who were otherwise affected. To the democratic nature of our government, now there always been a want for a revolution; there has always been an economic deficit. (J1)*

This discourse references an assumed relationship between those who live in this nation and what the expectations are of the democratic state and of residents. When asked what it means to be South African, W2 replied:

*For me it means commitment from both sides. Government and myself. Like if I get an opportunity, I don't have to pay back, but, payback doesn't mean financially, but I have to work. (W2)*

An alternative perception of democracy altering belonging in South Africa is offered by E2, who relates to democracy as providing access to education and resources, which fulfills part of the entitlements of non-racialized, post-apartheid citizenship. The complexity of this relationship is indicated at the end of the excerpt, in which she articulates that access to those resources, while appreciated, has not yielded the intended results.

*Our parents were not educated in terms of sex life so they couldn't teach us...There are books; there is literature about raising a teenage girl. So democracy also brought us in. At least we have literature now, we have programs dealing with teenagers, how to raise a teenager. And we have quite a lot of institutions as well. But I really don't know, because when I look at these programs, we felt so comfortable. Because we thought that, we were happy to have these programs, after school and in the communalities. But we also thought, because there are these programs, our kids won't fall pregnant. But they are! They are! It's still the question of poverty. (E2)*

T2 offers a similar perception of democracy's influence on family planning, drawing a direct cause and effect between the two, stating that *democracy is making people have kids too young.*

The discourse of a flawed and incomplete transition to democracy that informs the construction of belonging is also evident in the text when participants reflect on the TRC process. This positions 'the people' as having agency in the process of democratization, which is distinct from the discourse presented earlier in this section in which government is painted as all-powerful and 'the people' constructed as helpless.

*The people, they gave up. For truth, they gave up justice...If you're talking about that year, and why people don't feel satisfied, it's because we've gone through all of this, we've gone through it, but what did we get out of it? No one got nothing. Your family still got killed. You went through all of this and you're still living in the same place, or your land was taken away. At the end of the day, every white person is still living the same way, the same privileges. They still have the old money that they have. Where our people are still sitting with the same fucking debt that we've got. Same area that we living in. Worse conditions. And what did we get out of the struggle? (C3)*

Although democratic South Africa is constructed as partially transformed, the discourse of apartheid's legacy is still present in conversations about the repercussions of a violent pre-democratic regime. The following excerpts express the Zimbabwean focus group members' reflections on South African democracy in its infancy compared to that of their home country.

*I think it also has to do with apartheid and all that violence. Where has all that violence gone? It didn't just disappear in 1994...It's like they don't have a way to communicate their pain so they just use violence. (T4)*

*You know, they're young after all, that they still young from independence because there are still guns all over. (K4)*

*I think it's different because most of the people in Africa they live, we live with that period of colonization. But here it was apartheid, very, very strong done, that colonialization. That's why maybe they are so, I don't know. They are, you see, their heart is not good, yeah. They have too much in their heart from their parents and sisters, you see? Yeah. They hate, you see, somebody who can have better life than him. Yeah. Maybe they think that they spent too much time in fighting, you see? (B5)*

The discourses present in the focus group texts which inform the construction of belonging are diverse, contested and contrasting, whilst collectively pointing to the role of government and the transition to democracy as impacting the socio-political landscape of this nation and what it means to belong here.

### THEME 3: WE SHOULD FEEL PRIDE AND SHAME

The theme of pride and shame is present in the texts in a number of contexts, including competing interpretations of the current political and social realities of South Africa, and if they warrant celebration or shame. What is consistent is the notion that there is an expected emotional response in relation to aspects of South Africa classified as accomplishments and failures.

#### DISCOURSE: 'WE' SHOULD FEEL PROUD OF WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED

The first discourse identified within the theme of pride and shame is the discourse that the transition to democracy and accompanying social transformation is a source of pride for those living in South Africa. Pride for leaders such as Nelson Mandela, racial integration, cultural identifications and participation in the struggle are identified in the excerpts below as examples of how the discourse of pride are represented in the focus group texts.

Mandela is represented in the text as espousing the most positive and hopeful traits of South Africa and standing for a country that has overcome a violent and segregated past.

*So I have been incredibly happy since ninety four it a complete joy then to see how integrated we are... it's so fascinating; this country is wonderful...We are incredibly fortunate here. I'm terribly happy. We started off with this man Mandela who is a saint as far as I'm concerned it's part of my religion he is a saint. How he preached all the time. All his speeches was 'togetherness, togetherness'. (F1)*

*One daughter has a Jewish husband, so I'll have a Jewish grandchild, which is wonderful. (D1)*

Participants celebrate the survival of an imagined South African spirit, which is tied to cultural identifications and pride in the struggle against apartheid. The suffering that South Africans endured is constructed as enhancing the character of those who live here.

*But they never gave you encouragement, or even to say, or even to school you, and that's why we called it a gutter education and renounced it. So it made me feel proud to say, or tell you that, yes, we are from Khoi-San heritage. Be proud of who you are. (W3)*

*So I think South Africans are incredible because they hold this deep pain and love at the same time. (P3)*

Attachments to physical locations and histories also elicit pride, based on notions of community, culture and natural beauty.

*I'm South African, proudly....proudly Capetonian, proudly Khoi-San. (C3)*

*I have never been to any other country but here in South Africa. Ja, so I grew up here in South Africa. In a township called Gugs. I am very proud of Gugs. (W1)*

*There are so many beautiful places, but Cape Town is just exceptionally beautiful from a visual point of view. (P3)*

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#### COMPETING DISCOURSE: 'WE' SHOULD FEEL SHAME FOR WHAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS FAILED TO ACCOMPLISH

The alternate discourse that overlaps, contests and contradicts the discourse discussed above is presented in focus group text which comments on the aspects of contemporary South Africa that elicit feelings of shame. This is juxtaposed by a continued optimism that Cape Town or South Africa still has the potential to inspire feelings of pride.

*I think we're in a global crisis at the moment. It's not just here. As far as I'm concerned, we are in a serious global situation. And it is momentous what is going on right now. And we're all going to feel it in every part of the world. If you're connected through internet or television. I've always been positive about Cape Town despite all of these things. (P3)*

One source of shame is the socio-economic divide between the 'two' Cape Towns, one that is white, affluent and at liberty to enjoy the physical beauty and economic opportunities of South Africa, and the other that is black and coloured, still marginalized from apartheid era oppression.

*We are very optimistic. Like I say, we are very fortunate to come where we come from, but a little bit down the road, a half a kilometer away from here you've got houses with no windows there, drug addicts. (C3)*

Complimentary to the excerpts presented in the discourse of democracy in which Zimbabwean focus group members commented on the relative youth of South Africa's democracy, R3 expresses a concern for the present and future in the context of celebrating what has been accomplished.

*We can say now that the country's in a kak state and that we're going into a worse state and we don't know who the president must be and whatever, but what we did achieve, and even up until after I think 10th year of democracy that we had before we came to 15 year where we are now, um, that was a lot for our little country to achieve. (R3)*

#### THEME 4: AFRICANNESS

The construction of South Africa as a political and social space located in a wider context of Africa produces discourses of Africanness that are dual-sided. Being African is contested and negotiated in the focus group discussions and is constructed as constituting both a source of pride, identification and a key component to belonging. This is contested on the basis of 'racial' identifications and is conversely constructed as a tool for exclusion for those who fail to meet the 'authentic' criteria for belonging in contemporary South Africa.

#### DISCOURSE: RACE, CULTURE AND ETHNICITY AS BELONGING

Mamdani (2001) explores the historical relation between 'race' and 'ethnicity' and their place in the law of colonial states. Natives belonged to ethnic groups whereas non-natives were racially identified as they were deemed void of ethnicity. He points to a colonial racial hierarchy with Europeans on top, 'coloureds', Asians and Arabs in the middle, and blacks on the bottom (Mamdani, 2001: 654). 'Races' were governed through civil law and ethnicities were governed through customary law whilst "colonial law made a fundamental distinction between two types of persons: those indigenous and those not indigenous; in a word, natives and nonnatives," (Mamdani, 2001: 654). Under colonialism, rights belonged to those constructed as non-natives, rather than to those identified as natives. He opposes binary identifications noting that while all natives were necessarily colonized, not *all* non-natives were colonizers. This complex relationship of authenticity, ethnicity and 'race' intersect in the discourses related to Africanness in the focus group texts.

Despite the transition to a purportedly non-racial, democratic South Africa, participants share how prevalent the discourses of 'race' and ethnicity are in shaping their experiences of belonging and locating themselves in relation to Others and the state.

The tensions and negotiations of a shifting context for the imagined binaries of 'oppressed' and 'oppressor' are expressed in the context of Africanness as the theme relates to discourses of entitlement, expectation and exclusion.

*Me, I believe I'm an African. (K4)*

*Africa might be the best place to stay but South Africa is the most separate place stay. (C4)*

J1 comments on the challenge of having been raised during apartheid when identification by 'race' was enforced, and now attempting to read Others in a way distinct from 'racial' classification.

*I have a problem of always categorizing people because that's how I'd grown up. And as much as I'd like to say it's bad, maybe it's good that I have that, because I do suppress it, and I look at it objectively. We were all brought up that way. We'd see somebody who was Jewish or maybe coloured, you know, and my mind is working on that. What is he actually? Let's have a look, you know? It's not sort of a happy situation. (J1)*

W3 comments on the continuance of 'race' being a defining factor of entitlement and opportunity in South Africa, despite the transition to democracy.

*And, for us now also, now we're starting to see, all the inherent, everything is wrong within our country, like we are not given those opportunities. And at the end of the day, it's also going to again go around race and be about race in Cape Town. (W3)*

The discourse of race is challenged by P3 who is quick to say he doesn't want to discuss 'race' while positioning himself as hyper-engaged with the topic.

*It's an exhausting topic to be honest, for me. Like bloody hell. My family's so deep in there that I just can't any more with this topic. Like around land, and ach." (P3)*

A similar view is expressed by his friend and focus group member who argues that culture, and particularly **his** culture, is what he chooses to define his context.

*I don't want anything to do with race anymore. Nothing. It's about culture. My heritage. My culture. (W3)*

Some participants employ the discourse of race when documenting experiences they had in which exclusion and discrimination were based on 'racial' classifications, including transformation that occurred in those moments of exclusion.

*When's in college, I went to Cape Town College, I was the only black student. And whenever we would be... distributed into small groups... if it was ten, nine white students I would be the only black student. And then I had this group of little white girls and you know, uh, before that time we knew white people to be, you know, superior... And I remember another time I heard one speak to another and she whispered "I don't want to work with her because we won't be able to communicate... I found out from them that they thought black people were stupid. They said "before we started this we thought we were going to get the lowest marks because we had been raised to understand that black people are stupid." And you know what, I removed that from them. (N2)*

The nature and definition of 'race' is clearly contested in the focus group narratives. For example, when the school teachers were asked if they would date a Coloured man, the response of one participant was:

*No, I believe the Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho. I don't believe in any other race. (E2)*

Other participants imagine a post-racial utopia in the focus group texts, where not only segregation has been transformed, but a new generation of South Africans are not even present to 'race' as an identification.

*You know you mentioned that but I worked in Hatfield in Pretoria. And boy it amazed me to see among the student population how there is complete integration...That is so much fun going to my grandchildren's schools which I do quite a bit to see the complete mix really not aware of what the color of the other children are...I have five grandchildren the eldest one is 21... sorry, I have six now; my youngest boy and his wife just adopted a little black child just a few days old when they adopted this one and it's a tremendous success and now is a year old. (F1)*

*I get home one day and find this little boy I can't remember what his name playing with my son Zach... And the mother comes to fetch the boy and the mother is pitch black and I did not think anything of it at the time... The car is driving down the hill and Zach turned to me and said Dad I didn't know he was black. I turned to Zach what part of your friend did you miss? My experience in my home there is no issue on the race thing. Can't say it been taken out of the equation...but we do hear other things that go on in other people homes. I just find it find it funny that Zach didn't actually know that this little boy was black until he saw his mother. (J1)*

This contrasts experiences based on racial discrimination in the past during apartheid:

*I can add when my daughter was playing tennis for the western province and there were Coloured people introduced but they weren't allowed to play on the white-only courts in their own town...The Afrikaans ladies there were quite tough on me; I was a 'kaffir buti', I was a 'nigger-friend.' (L1)*

L1 reveals that although she experienced and witnessed race-based discrimination in the past, racial classifications still greatly impact her view of the world in relation to knowledge production, homogenization and paternalism.

*Blacks think sons are so important; I think we should teach African women that daughters are wonderful and that daughters are great. Because in Africa the black woman is so important..." (L1)*

A co-focus group member argues that Steve Biko's message of black empowerment is now fully realized.

*And it almost taken thirty years for the principles of Biko's view to come to vision. You, black you beautiful, you could do anything; you can hold your head up high... A sense of entitlement that now come through. Yes it is very clear. Like their [blacks] age. Like the Age of Aquarius. Their age to take advantage of the fruits of South Africa. (J1)*

The meanings and histories assigned to 'race' are constructed and negotiated in language between the participants. The following dialogue illustrates how one focus group constructs an image of the reality of being black in the 'new' South Africa.

*What's wonderful is to walk around and see that Black people have a much more. Now they look beautiful they dress beautiful. Like 'this is our place'. (D1)*

*But don't you think it because Chinese are producing much cheaper clothes? (L1)*

*No I think it's that self worth. (D1)*

*People in shops are friendly there is no resentment and um, like, 'this is our place'. (F1)*

Similarly, focus group participants negotiated the level of authenticity of Coloured South Africans.

*The thing is about colored people is they're as African as any of us. (S1)*

*If we had a whole group of colored people who knew a bit more about their history...would actually be interesting that you know Mr. Mbeki said I am an African he can probably go, go back five/six generations. Coloured people if they allowed claiming their ancestor could go back a couple of thousand years. (J1)*

Discourses of tribalism, blackness, authenticity and indigeneity are all evoked in focus group discussions when the intersection Africanness, 'race', ethnicity and culture is explored among participants.

*And the whole thing in Polokwane, it's a tribal thing man, a thing that comes deeply rooted with all that peoples, their main egos, where they come from, the states where they come from. Jacob Zuma knows his main power and support come from Zulus. (C3)*

*Honestly there is still that tribalism here the colored there the Xhosas and there is the whites. I don't know if it is a thing in Africa. Black people still think they still in old Africa. Blacks are fighting against blacks. Even me getting a job, my boss he a racist cat. He say things like is it a 'black thing' to forget things. (K4)*

The experience of exclusion on the basis of being un-African was also present in the focus group texts, particularly in relation to Mbeki and Zuma's conceptions of Africanness.

*This was the united nations of Africa then all of a sudden Mbeki decided no we support some Africans everybody else goes away. (J1)*

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#### DISCOURSE: RESISTANCE AND STRUGGLE 'EARN' ONE BELONGING

The discourse of resistance, particularly against apartheid, is constructed by focus group participants as a qualification for belonging in South Africa. In the context of colonialism and the apartheid era hierarchy of belonging based on 'race', focus group participants cite personal and familial actions resisting apartheid as trumping any 'race' based evidence that would align them with the colonizers or question their entitlement to belong in democratic South Africa.

Authenticity is argued from the stand point of focus group participants who experienced the struggle first hand, in which their contribution is implicit in their belonging in democratic South Africa:

*If I was a little older, just before the apartheid thing was over, I would have been pepper sprayed there. (C3)*

*I'm glad I wasn't 30 like I am now, during the struggle. I would have been dead. (R3)*

*I was also arrested. (W3)*

*So we're like the people that are sort of like in between those two worlds. Between those worlds of apartheid, we've experienced it. And we've also experienced the struggle, that's the new world actually. And now post. Like when Mandela was free. I mean that time in South Africa, it was insanely beautiful. It was so amazing to be a part of it. And so South Africa has all of that because we are amazing that we didn't go to war. (P3)*

Authenticity and pride that accompanies participating in the struggle is positioned as something that can be inherited, with belonging being passed down from activist parents to children.

*My dad was very political too. I can remember running, being on my mom's shoulders in the middle of Retreat road and police chasing us, you know, rubber bullets and tear gas trying to find my dad because he was part of the struggle. (W3)*

A focus group participant who is a retired judge and friend of Mandela, shared the following experience which reproduces discourses of resistance as qualifying belonging in South Africa.

*I was appointed judge permanently. I found they had separate toilets. Colored and another one signed up so I went to Harold van Zyl who was an Afrikaans speaking nationalist. So I said to him we can't have this we have to have this removed. It will have to be moved over the weekend but if it gets to the press there troubles. So myself and the janitor over that weekend took all the signs off nobody ever knew about it. (F1)*

Non-South African focus group participants offer a different relationship to struggle. Some positioned themselves in relation to discourses of struggle, juxtaposed with the hardship of living in South Africa present in their narratives. Others focused on the camaraderie that *should* exist between South Africa and other countries that resisted colonialism, especially those nations that supported South Africa economically and physically during the struggle.

*Being a Zimbabwean we have been through a lot of suffering. Even like simple things like buying food. Like normal person will eat three times a day in Zim it not like that. To survive. Life was tough. (K4)*

*They [Zimbabweans] are people that love peace. I heard my parent talking about war in 1978. My mother told me one day the soldiers came to our house and she was carrying me on her back. I was only...that was in 1978. 1980 we got independence so I grew up in an independent country and what I know of hardship in Zimbabwean is economic hardship not political hardship, of course it was related, but then there was no violence. We grew up going to school knowing about learning. I'm scared; I don't know how my kid is going to grow up in South Africa. (C4)*

Focus group participant N2 offered a succinct view on how a construction of belonging and entitlement informed by race, nationality, and participation in the struggle can be exclusive.

*This is our freedom that black South Africans fought for. Why should people come here and benefit from what we fought for? (W2)*

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DISCOURSE: THE NOTION OF AFRICANNESS PROPEGATES XENOPHOBIA

A competing discourse related to this theme is that a narrow view of Africaness motivates xenophobia, with those perpetrating violence and discrimination as defending their identity against foreign infiltration. Some focus group members focused on the camaraderie they believe *should* exist between South Africa and other countries that resisted colonialism, especially those nations that supported South Africa economically and physically during the struggle.

Referencing Thabo Mbeki's May 1996 'I am an African' speech, J1 expresses his view that the speech represented an exclusive Africaness, one which deemed him an 'outsider'. He implies a causal relationship between this speech and widespread xenophobia.

*This whole 'I am an African' nonsense happened and xenophobia started. (J1)*

When white focus group members discuss their identifications and rights as African, J1 offers a contrasting narrative, arguing that although he sees himself as African that the government does not see the focus group members as African, implying that the government views African as synonymous with black. He explains that Mbeki did not say this outright but that he expressed this sentiment through BEE, policies of the Department of Public Works, and the distribution of land. He described the land act as *having clearly eliminated anything to do with whites*. He continues by positioning Mbeki as racist and denying belonging to white South Africans, implying the exclusion of anyone who is not black African.

*Mbeki will go down in history as the most racist president in Africa actually. The issue of racism in Africa...The thing about Mbeki is that thru his 'I am African' speech takes all our combine history and eliminates all of it. I'm not an African? I've got two generations; I'm second generation South African. Sounds like you third generation, first generation, second generation [motioning to focus group participants]. And this little man stands up there and says 'you're not South African and your role here simply be obliterated simply because you not an African'. It's absolutely nonsense. Does this mean that all Muslims are now are no longer African? (J1)*

The following focus group participant offers an example of how residents of South Africa struggle to have their nationality and Africaness recognized as a source of belonging rather than used as means for exclusion. The sentiment speaks to the perception that belonging in South Africa is constructed on the basis of a narrow view of Africaness, informed by national and racial identifications.

*Of course I am not a shamed of being a Zimbabwean, I'm not a shamed of being black. I am proud to be a Zimbabwean and I will never say I'm an African a locally African. I love being myself. (C4)*

## THEME 5: MIGRATION

The previous theme and related discourses explored the construction of belonging and exclusion in relation to Africanness. This theme explores the movement of people as constructed in relation to authenticity, indigeneity and xenophobia. The terms 'insider' and 'outsider' locate one (as self-defined and as defined by others) in South Africa in terms of what he or she is entitled to with a specific focus on belonging. One's experience of belonging or exclusion is always fluid, contested, and a facet of identity and expectation in contemporary South Africa.

One of the processes central to the construction of belonging in the narratives of Cape Town residents is identifying and relating to the Other, who is deemed 'different' and whose perceived existence is both defined by, and helps define boundaries for, belonging and exclusion from a dominant group (Connelly, 1991). In this section, the construction of the Other is not based on 'race' as it is in the previous section, but based on experiences of and meanings attached to migration.

One participant points out that contemplating the difficulties of bridging the cultural and 'racial' gaps between South Africans highlights the even more pronounced challenges of being from a Sub-Saharan African country living in Cape Town.

*I had to negotiate with people on the taxi lately; we're trying to get them to understand there is no sense of entitlement that they got to work within the body of the law...They say "well, you white" and white this white that and after half an hour you have get through it again. And it is bloody difficult, you know, to build bridges. Imagine living in Rwanda where nobody talks to each other. Imagine being all the way you not as south African as I am. How do you answer that? (J1)*

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### DISCOURSE: 'FOREIGNERS' ARE OTHERS AND ONLY THE INDIGENOUS BELONG

The topic of the movement of people, especially participants' personal and ancestral relationships to migration, is contentious and recurring throughout the texts. One participant describes his family history as going back hundreds of years to Lithuania where they were herring and potato farmers and argues that his family history *does not really start until the 1890s when those grandparents arrived in South Africa* adding that his family does not *look to the old country but instead look to my parents who were born in South Africa.* (J1)

The 'myth of common origin' refers to the belief in an unchanging, homogenous, singular version of culture that applies to all members (Yuval-Davis, 2004). This discourse is apparent when focus group participants discuss Othering on the basis of language and culture in addition to nationality. The Other is often perceived as an enemy, a threat to the entitlement of the 'insiders'.

Within this theme, participants who self-identify as coloured, claim authenticity and belonging based on constructing themselves as the only ethnicity in South Africa that do not have a history of migration.

*It [Khoi-San heritage] is the very thing that connects me here because inevitably the Xhosa and the Zulu, all of them, they were also people who came, helped all of the slave owners and helped the slaughter of the Khoi. I have to see my part of it. But I'm also African and I'm also black. I'm just from South Africa. For me, I find out I have roots within all of that. (P3)*

*I think the Khoisan is what connects us with the land. They are the owners of, especially of this side of the land, the Southern Cape. They are the owners of the land. And that the heritage of this land is that people. And that's the people that they wanted to wipe out already. This is like the mother city, everybody, like poor people came here, so first contact would have been here...They [the Khoi] were actually the first cultural people, the first civilized people of the world. You know what I'm saying. So in South Africa they don't want to recognize that, you see? (C3)*

Another side of the debate surrounding the idigeneity of coloured South Africans is presented by a focus group participant, who contends:

*They [coloured South Africans] should be in the same space as we are. But apparently they don't see themselves as part of us. They were second after the white. But you know what, what's funny about these people, the coloured? Democracy came, and it's very common now, they want to be African, they are 'African' now. (T2)*

Sub-Saharan Africans living in Cape Town are Othered and excluded from belonging based on a number of discourses that construct 'foreigners' as criminals and even as unhygienic.

*My first contact with other black ['foreign'] people? Drug dealers man. Not just from Nigeria but from all over Africa. They're religious people though, you can't get a hold of them on Sundays. (R3)*

*My first encounter with a foreigner, you know, so there was this smell. I don't know. I like them, but I didn't want to date them. (E2)*

A Zimbabwean focus group participant expressed her experience of being Othered based on race and nationality, a complex source of identification and discrimination.

*I was the first black person to work in her office with 8 people, two 'boers' 6 coloured, Even these others colored and white they not used to working with somebody like me. They treat me like I'm from another planet. You see at one time my boss told me that people are complain that [I] steal. (C4)*

The modern 'foreigner' constructed as the Other is also normalized and even romanticized, offering a counter discourse to the demonized construction based on migration explored above.

*And they ['foreigners'] have, like multi-talents. (P3)*

*In school, at first he was from Congo and he couldn't speak a word of Xhosa when he came. He went to grade 1. I think two, three months he could utter few words and when it was the end of the year he could interpret for his mother and father....It was amazing, amazing! (N2)*

*We had, um, neighbors, you know, foreign neighbors who were just smoking, waking up going to work, drinking, having fun, you know, having girlfriends over. They were like, neighbors having fun, you know, having girlfriends over, putting music as high as you can get it. They were not doing anything to harm anyone. That was my first encounter with foreign people. Then I got close to them. (W2)*

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DISCOURSE: XENOPHOBIA IS PAINFUL, AND IS SOMEONE ELSE'S DOING

A prevalent secondary discourse in relation to migration is the notion that Others are xenophobic, and 'we' are not. When this discourse is reproduced, the speaker constructs him or herself as outside the group perpetrating xenophobia. This often included an identification of who the 'perpetrators' are and what motivates violence and discrimination along identifications of nationality. Xenophobic South Africans are conceptualized of in terms of race and class and negotiated in the text. The following dialogue highlights how focus group participants attribute xenophobia only to black citizens.

*I don't think there is many coloured people that are xenophobic or white people that is xenophobic. You know what I'm saying? (R3)*

*That's a good point. (P3)*

*You see black people - it's a certain class of black people, living in townships and stuff like that. (R3)*

*These people are poor. You don't have anything to live with. Now the simplest things, the smallest hopes that they had were taken away from them 'cause foreign people now just take it away from them! (C3)*

Focus group participants reproduced a number of discourses about the reasons for xenophobic outbursts in South Africa since democratization. These reasons include political dissatisfaction, class and power imbalances, employment opportunities, culture, and a patriarchal, heteronormative construction of women who must be protected from 'foreigners'.

*The people were frustrated. People are frustrated. People on the ground level – they're still living in the same houses. They're still living in the same places. Still awful. They still have a thousand people on one toilet. And now these people coming here from other countries – Somalians, Nigerians. And they're starting to prosper, have prosperous businesses in these same areas where these same people have been suffering for years. Fought in the struggle, in this time. Waiting for how long? For more than a decade and a half. Waiting for something. They still haven't got their own damn toilet yet. Or electricity or anything like that. And now these other people are coming from all over the place, and they just taking over every little shop, every little place. (C3)*

*I think the reasons behind the attacks. You'll hear them again. Because the problem with us and the people from the other country is a language problem. We need to exchange, like, I'm teaching you this language, you're teaching me this language. We are together. (W2)*

*Their ['foreigners'] houses were being burned. Some of them were killed. And that they were taking, you know, South African people's opportunities, you know, job opportunities, girlfriends. I think people just got jealous. They were taking over. Because where there is a foreigner there is a business. They are working very hard. (N2)*

*It also about a class struggle...I realize it a poverty thing and a lot of us Zimbabwean that are working or studying are protected by that...It is difficult for people to live together when they living in poverty. I think poverty has a lot more to do with it than nationality does. (T4)*

*It's also, it's two different cultures. At the same time, what makes someone come from absolutely nothing move into a foreign country, ban together, as groups individuals, and make something of themselves? (W3)*

Other participants distance themselves from the construction of xenophobia by rebutting other group members' explanations for attacks on 'foreigners' in 2008.

*Personally, I don't care how people tell me, even in this group. I felt there was no need for the attacks. I hear the reasons but I'm still not convinced why these people were attacked. (E2)*

Xenophobia is constructed as painful, hurtful to the victims of violence and discrimination and secondarily to the social and political landscape of South Africa.

*Whatever happened is so scary, it was so painful. That stuff was organized. There is no doubt in my mind. My gut feeling. (P3)*

*Just very, very upsetting it was very painful. (T4)*

*Even me, I am scared to be here because I don't know what is going to happen next. Obviously I am doing this job, one day I'm scared somebody might follow me home outside. It not safe if you a foreigner. (K4)*

*I'm afraid. Everyday. Every morning. Actually I can't because I don't want to meet that people. Everyday. I just keep quiet. I don't do nothing. They know that one is 'kwerekwere'; the husband is not here. They rape her all night, three young men. They rape a woman with children. (E5)*

*So the [ward] counselor was good. But the problem is other people... Somebody, a man, he can be 30 or 25 years he pushed me from taxi to main road. I was scared...He said I'm foreigner and I must leave the country... They want to kill me. To lead me to the main road and a car come to stab me. (E5)*

*If your neighbors are not nice they will kill you. (B5)*

An alternative narrative provided by focus group participants who highlight the overlapping and contested discourses that construct belonging in the context of migration and xenophobia and illustrates that all 'foreigner's' experiences of 'xenophobic attacks' are not homogenous.

*I must say thanks to God to stay in Samora area. Not for me alone, for many refugees who are staying in the same place. People from Samora, they're like a prayer. They don't want something which can harm refugees. When xenophobia start, and there was fighting they said don't worry, we don't want to harm you, just stay with us. (B5)*

Negotiating who is xenophobic in the focus group discussions illustrated how notions of belonging, exclusion and blame are constructed in language, rather than reflecting an existing reality. Consider the following exchange of dialogue in Focus Group 3:

*Just check now. You can't open up a club now because there's Nigerians opening up kak left, right and center. You as Capetonians try to open up a club or something. You know what I mean? The criteria? You don't meet it. (C3)*

*You're xenophobic! (R3)*

*No, I'm not xenophobic. (C3)*

*I love all people of all parts of the world, from all over. (P3)*

Distinctions regarding the 'race' of those who perpetrate xenophobic violence and discrimination was discussed at length in the focus groups, with the following excerpt representing the bulk of the positions of participants:

*They are not, not good, you can hate some people or be jealous. But the black people, most of them, most of them if you meet them, they just talking bad things about foreigners. You can get in the train, if they see you foreigner they start to talk. But not white people or coloured people. You can get in a train; they see you. They are not talking about you, they are talking about themselves. (L5)*

The racialization of those who are constructed as 'xenophobic' homogenizes black South Africans in terms of class and politics.

## CONCLUSION

In the previous sections, dominant discourses present in the focus group texts were explored by themes that emerged during the process of discourse analysis. The discourses explored in this chapter are not representative of all the discourses present in the text, nor are the focus group participants representative of the diverse population of South African, and more specifically, Capetonians. That makes speculating about wider implications for the analysis findings challenging, as the process and the results are subjective and specific to my point of view as a researcher, and the points of view of the individual participants. What can be deduced, however, is that co-narrated, contradictory and overlapping discourses illustrate the complexity and fluidity of the construction of belonging in South Africa.

In a more in-depth study without the length restraints of this thesis, it would be vital to include more contextual information woven into the discourses identified, rather than simply presenting them as in this chapter. A deeper critical discourse analysis of the focus group texts has the potential to yield findings that relate the discourses directly to issues of power and inequality. Contrasting and competing discourses identified in this analysis speak to the contested nature of belonging and imply a hierarchy of belonging, which each individual constructs differently. Participants' socially constructed realities shape the way they see the world, South Africa, Cape Town, and their place in

those spheres. The process of constructing belonging in everyday language is evident in the negation and collaboration of reproducing discourses related to belonging and exclusion.

## CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSIONS

The previous chapter explored multiple overlapping and contrasting narratives from focus group texts of Cape Town residents discussing topics related to belonging, including identity, migration, nation, culture, race and language often in the forms of memories, explanations and debates. It became apparent that meta-narratives and discourses about culture, race, history and politics dominated and shaped the constructions of belonging illuminated during the interviews. The chapter explored the discourses that arose in spoken language between participants as they discussed experiences related to belonging and exclusion. This is highly context-specific and the language of the focus group texts not only constructs belonging, but also reproduces and resists historical interpretations of belonging. This final chapter offers my reflections on the methodology, process and findings of this research and provides an overview of the chapters in this thesis. Conclusions derived from the exploratory discourse analysis related to belonging is presented, as well as perceived limitations of the study and suggestions for further research.

### PERSONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL REFLEXIVITY

In the following paragraphs, I present methodological reflections relating to this study. I engaged in a qualitative, exploratory investigation of the participants' constructions of belonging and utilized the methodological approaches that I deemed most appropriate for the topic and scope of this research. Discourse analysis provided me with the tools to unpack participants' constructions of belonging and search for meaning, patterns and connections in their language.

To design a research project that would address the specified research questions of this study, I explored a diverse range of academic literature, engaged in participatory observation and facilitated five focus group interviews which were tape recorded. I attempted to facilitate the interviews in a conversational and participatory manner to encourage a group conversation rather than have participants take turns answering questions individually. It was in the moments of social interaction that the complexity of the process of constructing belonging was illustrated. I engaged with participants as someone interested in a topic in which they have expertise. I strived to be read as someone who acknowledges the participants as experts in their own experiences, realities and constructions of belonging.

The narratives produced in the focus groups were distinct from the narratives that would have resulted from individual interviews, both because socio-linguistic interactions between the

participants shaped and guided the interview, but also because participants would have been likely to answer questions differently (and even use different language) had they not been in the presence of their friends and colleagues. This research was designed to engage with co-narratives produced in groups of similarly situated Cape Town residents. Individual interviews would have positioned the participants in a more solid role of 'informer' and provided them with independence in their response, whereas focus group interviews better addressed the greater context of my research that positions belonging as constructed between people in language. The focus groups created a space that encouraged the participants to react to, validate, contradict, question, negotiate, build upon and debate each others' comments.

The interview process was guided as much by the participants as by my pre-formulated interview topics and questions. This created interviews as well as a context for analysis in which the participants were positioned as the experts in their own realities, experiences and analyses. This was an attempt to combat the view that both research and development initiatives are too often formulated without the feedback or interaction of context (Gardner & Lewis, 1996). It was my intention to perform research that produced relevant data and analysis that facilitates the exploration of the construction of belonging, as well as engage in knowledge production that begins to unpack the intersection of history, personal narrative, memory and imagination in relation to a human preoccupation with belonging.

Regarding personal reflexivity, it is important to identify myself in terms of the same variables participants used to describe themselves. I am a 31 year old white, unmarried, American woman engaged in graduate work whilst maintaining my employment as a forensic economic researcher. My personal, academic and employment experiences have shaped the way I read and engage with others. I completed my undergraduate degree from the University of Texas at Austin with majors in anthropology and philosophy and wrote my honors thesis regarding the transformation of identities of Ecuadorian immigrants living in Spain following fieldwork performed over a period of two years.

My professional career in forensic economics has had me engage with topics relevant to this research, namely race, class, migration and discrimination.<sup>15</sup> In South Africa, I have had the

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<sup>15</sup> My work is specifically related to issues involving employment discrimination, racial profiling, the economic impact of social and government programs, and the estimation of economic damages in U.S. and international legal cases. I worked with colleagues to produce four years of research on racial profiling and I directed Texas Police Law Seminars, a conference series that examined racial profiling statistics in police misconduct cases. My interest in representing historically marginalized groups in a legal context was furthered by research undertaken to produce "How Long Do Mexican Migrants Work in the U.S.," published in the *Journal of Forensic Economics*.

opportunity to collaborate with the Centre for Conflict Resolution, designing curriculum and facilitating Early Warning/Early Action education that enables participants such as government and NGO employees, to manage community conflict through the use of analysis, reflection, and an understanding of the complex changing world. Additionally, my work with the Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention to finalize safety audits and a monograph focused on social crime prevention and a community-based diversion project heightened my interest in conceptions of 'home', entitlement and belonging. My relationship to social and political issues related to migration were in part informed by my participation in coordinating and facilitating of the Department of the Premier's xenophobia intervention strategies during the 2010 resurgence of displacement and migration due to threat of violence against foreign nationals in the Western Cape.

Some limitations and strengths stemmed from my personal positionality. Not being South African and having lived in Cape Town for only four years limits my understanding and interpretation of the history and meaning of this space.<sup>16</sup> In other moments of the interview and research process, my positionality yielded 'positive' results. My position as an 'outsider' often encouraged participants to feel more comfortable sharing their opinions, feelings and experiences with someone who is not situated as an expert in the topics of focus group discussions. There was no fear that I would contradict or challenge their personal, political or historical narratives. When my positionality was identified or referenced by participants, I stayed present to the relevance of those moments in the greater context of this research, acknowledging that part of what this study explores is how people read themselves and others. Given that I 'read' the participants' narratives in the analysis section of this study, I am thankful that the participants felt comfortable commenting on and sharing how they 'read' me.

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<sup>16</sup> One pointed example of my positionality creating limitations to fieldwork is that a sixth focus group consisting of participants who self-identify as Malawian, Rastafari, undocumented workers elected to not participate when we discussed the method of capturing the data (tape-recording) and they learned that the data would be used for my studies at University of Cape Town. The group chose to not participate in the study despite my having social relationships with a number of the group members and being acknowledged as a member of the Rastafari community as well as having a strong presence in the neighborhood Marcus Garvey, where we met for the interview. (Where I 'select' or DJ current music from Kingston, Jamaica on Friday nights and have been involved in social activism and anti-police brutality activism.) It was clear some combination of my whiteness, my gender, my American nationality and my collaboration with an institution widely read in that community as being elitist, combined with experiences of misrepresentation and exploitation by 'Northern' researchers had them experience the interview possibility as one that would produce negative consequences for them. This is an unsurprising consequence given that narratives and life-stories of 'subjects' have been historically silenced in academia, preferring instead for researchers to 'speak for' participants.

The focus groups were conducted in English, in which all participants are proficient, but surely the texts, language and topics discussed would have been distinct had participants been encouraged to speak in any and all languages they feel comfortable. As an American interviewing non-American participants, there were expressions, references and nuances that I either did not notice or misinterpreted. I am not an impartial researcher and the lens through which I designed and executed this research project is shaped by my constructed reality and lived experiences. I care for the wellbeing and future of the participants, most of whom I had personal and/or professional relationships with prior to this study and stay in touch with many of them.

Given that this research is exploratory, I entertained no grandiose expectations of uncovering 'truth' or fulfilling a 'Northern' stereotype of identifying 'problems' and then offering 'solutions'. Throughout the data collection and during the analysis I remained present to my personal limitations based on positionality and was respectful of and thankful for the participants trusting me to share their experiences, views and social interactions with other participants to begin to unpack how belonging is constructed in contemporary South Africa.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study had a number of limitations that are important to acknowledge. I performed qualitative research, inherently subjective and often associated with 'soft' academic work that is lacking in solid evidence or data. Discourse analysis was chosen as the primary method to facilitate this exploratory investigation. The collection and analysis of qualitative data can be challenging in that interview data does not have a uniform, standardized way to be organized. This, however, can also be viewed as a strength of this medium being that it allows the researcher more potential options when combining and analyzing data. I attempted to ground this research in the socio-political history of South Africa, as well as a global context where applicable. The scope of this research topic and the length limitation of this thesis, however, made it challenging to address all of the events, histories and contexts that shape the construction of belonging as well as the processes in which belonging is embedded.

I utilized the snowball sampling technique in order to penetrate specific communities beginning with a small number of personal contacts, to not only create a sense of trust by secondary informants who were referred by a mutual contact, but also to help map social networks and unpack what constitutes belonging to group(s) in Cape Town. One limitation of snowball samplings is that a small

number of networks may be over-utilized while other networks are excluded, creating data that is not representative of the entire target population (Bloch, 1999).

Especially when engaging with participants who self-identify as refugees, asylum seekers or undocumented workers, the fear of retaliation and deportation may have been a factor that influenced the research data and, more importantly, the emotional and mental well-being of the participants. It was challenging to engage discussion around topics that may be related to negative experiences without harming participants. Discussing migration, discrimination and xenophobia, in addition to general notions of belonging, home and identity, often evoked strong emotional responses. My utmost priority was the wellbeing of the participants.

The data collection strategy used in this study entailed in-person, semi-structured interviews, which were recorded and transcribed. As is true in any qualitative research, my interpretation of both verbal and non-verbal responses, as well as the themes and connections drawn from the data, were subjective and informed by my own experiences, nationality, gender, ethnicity, age and education. I contextualize my findings and conclusions as personal and subjective rather than artificially present them as truthful or objective.

One limitation to the data collection process was that I did not confirm the data with the participants. For example, when a phrase or comment was unclear or when more than one participant was speaking at the same time I did not request that the participants rephrase, repeat or explain what was unclear. I was intentional to not interrupt the linguistic interaction and co-narration between participants as those moments were crucial to exploring how belonging is constructed, negotiated and reproduced. The limitation, however, is that those interactions were likely not fully understood or interpreted by me as they were meant by participants.<sup>17</sup> I was also challenged by background noise in some of the interviews recorded in a social or densely populated location. This produced moments in which participants' words and intonations were likely misunderstood and misreported in my transcriptions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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<sup>17</sup> If I were to engage in another project that utilizes focus group interviews, I would ask participants at the time of the interviews if they would like to review the full transcript and invite them to provide me with any feedback they have. This would enable a deeper level of analysis to occur, in which the participants are not only the sources of the texts which I analyze but also acknowledged as experts of analysis of their own narratives. It would also help confirm the data collected, highlight contradictions, and better map the complex construction of belonging that occurs in language between people.

This research was limited and serves as a pilot-study for what I believe could be a much broader and more in-depth investigation of the construction of belonging in contemporary South Africa. There are a number of ways in which I can imagine further research being performed on this topic, including but not limited to: increasing the number of focus groups; incorporating individual interviews in which participants independently express their views; expanding the geography beyond Cape Town; exploring the impact of belonging on policy, community and interpersonal relationships; and interviewing the same participants over time to explore the fluidity of the construction of belonging. Any of these alterations for future research would elicit richer data that would undoubtedly provide greater opportunities for analysis.

Another strategy for continuing to investigate this research topic would be to substantially narrow the topic, perhaps selecting one theme or discourse to study in greater depth. This study was designed as exploratory to examine what discourses inform the construction of belonging; exploring just one of those discourses in relation to belonging could yield more in-depth results, such as citizenship, migration, or nation-building. Any one of the themes or discourses explored in this study, if investigated singularly, would produce meaningful and engaging research. Constructions of belonging could be explored in relation to gender, generation, nationality or other characteristics. Such specific inquiries could shed light on factors that shape the construction and experience of belonging.

Given that I purport to take an intersectional approach to locating the focus group participants and texts within a wider context of time and place, one that explores how multiple axes of identity overlap and shape one's relationship to domination and power (Hill Collins, 2000), I would like to have, in retrospect, taken gender, sexuality, class, rural/urban locations and disability more seriously in this study. I would encourage future research on the construction of belonging to engage more fully with the axes of identity, particularly those mentioned that were not given sufficient attention in this study, or risk the continued marginalization and silencing of voices that identify with those axes of identity.

Exploring the social construction of the discourses identified in this study could be used to facilitate readers' better understanding of themselves and the social constructions that are the context for their lives, as well as shed light on those they consider to be similarly and differently situated. Conceptions and experiences of exclusion have the possibility of being transformed by engaging with the similar discourses produced in talking about belonging amongst a variety of participants. In the focus group texts, participants often discussed Others in relation to their having felt excluded,

alienated or oppressed. Exploring the shared human search to feel connected to others, to belong, may foster compassion and engagement between people who initially view themselves as having little in common, or more drastically, as being adversaries. Further research in this area could be explore in much greater depth the functions of the discourses identified in the analysis, and how they relate to power, domination and inequality. Findings of that nature could impact policy, nation-building activities, conflict resolution strategies as well as be useful for anyone collaborating with diverse populations in South Africa.

Most importantly, the goals of critical discourse analysis related to social transformation could be explored and pontificated on to a much greater degree in a more extensive research project on this topic. Created as a pilot study, this thesis acknowledges the potential for future research to offer a profound contribution to the discourses that shape belonging.

## CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this analysis is to explore the process of the construction of belonging by engaging with focus group narratives in which participants talked about themselves and Others in relation to belonging, situated in the historical, political and social context of contemporary South Africa. The central inquiry is: How do individuals and groups construct their forms of belonging through language, both in personal narrative and co-narratives? I interpret and analyze the discourses of five groups of friends and colleagues who live in Cape Town and reflect on the political, social and cultural aspects of their environment(s) in relation to belonging. Through exploring the texts of focus groups that identify differently in terms of culture, language, politics, race and nationality, this research aims to explore discursive ways in which focus group participants construct their experiences of belonging. Discourse analysis is utilized in this study to unpack the lived experiences of Cape Town residents and how they construct and negotiate belonging.

In the initial chapter of this thesis I posed a number of questions that informed and guided the research process. Most central to this research, I sought to explore how the construction of belonging is reflected in the everyday language of Capetonians. The second chapter provided a context for this research, theoretically, historically and politically. The experience of belonging is tied to concepts of identity, which are situated in a particular context, fluid and discursive. Five major topics are explored in this chapter, including: belonging; identity; 'race', ethnicity and indigeneity; nations, citizenship, borders and nation-building; and migration.

The third chapter offers a theoretical and methodological framework for the study, including a discussion of social constructionism and phenomenology, discourse analysis and critical discourse analysis. The details of the fieldwork and methodological process are documented in this chapter, including data collection and analysis. Chapter four, the last chapter prior to this concluding chapter, explores the analysis of focus group texts. Five themes and related discourses are explored.<sup>18</sup>

The focus groups, in comparison to individual interviews, produced co-authored narratives in which the process of the construction of belonging could be explored, as it is constructed within language and in social interaction. The narratives were not read for 'truth', including historical accuracy, and the groups were not judged based on the level of cohesion or dissent produced around different topics. The focus group texts contain narratives and meta-narratives overlapped and interwoven that construct belonging, with 'negative' narratives embedded in 'positive' narratives and vice-versa. For example, lived experiences of oppression embedded in a wider context of national pride, and narratives romanticizing immigrants contextualized in a larger meta-narrative of xenophobia.

Conflicting and contradicting accounts of Others are presented not only within a group narrative, but also from individual participants. This illuminates the complexity and fluidity of belonging. Participants' construct and negotiate belonging in the context of social forces, discourses and personal agency. The outcome of this research is confirmation that a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of analytical and conceptual engagement with the process of constructing belonging is challenging and worthwhile. The focus group participants' individual and collective histories, cultures, lived experiences, politics, memories, imaginations, identifications and interactions inform the construction of belonging as an ongoing social process.

It is my goal that this thesis, being made available electronically and in hard copy to UCT students (and perhaps elsewhere), incorporates this study into the discourse of belonging in South Africa. Being that the multiple, fluid realities of focus group participants were explored in this thesis, and that those realities, communities and the nation are imagined (Anderson B. , 1991), the discourses

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<sup>18</sup> The theme of belonging to a place, or a location, is examined in relation to the discourse 'I belong (or should belong) at home' and 'geographical borders denote borders of belonging'. Second, the theme of government constructing and policing belonging is examined in the context of the competing discourses about the government being corrupt and instigating division and the government promoting inclusive belonging. This theme also contains the discourse that democracy shapes belonging. Theme 3, pride and shame, explores participants' reproduction of discourses related to feeling pride or shame for the social and political state of South Africa. The fourth theme is Africanness, and the discourses investigated in that section are race, culture and ethnicity constituting belonging, resistance and struggle as qualifying entitlement and belonging, and the discourse that the notion of Africanness propagates xenophobia. Finally, the theme of migration is explored in the framework of discourses of migration as grounds for exclusion, foreigners constructed as Others, and xenophobia.

that inform those imaginings have a significant impact on how individuals experience the world around them. It is my hope that in some small way, this study impacts the experience of belonging (perhaps by inspiring more in-depth research) highlighting agency each person has, not reflecting a fixed truth about belonging, but in creating and constructing the context for belonging. Weedon (1997) suggests discursive spaces can provide individuals the platform from which dominant subject positions may be resisted and contested. Belonging is not something that happens to us, but something we create. In acknowledging that inherent power of our word, of language, discourses that reproduce and legitimize discrimination and oppression can be challenged and contested, and a new relationship to belonging based on inclusion has the potential to be created.

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University of Cape Town

## APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

**University of Cape Town  
Department of Political Studies**

**Exploration of nation-building, citizenship, and belonging in South Africa**

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I am a student at University of Cape Town, and I am conducting interviews for my master's thesis in the Justice and Transformation program. I am researching senses of belonging, citizenship and identity in the context of the nation-building project through people's experiences and beliefs.

During this study, you will be asked to answer some questions regarding your experiences in and perceptions in this country, your identity and how you view others, and your interactions with political, social and fiscal landscapes in South Africa. This interview was designed to be approximately one to two hours in length. However, please feel free to expand on the topic or talk about related ideas. Also, if there are any questions you would rather not answer or that you do not feel comfortable answering, please say so and we will stop the interview or move on to the next question, whichever you prefer.

I do not foresee any risks to you. In the thesis, you will not be identified by name (unless you wish for your name to be used). All the information will be kept confidential. I will keep the data in a secure place. Only myself, and potentially a transcriber, who will convert this recorded interview to a word document, will have access to this information.

**Participant's Agreement:**

I am aware that my participation in this interview is voluntary. I understand the intent and purpose of this research. If, for any reason, at any time, I wish to stop the interview, I may do so without having to give an explanation.

The researcher has reviewed the individual and social benefits and risks of this project with me. I am aware the data will be used in a master's thesis that will be publicly available at the University of Cape Town campus. I have the right to review, comment on, and/or withdraw information prior to the thesis submission. The data gathered in this study are confidential with respect to my personal identity unless I specify otherwise. I understand if I say anything that I believe may incriminate myself, the interviewer will immediately rewind the tape and record over the potentially incriminating information. The interviewer will then ask me if I would like to continue the interview.

If I have any questions about this study or about my rights as a research participant, I am free to contact the student researcher or the faculty adviser (contact information given above). I have been offered a copy of this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

I have read the above form and, with the understanding that I can withdraw at any time and for whatever reason, I consent to participate in today's interview.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date