

Learning to resist

Exploring habitus (trans)formation of critical teacher-activists before 1994.

by

Ashley Visagie

Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

Supervisor: Prof. Azeem Badroodien

School of Education

Faculty of Humanities

University of Cape Town

This thesis has been completed with the generous support of the Canon Collins Trust and UCT Postgraduate Funding. All opinions expressed herein are the author's own and not those of the funding organisations that supported this work.

The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

Abstract

This study aims to understand the enabling conditions for the emergence of teacher activism before South Africa's democratic transition in the 1990s. It does so by examining the life experiences of four teacher activists that became politically active in their childhood and youth, and who entered the field of teaching during apartheid. The study contributes to a growing body of literature about the lives of teachers during apartheid, while offering theoretical insight into the emergence of teacher activism under apartheid.

Four teachers were selected for the study, all of whom were classified as 'coloured' males under apartheid. All four identify as socialists and all four participated in the anti-apartheid struggle and held various positions of leadership. While they began their teaching careers at different times and the length of their teaching careers differ for various reasons, including banning, imprisonment and dismissal, they embodied in their own ways what it means to be critical teachers.

Methodologically, this study critically analyses life-stories, drawing from in-depth narratives produced through semi-structured interviews. This approach allowed for an engagement with rich data on personal perspectives and recollections, as well as broader social influences in the lives of the teachers in this study.

The primary concern of the study is to understand the enabling conditions for the emergence of teacher activism during apartheid, which it explores through an analysis of the accounts of the four designated teachers. Treating memory as a repository of precious knowledge, the goal is to offer a variety of insights that serve as a heuristic framework to think about the arguable absence of teacher social movements in South Africa in the contemporary period.

Leveraging conceptual resources drawn from Bourdieu, the insights which this study has produced demonstrate that the emergence of activism may be better understood by considering how times of crisis produce conditions under which taken-for-granted assumptions can be contested. Crisis produces discordance within the field between hegemonic social visions and the reality of the crisis, which renders plausible resistance discourses. Such times of crisis can be experienced at the level of the individual in moments that are referred to in this study as critical incidents, and they are also experienced collectively at the broader societal level, as Bourdieu has suggested.

In the above regard, the primary contribution of the study lies in its engagement with the role of imagination as a form of intellectual labour at moments of crisis, where machinations of power are made more explicit but where imagining a more hopeful future is also catalysed. Both processes are necessary in converting crises into catalytic events capable of mobilising people, and that then spurs different forms of activism.

A further contribution emerges from the study's engagement with different collective processes of organisation such as trade unions, history societies, or sports clubs that offer spaces that promote the acquisition of two forms of capital, namely critical capital and organising capital, and that create places where counter-hegemonic imaginations can be cultivated. The study shows how changing situations in the lives of different teacher activists simultaneously constrain possibilities for change and produce contradictions (or contradictory conditions) that provide the required room for activist intervention. These lessons, it is argued, offer important insights into how teacher activism is constituted and how, perhaps, it can arguably be revived in the contemporary period.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work and that it has not been submitted before, for any purpose, to any other institution.

(Ashley Craig Visagie)

Date: 15 August 2024

Acknowledgements

My PhD journey is indebted to many people who have walked alongside me in different ways. Those who have offered conversation over a cup of coffee or a walk by the beach during a difficult time, a critical reader, or someone who offers an encouraging word. There are too many to mention all by name.

First, I would like to express thanks to Marcus Solomon, Brian Isaacs, Clement Meyer and Yousuf Gabru, who have shared part of their stories with me. This work may not 'capture' the moment, I do not think any work could ever do that. It is my hope, however, that the critical insights from reflection on your own stories may be of help to others, who also seek to 'make the road by walking'.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my wife, Helene, who has been incredibly supportive of me through this PhD journey and who has been with me through the most trying times of this project when I felt I could no longer endure. I am excited about what a new chapter may hold for us, Helene.

To my supervisor, Prof. Azeem Badroodien, thank you for creating room for me to grow as a scholar, for providing me with the opportunity to teach, supervise, conduct research as part of the Political Economy of Education Research Africa Hub and to present at both local and international education conferences. These experiences have prepared me well as I seek to make a critical contribution in the field.

I am also immensely grateful for the support from Dr Heather Jacklin, who has walked this journey with me and engaged in critical mentoring since I was her masters student. I hope that one day, I will be able to pay forward what I have benefited from your well above par approach to scholarship and thesis conversation.

To my reading group, my PEER/PhD colleagues, UCT Shut Up & Write and the Canon Collins Trust writing group: Thank you for helping to sharpen my own thinking and creating the space that is much needed on a PhD journey.

Thanks also to the Canon Collins Trust (CCT) and the Ros Moger & Terry Furlong Fund, who took a chance to support me while I was still doing my masters and have continued to support me until the completion of this PhD. I am deeply grateful for your support. CCT has truly emphasised relationship, humanity and social justice.

To all my fellows who walk the road together, especially the young activists of Bottomup, let us continue to dream freedom dreams and work together to make the world we want to live in a reality. Aluta continua!

This PhD is dedicated to my parents who have always been ready to offer their support and who have been with Helene and I through critical junctures in our lives. To my mother, my first teacher, Beryl Visagie (nee Wilson). Mom, it is your passion and your care for us that prefigures all of this work and which has instilled in us a care and commitment to other people. To my father, Clifford Visagie. Dad, your strivings have always been for your family, and I am thankful for the life you have given for the sake of our future.

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

ABSTRACT	1
DECLARATION	4
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	5
TABLE OF CONTENTS	6
1. INTRODUCTION	9
MOTIVATIONS	9
HISTORICAL CONTEXT: A LONG TRADITION OF TEACHER-ACTIVISM IN THE CAPE.....	10
<i>Critical moments (1980s) – punctuated equilibrium</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>The union arrives (1990s).....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>‘Our government’ - Reconfiguring social relations in the ‘post’ period.</i>	<i>15</i>
THIRTY YEARS OF DEMOCRACY AND THE FAILURES OF DISTRIBUTION	18
TEACHERS AT THE CROSSROADS: HOPE AND URGENCY.....	19
MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION:	20
<i>Sub-questions</i>	<i>20</i>
ORGANISATION OF CHAPTERS.....	20
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	22
BEYOND THE STRAIT-JACKET OF STRUCTURALISM: FROM ‘IDEOLOGY’ TO ‘SYMBOLIC DOMINATION’	22
BOURDIEU AS A THEORIST OF CHANGE.....	26
THE ROLE OF THE IMAGINATION IN SOCIAL CHANGE.....	29
COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION	32
ON TEACHER IDENTITIES.....	35
<i>On Meaning (Imagination)</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>On Activity (Processes).....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>On Structure (Situation)</i>	<i>42</i>
ON TEACHER-ACTIVISM AND RESISTANCE	44
3. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	48
HABITUS.....	50
FIELD	51
CAPITAL.....	53
DOXA.....	54
CLASSIFICATION STRUGGLES AND LEGITIMATE VISION	56
TOWARD OPERATIONALISING THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:	58
<i>Situations - field transformations and effects.....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Imagination - classification/symbolic struggles</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Critical incidents (individual and social) - habitus (trans)formation.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Processes - habitus (transformation) and the acquisition of capital</i>	<i>60</i>
4. RESEARCH DESIGN.....	61

RESEARCH METHOD: LIFE HISTORY/SOCIAL TRAJECTORY	61
BOURDIEU, RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND 'SOCIAL TRAJECTORIES'	62
<i>Non-dualism / double-reality</i>	62
<i>Macro and micro analysis</i>	62
<i>Reflexivity</i>	63
<i>Toward a Bourdieuean research methodology</i>	63
<i>Bourdieu & Social Trajectories</i>	64
RESEARCH PARTICIPANT (CASE) SELECTION.....	67
DATA PRODUCTION	67
<i>Interviews:</i>	68
VALIDITY	70
<i>Reactivity</i>	71
<i>Bourdieu, validity and reliability</i>	71
RESEARCH ETHICS.....	73
<i>Authorial Capacity</i>	73
<i>Consent</i>	73
<i>Naming Strategies: Actual names or aliases?</i>	74
5. BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.....	77
CLEMENT.....	79
MARCUS.....	81
BRIAN	83
YOUSUF.....	85
6. THEMATIC ANALYSIS.....	89
THEME 1: "APARTHEID WAS EVER PRESENT IN OUR LIVES"	90
<i>Forced removals and the Group Areas Act</i>	90
<i>Family life</i>	92
<i>Spatial and educational arrangements</i>	92
THEME 2: "AND MY TOP WAS SPLIT IN TWO"	95
<i>Engaging Bourdieu</i>	97
THEME 3: "THEY WERE ALL POLITICAL"	98
THEME 4: "HISTORIES ARE MADE BY PEOPLE"	104
<i>Origin stories</i>	104
<i>Everyday resistance</i>	105
THEME 5: "THE NEW PERSON"	108
<i>Critiquing the present, rehearsing the future</i>	111
<i>Circling back to Bourdieu</i>	111
THEME 6: "WHATEVER THE HELL I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE"	113
THEME 7: "CATCH US IF YOU CAN!" PERFORMANCE, AFFECT AND EMOTION IN ACTIVISM	117
THEME 8: EMBODIED POLITICS.....	122
<i>Bourdieu and Embodiment</i>	126
THEME 9: "THAT'S IT! THERE'S NO POLITICS" (IMAGINATION)	128
THEME 10: "A KIND OF SOCIALISM": SYMBOLIC STRUGGLE AND THE CULTIVATION OF A CRITICAL CAPITAL THROUGH SPORTS AND CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS.....	134
7. DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION: THEORISING THE EMERGENCE OF THE ACTIVIST HABITUS	140

UNDERSTANDING THE EMERGENCE OF TEACHER ACTIVIST	143
<i>Crisis</i>	144
<i>The role of an alternative imagination</i>	145
<i>Placing activity back into a space of broader social-relations</i>	146
<i>Recognising capital as an enabler of activity</i>	147
THEORISING THE RELATIVE ABSENCE OF TEACHER SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY SOUTH AFRICA	149
<i>The end of a world and the new world</i>	151
<i>The symbolic revolution of neoliberalism: depoliticisation through the de-linking of identity/race and economy/capitalism</i>	152
8. POSTSCRIPT	157
REFERENCES	159

1. Introduction

This study is fundamentally about how change happens, individually and socially. It examines how this takes place within the field of education, and more pertinently, in the lives of the teachers in this study. It concerns the process of the 'the coming into being' (or habitus formation and transformation) of teachers who resist and confront injustice both pedagogically and politically, in and outside of the classroom, and is motivated by the intersection of three goals of research: the personal, the practical and the intellectual (Maxwell, 2013).

Motivations

In my personal experience as a youth worker who works within the context of schools, I have encountered the stories of students who kneel to receive corporal punishment. In a similar manner I have encountered the stories of teachers who are 'kneeling', not literally but in the daily act of returning to a site which produces frustration emotionally, physically and mentally. Likewise, when teachers look to the unions, they are met with bodies unable to move and act in response to the persistent inequalities in schools (See Buhlungu, 2003; Whittle, 2007 and Cross, Govender & Essop, 2023). At a glance, the democratic organs which institutionalised the calls of an anti-apartheid struggle appear to have been subsumed by a new neoliberal modus operandi that has substituted government for governance. Student Representative Councils (SRCs) have made way for Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs), Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs) have made way for School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and the character of labour unions have shifted from 'social movement unionism' to less transgressive and more muted forms of 'political unionism' (See Karlsson, 2002; Mathebula, 2018; Pillay, 2013). Even more significant changes in understanding the role of the teacher in school and society, as well as the purposes of education have been made as market ideologies have crept into schools through global education reforms (Sahlberg, 2012; Sahlberg, 2023). My personal motivations for engaging in this study then concern the need to find ways of recovering 'lost ground' where narrow market ideologies have replaced more expansive understandings of the role of the teacher as both professional and political, and the need to find ways of re-invigorating the teacher as intellectual and activist in the face of global social injustices and even the existential crisis of climate collapse.

Practically, I hope that through (re)membering the stories of teachers who have resisted neutrality in the face of poverty and inequality and who have confronted injustice, others may be inspired to do the same. While there is a growing body of literature on the civil rights movement in the US

and on political actors or organisations who have emerged as ‘leaders’ of the anti-apartheid struggle, there is a relatively small body of work, in South Africa, that concerns the work of critical teacher-activists and their organisations which played a pivotal role in cultivating an alternative social imagination and whose pedagogical work fanned the flames of movements toward justice. This study aims to contribute to such studies on teachers’ lives and particularly on teacher activism in Cape Town across changing discursive moments.

Intellectually, I want to build theory that enables us to explore the situations, events and processes through which teacher activists learn to resist, interrupt and imagine otherwise. In doing so, I hope to also gain insight into the relative absence of the sense of urgency, indignation and collective activism today.

Adopting the specific focus on the emergence of teacher-activism through the life histories of the teachers in this study also positions this research within a broader conversation about teacher social movements which includes but is not limited to teacher unions. Understanding the broader historical and contextual terrain of the Cape, in relation to teacher resistance and teacher organisations is therefore necessary to locate the individual teachers in this study within a historical time and place.

Historical context: A long tradition of teacher-activism in the Cape

While this study focuses on the latter half of the 20th century, the events and possibilities of such constructed historical ‘periods’ do not occur in a political vacuum and are connected to a long tradition of teacher-activism in the Cape. Nasson (1990) describes the Western Cape as the ‘home territory’ of independent South African Marxism. This ‘home territory’, as Nasson (1990) notes, was significantly shaped by the politics of the Non-European Unity Movement, a Marxist-Trotskyist organisation. Launched in the 1940s, the legacy of the Unity Movement included its newspaper “The Torch”, the Educational Journal, the New Era Fellowship which has recently been discussed in Soudien’s (2019) book, *The Cape Radicals* and the Teachers League of South Africa (founded in 1913 and affiliated to the NEUM in 1943). Later, in the 1980’s, the New Unity Movement revived this work under the leadership of R.O Dudley.

Omar (2015) explains that The Teacher’s League of South Africa, an instrument of the Unity Movement, held as a key conceptual construct *“the teacher as a leadership figure in the struggle against oppression”* (p.39). This point is affirmed by Ben Kies, a key figure within the Unity Movement who said: *“...the only persons amongst the non-Europeans who have more than a*

mere smattering of education, are the teachers. They are certainly the only ones to have a certain amount of leisure” (as cited in Omar, 2015, p.39). This idea of the teacher as an intellectual leader and leader in the struggle, while admirable and arguably in stark contrast to how the role of the teacher is imagined today, is not without criticism though. Omar (2015) explains how this emphasis also became the basis of critiques of the movement as petit bourgeois and elitist: *“Given its stated aim of mobilising the working class and the peasantry, its articulation (by Ben Kies) of teachers as de facto leaders of this revolutionary corps, is, in Gramscian terms, counter-revolutionary and elitist”* (p.42). Nonetheless, the undeniable influence of Unity Movement politics contributed significantly to the production of critical teacher identities in the Western Cape, which also took expression in Cape Town schools well-known for their political activism (including Livingstone High School, Harold Cressy High School, Trafalgar High School, South Peninsula High School etc.). Wieder (2003) notes how schools that were *“TLSA strongholds”* were known for their high academic standards and political awareness. Chisholm (1991) similarly noted how *“a report listing the top 100 feeder schools for the University of Cape Town for 1983, Harold Cressy and Livingstone High School, both 'Unity Movement schools', come 10th and 11th”* (p. 10), placing them ahead of many white middle class schools at the time.

A more extended engagement might trace the origins of the Unity Movement back to the history of the Workers' Party of South Africa. However, the aim is simply to illustrate the point that teacher activism in the Cape runs deep and that what is witnessed in periods of punctuated equilibrium such as the 1980s onward toward the democratic transition, often builds on the foundations that were laid in earlier movements and organisations.

The terrain of emancipatory politics was however not homogenous. Other powerful forces within the Western Cape landscape in the 1980s included the Black Consciousness Movement (in organisations like AZAPO), and the United Democratic Front (UDF), a Charterist anti-apartheid umbrella organisation that was formed in 1983, in Mitchells Plain.

Critical moments (1980s) – punctuated equilibrium

By the end of 1985, black schooling across South Africa was in crisis. In some areas, no schools were operating at all. There were continual conflicts between the army and students. Hundreds of students were in detention. Many school buildings were damaged. Relationships between students and teachers were getting worse. (Christie, 1991, p.268).

The 1980s represents what may be called a period of punctuated equilibrium in the landscape and history of teacher activism. It was in this period that the 'People's Education for People's Power' movement blossomed, that teachers responded *'organisationally'* by establishing three

new teacher unions (DETU, EDASA and WECTU), that talks of unity between teacher unions were discussed (at COSATU's 1987 Education Conference) and that SADTU was established (Kihn, 2002).

These actions on behalf of teachers, however, followed on the back of mainly student-led resistance. Mandy Sanger (of WECTU, and also a past-pupil of South Peninsula High School) writes:

South African education has been in a crisis for a long time and students, not teachers, have historically been in the forefront of confronting this struggle head-on. More often than not teachers have been the ones to stifle legitimate student militancy brought on by gross inequalities in the system. While students were turning schools into a terrain of struggle, teachers took a neutral stand or stood side by side with the authorities in trying to force the students back into the classroom. (Sanger, 1990, p. 37)

In a more scathing critique Sanger (1990) also writes:

The state has always relied on the support of teachers to disseminate its ideology and in the main teachers (except at crisis points like the 1940s, 1950s, 1976 and 1984/86) have been obedient carriers of state ideology into the classroom. In this respect, teachers have represented, on the whole, a conservative force in the unfolding struggle for democratic control of schools. (Sanger, 1990, p. 37)

Kihn (2002) similarly describes the actions of teachers in the 1980s as “responses” to student resistance, suggesting that: “*In the Western Cape, if the 1976 student boycotts set off sparks here and there, the 1980 boycotts burned brightly, particularly in Coloured schools*” (p.326). The period, Kihn explains, was characterised by a “high level of politicisation” of students, who not only challenged the racism of Apartheid but who had also started to develop a class-analysis and critique of the state that was influenced by the labour movement. Van Driel (2011) offers a clear example of such student activism in recounting the activities of the ‘Committee of 81’:

The year 1980 saw the biggest, most organised and decisive student protest in the history of the Western Cape. At its zenith the boycott of classes involved every educational institution in the province, in both rural and urban areas, and included students from African, Coloured, and Indian schools. Parents and entire communities were soon drawn into the debate around the students' demands.

This characterisation of the 1980s by Sanger, Kihn and Van Driel suggests that in some ways the choice to engage in oppositional politics and to take up a stance might have confronted teachers then in a manner that may be quite different than in the contemporary moment.

Whether or not teachers today are confronted with the dilemma to get involved in activism, and whether stances are demanded by the situation is worth consideration when thinking about the making of teacher-activists in the post-1994 period. It might be expected that when students are gearing up to protest, the choice is not about whether to get involved but rather about which side of the barricades the teacher chooses to stand. This dilemma is revisited in the discussion part of this study which explores the laments of the teachers in this study in relation to field changes in politics and education post-1994.

To further illustrate this point, however, consider Chisholm's (1999) quote from a Black Soweto based school principal:

Generally, you will find in all the schools, there has been defiance of authority. You actually have to earn the respect of students. You can't use your position of authority to dominate over them. The same applies to teachers. I actually have to negotiate everything in the staff meetings, you know, whereas before I could just give orders. These days you actually have to negotiate your position. So there's been a change in the nature of staff meetings as well. (cited in Chisholm, 1999, p.117)

In relation to the quote above from the field of education, a similar observation has been made in a different field — the field of religion and the church in particular. Consider for example, this commentary about the choice the clergy are confronted with from Boesak's (1979) address to the South African Council of Churches:

This new political consciousness, and the consciousness of Black humanity, have brought a new sense of humanity in the Black community. This new sense of responsibility and the active involvement of the Black community in the struggle have taken away almost completely the traditional reference to the church. Church officials are no longer judged by their office and the authority it represents; their office and authority are now measured by their active participation in the struggle for liberation. (as cited in Boesak, 1984, p.27)

The fact that similar observations could be drawn from these different fields, each with their own relative autonomy and internal logics, illustrates the extent to which political crisis extended into all sectors of society. The position and authority of both teachers and religious leaders, at least in some contexts, were redefined by their political stances.

The union arrives (1990s)

In this context of widespread discontent and resistance to the status quo, teachers organised themselves. Amoako (2014) suggests that the formation of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) may be traced back to the 1970s and to the many radical teacher organisations that formed in the aftermath of the 1976 student protests. These 'progressive'

unions, Amoako (2014) argues, broke away from the established but more conservative teacher organisations that were organised under the African Teachers' Association of South Africa (ATASA). The earliest of these breakaways was the Teacher Action Committee (TAC), which was formed by Soweto Teachers during the 1976 protests (Amoako, 2014, p. 150). By 1985, Amoako (2014) argues, several radical teacher organisations had been formed including the National Education Union of South Africa (NEUSA), the Progressive Teachers' Union (PTU), the Mamelodi Teachers' Union (MATU), the Progressive Teachers' League (PTL), the Western Cape Teacher's Union (WECTU) and the East London Progressive Teachers' Union (ELPTU). Of these, NEUSA and ELPTU were directly affiliated with the United Democratic Front (UDF), the others identified with the national liberation movement (Amoako, 2014). Amoako (2014) summarises the dividing lines in the following quote:

On the one hand, the progressive unions regarded the established organizations as quislings, rocking the boat of the apartheid education authorities. The established unions, on the other hand, regarded the progressives as undifferentiated radicals concerned only with liberation at the expense of the child (Amoako, 2014, p. 150)

These divisions, which threatened to fracture the broader liberation movement, led the ANC and the World Confederation of Professional Teachers (WCOPT) to intervene by initiating 'teacher unity talks', the first of such talks taking place at the Harare conference of 1987 (Amoako, 2014). It is these talks Amoako (2014) argues which eventually led to the formation of SADTU in October 1990.

SADTU's early days were marked by the struggle for recognition as an official teacher union. This lack of recognition implied the inability to participate in ministry boards (lack of representation) and the inability to apply stop orders for membership fees (economic sanction). SADTU's struggle for recognition manifested in attempts to meet with the state president to urge him to advocate for SADTU's recognition but this was met with refusal (Amoako, 2014). In fact, on the 25th July 1991, President F.W. De Klerk met with the rival union NAPTOSA, who in early 1992 received full recognition from the Minister of National Education (Amoako, 2014). The refusal of the state to recognise SADTU and to instead recognise NAPTOSA, the more conservative union which was largely indifferent to the struggle for liberation, is a concrete example of the contestations over meaning in education, schooling and most relevant to this study, understandings about the role of the teacher. On the one hand SADTU represented a democratic teacher union that embodied workerist and activist identities (with sit-in's, chalk-downs, pickets, campaigns against inspection

and unfair dismissal of teachers), while on the other hand, NAPTOSA represented a teacher union that sought to adopt an image of the teacher as professional but also a-political.

Following SADTU's 1993 strike, Amoako (2014, p. 159) explains that the union's agitation receded significantly. Amoako (2014) suggests that the main reason for this is that SADTU anticipated that the CODESA negotiations would lead to an election. The new question confronting SADTU therefore concerned whether to join COSATU or not. Whittle (2007) references the SADTU NEC on the question:

Affiliation to COSATU takes us squarely into the tripartite alliance. It is time for this union to say that it supports the ANC in this election and to commit our resources and influence to achieving a landslide victory for the ANC in the April elections. (cited in Whittle, 2007: 103)

This last point concerning SADTU's desire to reposition itself in relation to the potential incoming democratic government presents a pivotal moment in terms of the study, especially because the study concerns itself with the production of teacher-activist identities before and after 1994.

'Our government' - Reconfiguring social relations in the 'post' period.

Economic transitions

The transition to democracy in South Africa occurred at a time when the world itself was undergoing significant changes through the globalisation of neoliberal political ideologies and economic policies in the dissolution of the Bretton Woods system and through the proliferation of structural adjustment programmes via the concessional loan system of the International Monetary Fund. South Africa, unlike many other nations in the global South or 'two-thirds world' did not undergo structural adjustment but in June of 1996 introduced the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) plan, which was a form of self-imposed structural adjustment, intensifying neoliberal reforms in South Africa. Harvey (2006) offering a brief description of neoliberalism, describes it as "a theory of political economic practices which proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by the maximization of entrepreneurial freedoms within an institutional framework characterized by private property rights, individual liberty, free markets and free trade" (p.145).

By implication, South Africa had, from the dawn of democracy, set itself on a trajectory which would make it difficult if not impossible to achieve the redistributive reforms that were hoped for in land, housing, education and other domains, and which would set firmly out of view any more

fundamental changes required to build a more egalitarian society from the point of production. In other parts of the world, this neoliberalism has meant the dismantling of health, education and welfare systems, and the accelerated redistribution (or expropriation) of benefits from the working-class to the ruling-class. In South Africa, the process of neoliberalisation of the economy has meant the gradual and ongoing diminishing of state institutions through budget cuts, rationalisation and privatisation. In education in particular, this resulted in a massive teacher rationalisation programme implemented in the 1990s which saw the exit of a significant number of teachers from the schooling system. In effect, instead of employing more teachers to improve conditions in schools, the problem of sufficient teachers and adequate resources were removed from the equation of redistribution, producing a situation of inequity in educational provision. In South Africa, everyone has the right to basic education, and the aims of the new schooling arrangements as elaborated in the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), seek also to “*combat racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination*” (p.5). However, while significant gains have been made in terms of access and enrolment in basic education, race and class position still, to a large extent, determine the quality of schooling children in South Africa receive.

It is important, however, to note that despite the onslaught of neoliberal reforms, the ways in which this attack on the public might have been perceived were complex and contradictory. The reason for this is that there were two waves of reform that were occurring simultaneously with each other. On the one hand, the state was undergoing a process of de-racialisation and equalisation, while on the other, cost-cutting measures hampered any long-term hopes of equal access to adequate provisions. In the field of education, for example, 19 segregated departments of education were collapsed into one (Pampallis, 2002), and shifts in funding policies meant that the majority of schools serving Black students did experience some form of “improvement”, and teacher salaries for example were standardised. Student enrolments increased and the state established the National School Nutrition Programme in 1994. This uneven development of post-apartheid ‘corrections’ coupled with neoliberal austerity might have for a short while sustained the illusion that things were getting better. Such transition period hopes and triumphalism were however progressively shattered as the effects of neoliberalism unfolded in South Africa resulting in even greater degrees of inequality than before 1994. Dissatisfaction of South Africans has shown in various ways, among different social bases, and with differing motivations including for example the Marikana Miners’ Strike and the resulting massacre in 2012, the ‘Poo Protests’ in the Western Cape in 2013 and the Fees Must Fall Student Protests in 2015 and 2016.

Changes in the objective position of the union

To a certain extent, there was a huge optimism, we'd just elected a democratic government, it was our government, we were relatively confident with the kind of legislation that was coming out of certain processes and in the interests of certainly the membership of the union, so I think it wasn't based on an expectation or suspicion of government at that stage and that's why we were able not to get involved fully in every aspect of it [policy-making] (Hindle, cited in Govender 2008, p. 291).

In the post-1994 arrangement, the position of the union had shifted *objectively* from one of an antagonistic organisation fighting against the apartheid state to an organisation whose members now occupied positions within government. As expressed by Duncan Hindle in the quote above, a sentiment existed that it was “*our government*”. Aside from the fact that union members had now been absorbed into the state, the union in the post-1994 context would also derive its power from its strategic alliance with the ruling-ANC and the SACP, as opposed to relying on mass democratic movement building, popular education and organising. Such a shift in relations between state and union might otherwise be defined as the difference between the critic who stands on the outside and derives power from the extent to which the message resonates with a broader social base, as opposed to the administrator who operates from within and who derives power from formal and positional authority. There have been examples of the union opposing the state after 1994, of course! But there has also been a gradual erosion of union education and base-building at grassroots level.

Real losses

Apart from the challenges presented by a neoliberal global economic reform agenda, SADTU (the largest teacher union) had also suffered significant material losses as leaders sought out new opportunities availed within government and in the corporate sector. Buhlungu (2005) describes these losses in a very straightforward manner:

...the leadership drain, which accelerated in 1994, continues and threatens to deprive the unions of an entire generation of leaders from the past three decades. The haemorrhage has hit unions at all levels, from the shopfloor right up to the national level of union structures. Many past shopfloor leaders are now managers in the private sector and local government councillors, while scores of full-time officials and national leaders have moved on to become managers, consultants, civil servants, businessmen and women and politicians (p. 711)

This loss of leadership capacity is significant because of the manner in which it affected the union from its most prominent leaders to its branch-level organisers. While SADTU still does have a large membership base, this base is not necessarily an active base. It is beyond my scope to do

a survey of SADTU members' attitudes within and toward the union. While such an investigation would be helpful to more accurately gauge levels of engagement of unionised teachers, it is enough to consider the stark contrast between the active social justice unionism which is emerging globally and the relative complacency of unions in South Africa concerning very urgent and pressing schooling matters.

Teacher organisations which were at their most powerful in the final stages of apartheid were formed by teachers who had been influenced by a radical socialist imagination. In the transition to democracy, this driving force of radical criticism appears to have given way to a more collaborative approach to the state. During the time of transition many union leaders welcomed the opportunity to reposition themselves in the new regime in ways that would afford them greater political status and economic rewards. The repositioning of such a large-scale radical teacher resistance movement within the 1994 context, and its new close associations with the post-apartheid ruling party, raises questions about whether it is possible for teachers and the organisations they built to be sufficiently critical of the state, and to embody that critical spirit in the same way, when they are so closely affiliated to the state.

Thirty years of democracy and the failures of distribution

Looking back on the transition to democracy discussed above and taking into account the current situation of schooling in South Africa, educationalists (Christie, 2016, Vally, 2018), student activists (Nwadeyi, 2016; Hassen, 2017) and economists (Spaull, 2013) have argued that what we live in is the result of a 'failed transition' in which the middle-class has experienced some change but much remains as it was before 1994 for the majority of working-class South Africans.

Christie (2016) writes:

Despite some shifts in apartheid's race/class configuration, the burden of poverty and poor education are still shouldered disproportionately by black people. The imaginary of liberation has scarcely been touched – let alone achieved – despite the formalities of a modern state being put in place (2016, p. 435)

Vally (2018) similarly argues:

Over two decades since the first democratic elections in South Africa, the combined weight of apartheid's legacy exacerbated by omissions in policies and tardy implementation over the past twenty-three years have meant that the promise of a quality public education system remains a chimera (2018: p.1)

In addition to the above perspectives, civil society organisations have also highlighted the poor conditions of schools serving black working-class communities. Equal Education, for example, has described the conditions in such schools as being “systemically under-resourced, understaffed and overcrowded” (Equal Education, 2016). The ultimate indictment of the failure of the state, is represented in the stories of Michael Komape, Lumkha Mkhethwa, Lister Magongwa and Siyamthanda Mtunu who have died at school, as a result of departmental failure to provide safe ablution facilities. Their stories speak to the material conditions of schooling which, in the field of education, cannot be disentangled from pedagogical work and are indicative of systemic failure.

Teachers at the crossroads: hope and urgency

When contrasting moments during the height of apartheid with the present moment, two stark images emerge. On one hand, the time of the movement for people’s power and the last decade of apartheid, is a moment of hope and urgency, reflected in statements like that of Zwelakhe Sisulu’s speech at the opening of the NECC conference on March 29, 1986 begins with:

We stand today at a crossroads in our struggle for national liberation. We hold the future in our hands. The decisions we take at this conference will be truly historic, in the sense that they will help determine whether we go forward to progress and peace, or whether the racists push us backwards and reverse some of the gains that we have made, towards barbarism and chaos. (Sisulu, 1987)

On the other hand, the post-1994 situation presents an image of grave inequalities in the ‘new’ South Africa, where the majority of youth remain damned and locked into the class positions they are born into, but this current reality has not evoked radical teacher activism and movement building. There appears to be little urgency to organise for liberation in education. Given the visceral realities, it is puzzling that teachers’ voices in the struggle for quality education appear to be either missing or muted. Why are teachers not visibly affected, angry or ‘at a crossroads’ today, when the field of schooling is overcome by inequalities in provision, inadequacies in funding, teacher provisioning and resourcing in terms of infrastructure or otherwise?

This is the issue at the heart of this research, both a sociological puzzle and an ethical dilemma, which demands inquiry: How did teachers get to the ‘crossroads’ of apartheid education? And why aren’t teachers who are working under the troubling conditions of schooling in the world’s most unequal country, according to the World Bank (Sulla, Zikhali & Cuevas, 2022), finding their way back to the crossroads? How is it that the cries of “education for liberation!”, “education for all!”, “each one teach one”, “almaal saam in die struggle” (Bundy, 1987) and “people’s education

for people’s power” have been replaced with “21st century skills”, “data-driven schools” and “evidence-based management”, with only fragmented opposition? And what has happened to teachers whose understanding of social relations of power and whose orientation toward critical social justice and democracy shape both their professional practice inside the classroom as well as their work outside of the school? These are the underlying concerns of my study. My research questions are articulated below.

Main research question:

Why are some teachers compelled to action and resistance behaviours when others adopt compliant postures in the face of oppression

Sub-questions

1. What critical incidents, temporal contexts, social conditions and discourse communities enable the development and formation (or ‘coming into being’) of the teacher activist?
2. What is the role of imagination in liberatory/critical praxis and how do people break through the limits of what is imaginable?

Organisation of chapters

This thesis comprises eight chapters. The first chapter, this introduction, has presented the motivations for study, situated the research within a broader historical context of teacher activism and teacher organisations in the Cape, examined critical changes and continuities between the past and present in relation to the economy, schooling and teacher organisations, and, presented the fundamental puzzle about the emergence of teacher activism and the research questions with which this study engages.

Chapter Two provides a literature review ‘for’ the study, which begins by contrasting the structuralist approach of Althusser with that of Bourdieu which leaves open a margin for freedom and symbolic intervention which can facilitate transformation. It situates Bourdieu as a theorist concerned with both reproduction and change. As opposed to reductionist readings of Bourdieu which present Bourdieu as only a theorist of reproduction, it draws on the broader oeuvre of Bourdieu’s work, to reconstruct a theory of change. I then explore the role of collective imagination and shared spaces in enabling reflexivity and resistance. Lastly, the literature review engages with ways in which teacher identity is constructed, specific representations of teacher identity, and

how this study has engaged with the notion of teacher-activism. In each section of the literature review, the issues presented are re-framed in relation to Bourdieu's relational approach and method to sociology which guides this study.

The Conceptual Framework of this study, based on Bourdieu's relational sociology as method is presented in Chapter Three. Here the main concepts drawn upon in this study, namely 'field', 'habitus', 'capital', 'doxa' and 'classification struggles' are explained in greater detail, followed by a discussion of how they have been operationalised in this research.

Chapter Four introduces the research design for this study, which applies a Bourdieuan approach to life history (or 'social trajectory'). I discuss how the teacher participants were selected into this study, describe how the data for this study was produced, engage with the key validity issues and ethical concerns and how I have attempted to deal with them. Issues such as the ethics and politics of naming the participants by their actual names, and how to read and understand the subjective memories and accounts of participants are explored at length in this chapter.

Short biographical sketches of each of the four participants are offered in Chapter Five, to help the reader to better understand the background of the teachers in this study. These were also included to provide necessary contextual information prior to presenting the thematic analysis in the following chapter.

The analysis chapter, Chapter Six, is divided into ten parts, each part presenting a theme derived from the data production process. Each of the themes interact with one or more of the four dimensions in this study, namely, situations, the role of imagination, events and critical incidents, and processes of collective organisation.

Chapter Seven, the discussion and conclusion chapter, returns to the original question of the study, exploring the insights from the data and analysis which make a significant and original contribution to understanding the emergence of the teacher-activism and teacher social movements.

The Postscript, Chapter Eight, offers a personal reflection on the completed study and considers present struggles in the field of power and the field of education globally and locally.

2. Literature review

This literature review is written as a literature review *for* the study, as opposed to a literature review *of* the field (see Maxwell, 2006). The focus of a literature review *for* research is not on breadth, coverage and comprehensiveness regarding the field of study as a whole but rather on *relevance* in relation to the focus of this particular study. Given that this study adopts a Bourdieuean perspective and that the central focus of this study concerns the emergence of teacher activism and resistance, in the lives of the four teachers in this study, and in relation to '*situations*', '*critical incidents*', '*imagination*' and *collective 'processes'*, the literature included has been selected on this basis and put into conversation with Bourdieu.

I have chosen to begin the literature review by opposing Bourdieu's conceptualisation of symbolic domination to Althusser's more structuralist account in order to demonstrate how Bourdieu leaves open a margin of freedom for symbolic intervention which can facilitate resistance. I then situate Bourdieu as a theorist of social change, who writes both of social stability and transformation, to demonstrate the relevance of the theoretical framework employed in this study, which concerns teacher stories of change and becoming. I go on to discuss the role of the imagination in social change, assessing the ways in which imagination and utopia have been deployed by other critical scholars, and again returning to Bourdieu who advocates a '*reasoned utopia*' which employs scientific analyses in the pursuit of realistic projects against the status quo. I then consider what imagination means in relation to collective space and community, highlighting the ways in which collective spaces offer opportunities for reflexivity. Lastly, I embark on a discussion of how teacher identity is constructed and specific ways in which teacher's work has been framed, ending with a discussion of how teacher-activism and resistance has been mobilised in the context of this study. Throughout this literature review, I attempt to re-frame or re-conceptualise the issues confronted by engaging with Bourdieu, yet without an extensive elaboration of concepts that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Beyond the strait-jacket of structuralism: from 'ideology' to 'symbolic domination'

Attempting to understand the emergence of activism in a particular moment inevitably involves some discussion about the interplay between material conditions, temporality and ideas. Some conditions and times may appear more likely to generate resistance but even then agents must believe that change is possible. Expressed more abstractly, it is a question of the relationships between structure and agency, structure and ideology, the objective and the subjective, or—in

more Marxist terms—base and superstructure. Differing traditions, even within the universe of Marxist social theory, ascribe greater or lesser importance to either structure or agency. At one end of the spectrum, the superstructure is subordinated to the mode of production, while at the other end, individuals possibly exert equal influence on structure to that which it exerts on them as individuals. How these issues are engaged matters immensely because they have implications for both how we think change happens and when change is possible. In this section, I begin by reviewing Althusser's work on reproduction, which breaks away from a so-called 'classical' Marxist point of view, but which still appears to leave subjects with little room for manoeuvre. In contrast to this, I review Bourdieu's reconceptualisation of the object of sociology as the study of the relations *between* the objective and subjective (different to analyses which move between these poles in pendulum motion). This reconceptualisation offers an alternative way of understanding both reproduction (without being overdeterministic) and change (without being voluntaristic).

French sociologist, Althusser (1968/1971) - in *Lenin and Philosophy* - explains the problem of 'reproduction', the idea that:

...in order to exist, every social formation must reproduce the conditions of its production at the same time as it produces, and in order to be able to produce. It must therefore reproduce: 1. the productive forces, 2. The existing relations of production. (Althusser, 1968/1971, p. 128)

Althusser (1968/1971) argues that the conditions indispensable to the reproduction of a society are the reproduction of **labour** (housing, food, clothing etc.), the agreement to and reproduction of ruling class **ideology**, as well as the reproduction of **hierarchical relations**. Althusser elaborates:

...the reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also, at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the rules of the established order, i.e. a reproduction of submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in words' (Althusser, 1968/1971, p. 132)

Building on and attempting to move beyond a 'classical' Marxist understanding of structure (economic base) and superstructure (law and ideology), Althusser (1971, p. 143) constructs a theory about how social formations are reproduced through ideological state apparatuses (ISAs) including the churches, the school, politics, communications, culture and other institutions.

Whereas Repressive State Apparatuses (the courts, the police, the army) function primarily through violence, ISAs are social institutions that function mainly through ideology.

Althusser makes a salient point when he describes how ISAs are united in their diversity through their adherence to 'ruling class' ideology, the evidence of which is in the fact that it is the 'ruling class' who governs: Althusser explains:

Given the fact that the 'ruling class' in principle holds State power (openly or more often by means of alliances between classes or class fractions), and therefore has at its disposal the (Repressive) State Apparatus, we can accept the fact that this same ruling class is active in the Ideological State Apparatuses insofar as it is ultimately the ruling ideology which is realized in the Ideological State Apparatuses... (Althusser, 1968/1971, p. 146)

Althusser's conceptualisation of social reproduction and the Ideological State Apparatuses is both relevant and provocative because it invites inquiry into how a nation-state like South Africa, moving into a post-1994 era of mature capitalism, shifted from the long reliance on the might of the state, to the reliance on ideological domination, or what Althusser (1971, p. 162) describes as 'the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence'. Althusser's work further provokes thought about the reproduction, co-option, inclusion, re-adjustment and re-configuring of Capital in the mid-80s through mid-90s and 2000s in South Africa.

Despite the usefulness of Althusser's work in understanding ideology and reproduction, its neglect of the processes and everyday practices through which this happens, however, tends to produce a view of the subject as being completely dominated and trapped within the grid of state ideology. Works such as Paul Willis's (1977) *Learning to Labour* show that human subjects are not mere victims of deception and that they do engage in forms of 'resistance' even if such resistance tends to reinforce patterns of reproduction. Similarly, James Scott's (1985) *Weapons of the Weak* shows how everyday resistance may take forms which are not immediately recognisable as 'resistance'.

In a more practice-oriented analysis of domination, Bourdieu (2001, pp. 1–2) describes a soft and gentle oppression which he calls *symbolic violence*, the production and legitimisation of dominant culture. Such symbolic power is exercised by the power elite "to impose a definition of the social world that is consistent with its interests" (Bourdieu, 1979, p. 80). With the theoretical concept of *habitus*, Bourdieu attempts to collapse the structure-agency debate, arguing that the habitus is both a 'structured structure' which represents the incorporation of the social world and a 'structuring structure' which shapes the activities and strategies of agents (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). Habitus also refers to disposition and a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 77) that comes to be inscribed in the bodies of subjects. This theoretical move represents a shift in analysis from

'ideology' and more specifically 'false ideology', toward 'practical reason' that arises from the homology between position and structure.

While habitus as a product of experience has a heavy leaning toward the past, the subject is not as locked-in as it might appear when following Althusser. At times, such as when he considers the total institution as one situation which enables habitus transformation, it may seem as though Bourdieu is being overly determinist or structuralist. He does, however, also offer several other ways for thinking about social change. These include his notion of 'symbolic struggle' and his discussion on prophets and heretics, present in his engagements with the fields of religion and art, and in the more recently translated 'General Sociology' (see Fowler, 2020; Yang Yang, 2014, Paolucci, 2022). In the next section, I will engage this controversy head on, with the aim to rediscover the theory of change in Bourdieu's work.

Bourdieu as a theorist of change

In the preceding section of the literature review, I have illustrated how Bourdieu's notion of habitus attempts to dissolve dualistic approaches which oppose structure and agency, object and subject, base and superstructure or fatalism and agency. Bourdieu's description of habitus offers one manner of dissolving the antagonism but he also offers other conceptual resources, such as the margin of liberty which is availed in a crisis, and the role of the prophet in times of crisis, which articulates both a theory of change and why such change is hard to achieve. Deterministic readings of Bourdieu arise less from Bourdieu's own ideas than from partial readings of his ideas, partly because of the limited accessibility and timing of the release of translations in the English language.

...and I believe it is better to propose, even with great uncertainty, a utopia rather than leaving everyone in a state of abandonment. (Bourdieu, 2002, p. 5-6)

I cannot help feeling that in being so honoured, in being brought into the orbit of a great defender of utopianism—these days so often discredited, dismissed and ridiculed in the name of economic realism—I am being authorized, indeed urged, to try to define what the intellectual's role can and should be in relation to utopia in general and European utopia in particular. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 125)

Many critics have it in their minds that Bourdieu lacks a theory of change, or worse, they misinterpret his work on social reproduction as a sign of deterministic thinking. All of this kind of misunderstanding seems to be at odds with a cross-field reading over Bourdieu's oeuvre, a serious engagement with Bourdieu's later writing, and a recognition of Bourdieu's own political strategies. The quote above, from Bourdieu (2002), which is from his speech of acceptance of the Ernst Bloch prize, in which he champions a '*reasoned utopia*' and affirms the important role of intellectuals in general, and also of the discipline sociology in particular in fighting against injustice, must seem paradoxical to those who are unable to recognise a consistency and unfaltering commitment to reconciling the objective and the subjective in Bourdieu's general method and construction of the object of sociology. Of course, Bourdieu was a theorist of reproduction, but no less than he was a theorist of change. It is the same Bourdieu who invites us to join in collective work against the forces which produce so much of the misery which he has written about:

So against this bankers' fatalism, that wants us to believe the world cannot be any different from the way it is—wholly amenable, in other words, to the interests and wishes of bankers—intellectuals, and all others who really care about the good of humanity should re-establish a utopian thought with scientific backing, both in its aims, which should be

compatible with objective trends, and in its means which also have to be scientifically tested. They need to work collectively on analyses able to launch realistic projects and actions closely matched to the objective processes of the order they are meant to transform. (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 128)

Against a fatalist caricaturisation of Bourdieu's work, scholars like Gorski (2001), Fowler (2020) and others (Joly, 2018; Pinto, L., Fowler, B., & Guibé, E., 2001) have engaged the question of a 'theory of change' head-on. Fowler (2020), for example, has suggested that Bourdieu's theory of social transformation may be better understood by considering his theorisation of the role of prophets as heretical leaders capable of symbolic revolutions, his repeated engagements about the role of intellectuals in political struggle and his theorisation of crises as preconditions of symbolic revolution (p.439). Drawing on recently published *Collège de France lectures: Manet: une révolution symbolique (2013)*, *On the State (2014)*, and *Sociologie générale Vol. I (2015)* and *Vol. II (2016)*, Fowler argues:

Bourdieu's sociology does allow for emancipatory action, by addressing actors' encounters with heterodox discourses, as well as by specifying their conditions of possibility. His sociology has consistently possessed a rich subtext that offers theoretical resources for analysing actors' critique, resort to heterodox beliefs and engagement in transformative societal change, both at field and societal levels (Fowler, 2020 p. 441-442)

Gorski (2001), convincingly drawing his evidence from citation data of Bourdieu's publications in the Anglophone and Francophone traditions, proposes that the misconceptions surrounding Bourdieu's sociology might be attributed to the availability, order and time of publication of Bourdieu's work in the English language, compared with the French (ibid, p. 1). Rather boldly, Gorski claims:

Bourdieu's initial question was about transformation rather than reproduction, that this question never disappeared from his view, and that it reemerged with great force at the end of his career...a closer examination of his early and late work suggests that one could just as easily argue that Bourdieu was first and last a theorist of social transformation and, indeed, that the concern with historical change is a red thread, sometimes thicker, sometimes thinner, that traverses his entire life's work. (Gorski, 2001, p.2)

For interest, Bourdieu himself had also responded to the ways in which his work was represented:

*I think that it is particularly necessary to set the record straight here: indeed, the hazards of translation are such that, for instance, my book *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977) is well known, which will lead certain commentators-and some of them have not hesitated to do so-to classify me squarely among the structuralists, while works that come from a much earlier period (so old, in fact, that they even precede the emergence of the typically "constructivist" writings on the same topics) and which would probably make them perceive me as a "constructivist" have characteristically been ignored. (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 14)*

Bourdieu's theory of change is anchored in his principle of “**reflexivity**” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Social transformations are possible in the movement from practical reason, which takes the world for granted, to scholarly reason which makes explicit the stakes, arrangements and dynamics implicit in the field of power. For Bourdieu, **times of crisis** are moments of possibility when habitus (the incorporated social) is out of sync with the objective conditions of the field, and the doxa is called into question:

Times of crisis, in which the routine adjustment of subjective and objective structures is brutally disrupted, constitute a class of circumstances when indeed “rational choice” may take over, at least among those agents who are in a position to be rational.

(Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 131)

Ermakoff (2013) contrasting times of crisis and times of concordance, expresses it in the following manner:

In times of concordance, actors can afford to be irreflexive. In times of rupture, this luxury becomes problematic. The point is no longer to make virtue out of necessity but to figure out where the necessity lies and, accessorially, why virtue has been lost. Actors realize that their dispositions no longer provide them with a sense of the game. They have lost their practical understanding. The loss compels them to gauge and reflect on their own presumptions. Their understanding of practice becomes less practical, less implicit, and less obvious as it becomes loaded with a sense of disjuncture. Moments of crisis are thus times of greater awareness. (Ermakoff, 2013, p.93)

Yet, despite the possibility for time of crises to provoke reflexivity, it still requires intervention for a time of crisis to be converted into a ‘critical moment’ (Bourdieu, 1988). In this regard, Bourdieu highlights in *On State Nobility, Homo Academicus, Manet* and ‘*The Genesis and Social Structure of the Religious Field*’, among other works, the kind of interlocutors and interrupters who are up to such a task of ‘symbolic revolution’, *the intellectuals, the artists and the prophets* — in dominated positions within the field of power — who speak a heretical discourse:

It thus may happen that the interests associated with the dominated position in the field of cultural production lead to subversive alliances, capable of threatening the social order. This occurs when, in the cognitive struggles over the social world, the professional producers of principles of vision and division, globally located in the dominated positions in the field of power (or at least those among them who, as second-degree nominated, occupy a lower position in the field of cultural production), engage their cultural capital in struggles that they more or less completely or more or less durably identify with their own struggles in the field of power; when, in other words, certain cultural producers” (defrocked priests of the millenarist movements of the Middle Ages, revolutionary intellectuals, etc.) symbolically abandon the camp of the dominants from whom they derive their power of symbolic construction in order to lend to the dominated their power to constitute the social

order, thus providing them with the means of mobilizing the potential power that the current symbolic systems were helping to contain. (Bourdieu 1996, p. 387).

While this historical sociology of social transformations which Bourdieu offers, is insightful for understanding social changes, Bourdieu in fact, goes further and articulates a more future-oriented approach, a 'project' perhaps, in which the role of activist/intellectual plays a central part. He makes a case for a kind of public intellectual and for a kind of public sociology in particular:

The social sciences which alone can unmask and counter the completely new strategies of domination which they sometimes help to inspire and to arm, will more than ever have to choose which side they are on: either they place their rational instruments of knowledge at the service of ever more rationalized domination, or they rationally analyse domination and more especially the contribution which rational knowledge can make to de facto monopolization of the profits of universal reason (Bourdieu 2000, p.83–84).

In summary, the aim of this section of my literature review has not been to engage in waging symbolic struggle with those who mistakenly characterise Bourdieu as a social determinist, nor to defend Bourdieu, but rather to show how Bourdieu's theory of change provides a useful framework for thinking about the role of the teacher activist. It is useful to consider the teacher activist as a public intellectual engaged in symbolic struggle, mobilising their cultural capitals and making explicit prevailing strategies of domination. Moreover, it is worthwhile to consider how particular moments of crisis provide opportunities for reflexive engagement and conversion to heterodox thought.

The role of the imagination in social change

A central question to the overarching theme of this study concerns the role of imagination and hope in activism. All activism might be considered as actions taken toward some desirable future (desirable at the very least, for those who take part) - this may be quite commonsensical. The focus on emergence of teacher activism under apartheid, does however raise crucial questions which relate to both past and present. Why under the oppressive conditions of apartheid, could teachers envision a future in ways that spurred collective action, while in South Africa today, such a vision that can sustain collective action toward justice in education, appears weak or absent? In the following section, I engage with the ways in which critical scholarship has conceptualised imagination and hope, and put forward the idea that to imagine is a human capacity, indispensable to political struggle, and that some imaginations (or imaginaries) carry greater force or moving power because they are carefully elaborated and widely shared.

For Marx (1867), imagination is a distinctive quality of human labour that separates the human from the 'mere animal' (p.127). As human beings, our labour is not based on instinct alone. Rather, we have the capacity to construct in our minds first before acting in reality.

We pre-suppose labour in a form that stamps it as exclusively human. A spider conducts operations that resemble those of a weaver, and a bee puts to shame many an architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. (Marx, Capital Volume 1, p.127)

If this capacity to imagine is such a crucial part of what it means to be human, then it must be accounted for also in understanding social transformations. When Marx explains how the architect raises his structure in imagination, he is talking about a kind of labour. While many critics position Marx as an economic reductionist ascribing everything to processes of production, even Marx takes it upon himself to pen a vision of a future society in 'The Communist Manifesto', which might be considered as an exercise in the labour of imagination. It may therefore be useful to think about imagination as a verb, a specific form of intellectual labour. If treated in this way, might the inability to *imagine* an alternative social order be the same as a foreclosure in reality? And, could the collective labour of imagining possible futures convert potential energy toward social movement?

Levitas (2013) extends this capacity to imagine by suggesting that imagination, in particular hopeful or utopian imagination, can be understood as an invaluable resource for critical and reflexive thinking:

It provides a critical tool for exposing the limitations of current policy discourses about economic growth and ecological sustainability. It facilitates genuinely holistic thinking about possible futures, combined with reflexivity, provisionality and democratic engagement with the principles and practices of those futures. And it requires us to think about our conceptions of human needs and human flourishing in those possible futures. The core of utopia is the desire for being otherwise, individually and collectively, subjectively and objectively. Its expressions explore and bring to debate the potential contents and contexts of human flourishing. (2013, p.xi)

For Levitas, envisioning future possibilities and juxtaposing these with present arrangements, policies and social practices, offers an opportunity for an 'ethical and institutional separation from the present' (2013 p.xviii) that can aid a critical evaluation of how collective life may be differently organised. She makes a case for utopia or 'the imaginary reconstitution of society' as method, which comprises three modes: *archaeological, ontological and architectural*:

Utopia as method has three modes. The first is an archaeological mode, piecing together the images of the good society that are embedded in political programmes and social and

economic policies. The second is an ontological mode which addresses the question of what kind of people particular societies develop and encourage. What is understood as human flourishing, what capabilities are valued, encouraged and genuinely enabled, or blocked and suppressed, by specific existing or potential social arrangements: we are concerned here with the historical and social determination of human nature. [...] The third is an architectural mode – that is, the imagination of potential alternative scenarios for the future, acknowledging the assumptions about and consequences for the people who might inhabit them. These in turn must be subject to archaeological critique, addressing the silences and inconsistencies all such images must contain, as well as the political steps forward that they imply. (2013, p. 153)

Olin Wright (2010) is also interested in utopias, and for him, it is about fusing together future possibilities with existing realities in what he describes as ‘Real Utopias’. He takes four concrete examples as empirical hooks, namely, the Participatory City Budgeting of Porto Alegre, Wikipedia, which he describes as “a profoundly anti-capitalist way of producing and disseminating knowledge” (p. 2), the Mondragon Worker-Owned Co-operatives of Spain’s Basque region, and the Unconditional Basic Income pilot project of Namibia. For Olin Wright, utopian imagination provides us with motivation and drive but must be grounded in reality and experience:

The idea of Real Utopias embraces this tension between dreams and practice. It is grounded in the belief that what is pragmatically possible is not fixed independently of our imaginations, but is itself shaped by our visions. Self-fulfilling prophecies are powerful forces in history, and while it may be naively optimistic to say “where there is a will there is a way”, it is certainly true that without “will” many “ways” become impossible...What we need, then, is “real utopias”: utopian ideals that are grounded in the real potentials of humanity, utopian destinations that have accessible waystations, utopian designs of institutions that can inform our practical tasks of navigating a world of imperfect conditions for social change. (Olin Wright, 2010, p. 4)

Writing with a similar concern for a struggle to improve the world, Freire (2014/1992) proposes “hope” as an ‘ontological need’, to hope is to be human, and even the practice of education is an exercise in hope. As with Olin Wright and Levitas, Freire’s (2014/1992) conceptualisation in ‘The Pedagogy of Hope’ also aims to counter both naive optimism and fatalism:

I do not understand human existence, and the struggle needed to improve it, apart from hope and dream. [...] The idea that hope alone will transform the world, and action undertaken in that kind of naïveté, is an excellent route to hopelessness, pessimism, and fatalism. But the attempt to do without hope, in the struggle to improve the world, as if that struggle could be reduced to calculated acts alone, or a purely scientific approach, is a frivolous illusion. To attempt to do without hope, which is based on the need for truth as an ethical quality of the struggle, is tantamount to denying that struggle is one of its mainstays. The essential thing, as I maintain later on, is this: hope, as an ontological need, demands an anchoring in practice. As an ontological need, hope needs practice in order to become historical concreteness. (Freire, 2014/1992, p. 2)

Freire's *pedagogy of hope*, along with Levitas' *imaginary reconstitution of society* and Olin Wright's *real utopias* resonate with Bourdieu's (1998) advocacy for a *reasoned utopia*, which resists both "the—ultimately defeatist—heresy of an objectivist automatism" (p. 128) and "pure voluntarism based on an excess of optimism" (ibid.). In different ways, the abovementioned perspectives, including Bourdieu, reaffirm a Gramscian "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" (1988/1977). All of these scholars see in this reworking of, or rescue of utopia, from the world of fantasy, a way to bolster a "sense of possibility" (Olin Wright), to avoid 'becoming demoralized' (Bourdieu) or cultivating a "desire for the world to be otherwise" (Levitas).

In thinking about 'imagination', it is necessary also to consider how to handle times of concordance and stability when deep structural inequalities prevail but counter-public visions of society do not seem to have adequate strength of appeal. In *The Violence of Organised Forgetting*, for example, Giroux (2014) describes a neoliberal public pedagogy in which there is alignment of forces between cultural apparatuses which act against critical thought. To do so, Giroux leverages Georges Didi-Huberman's term, the "disimagination machine", explaining that "*a politics of disimagination has emerged, in which stories, images, institutions, discourses, and other modes of representation are undermining our capacity to bear witness to a different and critical sense of remembering, agency, ethics, and collective resistance*" (Giroux, 2014, p. 26-27).

In the context of this study, I wish to take seriously the ways in which the imagination is constructed by the above scholars as a human capacity, a resource for critical engagement and an ontological need. I wish also to reflect on the ways in which religion and socialism whether one or the other, or both – as profoundly elaborated visions of worlds not yet realised – play a significant role in animating the lives of the individuals in this study. Lastly, and perhaps most tentatively, I want to consider as implications beyond the immediate scope of this study, the ways in which a failure of imagination – the lack of a binding narrative – in the current moment might explain the prevailing absence of teacher social movements in South Africa.

Collective Imagination

The four teachers interviewed in this study, did not operate as isolated individuals. For all of them, their activism and imagining took place within the context of community and collective organisations. Each of them in recalling their own stories, could offer long lists of the organisations which they were members of, participated in, or formed part of the organising structures of. As an extension of the previous section which elaborates the role of the imagination in social change,

and recalling the four dimensions of this study (situations, critical incidents, imagination and processes), I want to consider the ways in which the question of imagination has been understood by others, specifically in relation to community and collective identity. Linking back to Bourdieu, collective spaces and organisations are considered as providing at least the potential for reflexive thinking, which in Bourdieu's understanding is necessary for contesting dominant principles of vision in society.

... the great wars of this century are extraordinary not so much in the unprecedented scale on which they permitted people to kill, as in the colossal numbers persuaded to lay down their lives. Is it not certain that the numbers of those killed vastly exceeded those who killed? (Anderson, 2006, p. 144)

Benedict Anderson's notion of 'imagined communities', while it focuses on nation rather than social movements or activist communities is helpful given that it theorises about how such 'imagined communities' are constructed. Anderson's (2006[1991] p. 144) work also asks a bold question about why people are willing to lay their lives down for an idea, the particular imagined community or nation. In the original version of *'Imagined Communities'* (1991), Anderson describes how print capitalism enabled the production of common texts (the newspaper, the book of common prayer, etc) that bound people together even though their individual experiences might have differed considerably. In a later version of *'Imagined Communities'* (2006), Anderson adds a further chapter titled 'Map, Census and Museum' and proceeds to describe how these three key social institutions of the time were utilised in the production of national identity. Maps, as representation, sketched out arbitrary borders to delineate the boundaries of the nation. Censuses, as instruments of control, often categorised groups of people in equally arbitrary ways. Museums along with monumental archaeology, essentialised cultural identities and concretised such understandings in localised sites.

The idea of the imagined community, the examination of the willingness of an individual to lay down their life for the imagined community and the inquiry into how such an imagined community is constructed through ideological apparatus such as the census, the map and the museum is a useful starting point for thinking about the power of shared ideas to move people toward collective action. In a more recent work, *'Decolonising Schools in South Africa: An Impossible Dream'*, Pam Christie (2020) draws on Anderson's work to explain how a social imaginary of race essentialism and separate development still animates the town of Carnarvon. In this work, Christie considers the Municipality, the School and the Church as sites of struggle and social artefacts which uphold relations between people in the town of Carnarvon. The racial and spatial division in Carnarvon

also mirror broader social relations in South Africa. Anderson's work invokes a curiosity about what shapes the imagination of the teacher-activist. What do teachers-activist read that informs how they understand themselves in relation to society? What activities do they participate in that bind them together? What communities both real and imagined aid the construction of teachers' identities and social practices?

Another way to think about the 'imagined community' is to think of it as a '*discursive community*'. In '*The Archaeology of Knowledge*', Foucault describes 'discourses' as: "*practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak*" (Foucault, 2002, p. 54). Discourse in other words avails particular subject positions to be taken up. In relation to teachers work, the discourses that are availed offer teacher's ways to think and speak about their work, and profoundly influence the practice of teaching. To understand what is shaping the field then, it is useful to reflect on what discursive communities are accessible and the content of the particular discourses which are circulating among teachers.

Fraser (1990) describing Habermas' notion of 'the public sphere', explains that the public sphere:

...designates a theater in modern societies in which political participation is enacted through the medium of talk. It is the space in which citizens deliberate about their common affairs, hence, an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction. This arena is conceptually distinct from the state; it [sic] a site for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of the state. (Fraser, 1990, p. 57)

While Fraser leverages the notion of the public sphere from Habermas, she also significantly modifies it. Where Habermas' public sphere did not account for exclusions such as race, class and gender; assumed that such unequal and hierarchical relations could be bracketed or suspended in political deliberations between actors occupying different social positions; and viewed alternative publics as undesirable fractures, Fraser (1990) instead viewed the plurality of publics as necessary, precisely because of how unequal power relations influence participation. In particular reference to the feminist movement, Fraser (1990) argues *for* the construction of such 'counterpublics':

*This history records that members of subordinated social groups — women, workers, peoples of color, and gays and lesbians — have repeatedly found it advantageous to constitute alternative publics. I propose to call these **subaltern counterpublics** in order to signal that they are parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses, which in turn permit them to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs. (Fraser, 1990, p. 67 - bold emphasis my own)*

Imagined communities, discursive communities and counter-publics all offer useful ways to describe the relationships between agents and social formations, formations which they may build but also formations in which discourses are circulated and which they are influenced by. Such spaces provide opportunities or possibilities for what Bourdieu calls 'reflexivity' - it is this critical reflexivity that is necessary for rendering explicit workings of power which are otherwise taken for granted and tacitly accepted. In this study, I consider the ways in which the existence of an abundance of counter-public arenas under apartheid provided spaces for teachers to think and act together, and explore how the negotiated settlement of the 1990s and the advancement of neoliberalism has undermined the development of such critical spaces in which collective imagination may be shaped against the status quo.

On Teacher Identities

In this section I attempt to engage with existing understandings of teacher identity construction. This literature tends to cohere around three domains, namely meaning-making, activity and structure. Privileging one or more of the three dimensions, they all attempt to grasp how teacher identities are formed. These focal areas in the literature also align to the key aspects of the analytical framework of my own study, and so I have indicated this in brackets at the beginning of each sub-section.

On Meaning (Imagination)

Sachs (2001, p. 150) argues that discourses "construct particular identities for teachers in their professional lives" and that teacher identity also depends on how teachers make meaning of the contexts in which they work. Sachs (2001) contrasts two discourses that shape contemporary teacher professional identity, namely, democratic professionalism (emerging from within the profession) and managerial professionalism (reinforced through employing authorities). She argues that neoliberal reforms in education have contributed to the progressive deskilling and de-professionalisation of teachers. Sachs (2001, p. 155) further argues that "the conditions created by managerialist discourses give rise to and reinforce entrepreneurial identities, while democratic discourses provide opportunities for activist identities to emerge and flourish". The warning Sachs issues however, is that while identity is something that must always be negotiated, and that an 'activist' teacher identity is not something that will come naturally, it is not in the interest of governments to "have a vocal and autonomous teaching service" (Sachs 2001, p. 155). Sachs' work provides a helpful scaffold for a study on the formation of the teacher activist because it

introduces the concept of discourse in relation to subjective teacher positions and invites discussion concerning the discourse communities available to teachers in contemporary society. Additionally, Sachs also invites an exploration of the processes through which teacher identities are constructed because she does not accept that activist identities come 'naturally'.

Ball (2003) also emphasises the constitutive power of discourse in particular managerialist discourses which produce a culture of performativity and new teacher subjectivities. Ball describes these new discourses as a policy epidemic that is promoted by powerful transnational organisations such as the World Bank and the OECD, and is transforming the outlook of educators (Ball, 2003, p. 215). Ball (2003) writes:

The novelty of this epidemic of reform is that it does not simply change what people, as educators, scholars and researchers do, it changes who they are. (Ball, 2003, p. 215)

Ball explains that these changes occur through the introduction of a global neoliberal reform 'package' consisting of three interrelated 'policy technologies', namely the market, managerialism and performativity (Ball, 2003, p. 215) and that these reforms serve to re-align the public sector according to the methods, culture and ethics of the private sector (p. 216). Ultimately, such reforms serve to ready the public sector for privatisation and commodification. However, Ball (2003) specifically points out that these reforms do not only represent technical or structural shifts but are "*mechanisms for reforming teachers*" (p. 217). This aim to reform teacher subjectivities is what Ball (2003) terms "*the struggle over the teacher's soul*" (p. 217)

Drawing on a Bernsteinian framing, Ball suggests that the new policy reforms, while focused on devolvement, do not represent de-regulation or a relinquishing and abandonment of power and control. Instead, these reforms should be interpreted as "re-regulation" (Ball, 2003, p. 217). They introduce new modes of control in which the exercise of power becomes 'less visible'. New managerialism represents a weaker *framing* but stronger *classification*. In a manner, each individual teacher becomes their own police officer or inspector.

The policy technologies of the market, management and performance avail particular subject positions such as 'entrepreneur' or 'competitor' which are accompanied by particular disciplines such as 'competition' and 'comparison' (Ball, 2003, p. 218). When teachers' identities are recast in this way the focus is shifted toward the performative (outward-focused displays of what the system values) and such performance and competition displaces professional judgement and cooperation (p. 218). Together with this displacement of culture, value and ethics, collaborative forms of teacher organising such as the trade union is replaced with an allegiance to corporate

culture and corporate organisations. In the final analysis, Ball describes the process as one of colonisation of teachers lives and work:

The space for the operation of autonomous ethical codes based in a shared moral language is colonized or closed down. (Ball, 2003, p. 226)

Writing about teacher resistance to history curriculum in the UK, Smith (Smith, 2020, p. 2) suggests that a shared counter-hegemonic *discourse* was a critical element to unite teachers and in resisting the curriculum. Smith argues that for large scale resistance (movements) to be mobilised, a unifying counter-narrative is required, to lift contestation from micro-level to macro-level engagement. Critiquing interactionist accounts of resistance, Smith (Smith, 2020, p. 3) argues that while “micropolitical action can be effective, it is unlikely to be transformative” because such resistance tends to be too localised or because such resistance lacks a unifying counter-narrative. Smith (2020) draws on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony, which emphasises how social institutions define “the boundaries of the thinkable and the unthinkable”, in order to argue that the coherence of a counter-hegemonic discourse together with the existence of a teaching community or association for history teachers, enabled teachers in UK to effectively resist a curriculum that privileged the status quo.

White (2020) more recently deploys Fraser’s ‘Rethinking the Public Sphere’ and the concept of the ‘counter-public’ arena in a particularly helpful way concerning teacher’s work. White uses the empirical example of the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) in contrast to Teach for America (TFA). Following Fraser’s logic, White suggests that both these groups construct new discourses that frame teachers work in different ways: she calls these ‘teacher publics’. However, what is particularly helpful in terms of critical scholarship is that she examines the content of these discourses also and suggests that it is inadequate to view these two discourse communities both as “counter-publics” or “counter-discourses”. White (2020) suggests that while both groups are seeking change to the status quo, it is more useful to describe as **counter-public** the case of the Chicago Teachers Union, where top-down bureaucratic approaches are contested and social movement unionism was promoted. In the case of Teach For America, White suggests the term **alternative-public**, because the change sought only shifts power shifts toward private philanthropy. The differentiating factor for White (2020) between a counter-public and an alternative-public then, is that an alternative-public, while working to promote change, lacks a counter-hegemonic framing and does not build power among marginalised groups. This might also be compared with Cuban’s (1988) first-order and second-order changes — whereas a counter-public seeks to promote fundamental changes in design, alternative-publics seek

incremental improvements of the existing design. White's (2020) empirical example of the two teacher organisations also illustrates how different discourses which emerge from and circulate within different communities produce different dispositions.

Writing about teacher identity in South Africa in the 1980s, Kihn (2002) says that "the system of beliefs, or dominant ideologies, governing schooling and teachers impact upon the ways in which teachers teach and act, and the ways in which they organise" (p.325). Kihn (2002) argues that the teacher movements of the 1980s had reshaped how teachers' identity was conceived by interrupting traditional and apolitical conceptions of the role of the teacher, and that these contestations over teacher identity took place in relation to the lived realities such a student boycotts and anti-apartheid struggle. Kihn contrasts this new professionalism with the traditional professionalism which viewed politics and education as separate matters, highlighting for example, between older entities such as the CTPSA in contrast to TAC, and also the 1991 conservative establishment of NAPTOSA which was set up in opposition to the democratic teachers organisation SADTU. The new professionalism which Kihn describes, rejected neutrality and instead drew from the traditions of Marxism and the school of critical pedagogy (such as the work of Paulo Freire) which took into account both power imbalances and ideological analyses. As Kihn (2002) express: "The new ideology of teacher professionalism wedded schools to society, evoked understandings of power, and refused to isolate the individual child from his or her political context" (p. 329).

These perspectives which highlight the power of discourse, align with Bourdieu's work on language and symbolic power, where he mentions that: "*Politics begins, strictly speaking, with the denunciation of this tacit contract of adherence to the established order which defines the original doxa; in other words, political subversion presupposes cognitive subversion, a conversion of the vision of the world*" (1991b, p.127-128). The struggle over what it means to be a teacher is a form of classification struggles. In this regard, the South African case is interesting, because as Bourdieu (1991) suggests, dominant individuals are often hard at work to restore *the silence of the doxa* and failing that, to find reactionary substitutes in the face of heretical discourse. South Africa's transition moment, which was alive with possibility, was also such a time of dominants seeking new ways to preserve the existing social divisions and hierarchies. The neoliberal GEAR economic framework which has remained dominant since 1996, despite its failings, has powerfully reshaped discourses about schooling and the work of teachers.

Rooted in the above discussion about the constitutive power of discourse to produce new teacher identities, the section below illustrates how the metaphors which are used to describe the role of the teacher signal much larger macro-discourses about the purposes of education and teaching.

Images of the 'good' teacher

Meaning-making as shown above, can also crystallise in particular images or metaphors which are deployed in how different state, non-state actors, and teachers themselves describe the role. Competing visions of the ideal society invoke different discursive frameworks and visions about education and the role of the teacher in society. How the 'ideal' is imagined in society tends to exert a significant influence over the structures, policies and practices that shape our everyday lives. Similarly, how we imagine or think about the 'ideal' in relation to education and schooling, informs what we do with, in and for schools. For this reason, it is helpful to consider how existing reforms in education and schooling are always filtered through competing ideologies or ideas about what kind of society we hope for, what kind of student we hope to produce and what kind of teacher we believe is required for the task.

The table below explores some of the metaphors deployed in literature concerning teachers and education. The metaphors the authors use, though frequently binary, invoke vastly different ways in which the role of the teacher might be conceived and beneath them sit vastly different imaginings about the present and the future which people imagine they are building together. For example, if teachers are expected to be agents of the state, can they engage in critical practice? And if we consider the manner in which the state clamps down on critical teachers, are such teachers like fugitives in their own classrooms? Do we want teachers to be enemies of the state that provoke students to imagine a new world, or do we want teachers to be 'professionals' preparing students for the market?

In the table below, some examples are offered about how teachers, their work and the purposes of education could be imagined and how the different ways of imagining the teacher's role can also be opposed to each other. While I do not necessarily wish to emphasise a simple binary opposition here, I do use the table to indicate that the role of the teacher can be and has at various times been imagined as in alignment with or in opposition with the state, as apolitical and as deeply political. These different ways in which the teacher's role is imagined are not merely abstract concepts but must be assumed to also have profound implication in terms of how people embody the role of the teacher. In the case of the table below, the metaphors and images are

drawn from critical literature, but these kinds of images may also be found for example in popular films, novels and even social media.

<p><u>Teacher as:</u></p> <p><u>“specialized technicians within the school bureaucracy”</u> (Giroux, 2010, p. 36)</p> <p>- instrumental/technical rationality</p>	<p><u>Teacher as:</u></p> <p><u>“transformative intellectuals”</u> (Giroux, 2010, p. 37)</p> <p>- as promoters of democracy and critical/dialogical engagement - broader school of critical pedagogies</p>
<p><u>“bureaucratic</u> accountability” (Biesta, 2015, p. 83)</p>	<p><u>“democratic</u> accountability” (Biesta, 2015, p. 83)</p>
<p><u>Education for:</u></p> <p><u>the market</u> (whether the factory or the fourth industrial revolution).</p>	<p><u>Education as:</u></p> <p><u>political</u> - with the purpose of forming the capacities to transform society - and of working toward social justice.</p>
<p><u>“education for domestication”</u> (Dorn, 2013, p. 53)</p>	
<p><u>Teacher as:</u></p> <p><u>dispositif of government</u> – Foucault via (Ball, 2017)</p>	
<p><u>Teacher as:</u></p> <p><u>Agent of the state</u> (Lachica Beunavista, Stovall, Curammeng, & Valdez, 2018)</p>	<p><u>Teacher as:</u></p> <p><u>Enemy of the State and the Fugitive Space of the Classroom</u> (Lachica Beunavista et al.,</p>

	2018)
<u>Teacher as:</u> Professional (Kihn, 2002)	<u>Teacher as:</u> Comrade (Kihn, 2002)
<u>Education for Barbarism (Tabata, 1959)</u> <u>“The bantu-ized teacher” (p.39)</u>	<u>The “undesirable teacher” (Tabata, 1959,</u> <u>p.39)</u>
<u>‘the educator as a teaching machine’ (Hung,</u> <u>2018, p. 170)</u> <u>“blindfolded curriculum executors” (Hung,</u> <u>2018, p. 170)</u> <u>“tools of government — obedient and</u> <u>conservative” (Hung, 2018, p. 168)</u>	
<u>Paulo Freire – teacher as ‘depositor’ in a</u> <u>‘banking model’ of education. (Freire,</u> <u>2014/1970, p. 72)</u>	

The metaphors and descriptions tabulated here and the conflicting images of the ‘ideal’ or ‘good’ teacher which they presuppose, may be re-conceptualised in a Bourdieuean approach as reflecting symbolic struggles over the role and task of the teacher in school and society. In addition, reframing them as symbolic struggles invites reflection about how the role of the teacher was imagined, by teachers, during apartheid, as well as about how reconfiguration of the political field post-1994 and attempts to align the purposes of schooling to the market have washed into struggles over the definition of the teacher within the field of education.

On Activity (Processes)

Montaño, et al. (2002, p.265) argue that “the process of becoming a teacher activist occurs primarily in alternative sites of learning or communities of practice”. Drawing on sociocultural theories of learning they present an argument that teacher activist identities are shaped through active participation in social change projects beyond the site of the school (Montaño et al. 2002, p.266). Invoking the work of Paulo Freire and the broader school of critical pedagogy, they adopt a very particular description of the teacher-activist that is built upon the concept of praxis, arguing that “conscientization is not enough to effectuate change” (2002, p. 266). Their work is helpful in thinking about the research question because it prompts questions about whether teachers are engaged in activism outside of the classroom and about what communities of practice actually exist amongst teachers. In this manner, Montaño et al. (2002) presents a similar way in to Judyth Sachs although in a more applied manner. Montaño et al.’s “alternative sites of learning” may be somewhat analogous to Sach’s ‘discourse communities’ although “discourse” encompasses more than organisational groupings.

Montaño et al. (2002) and others who emphasise sites of learnings or communities of practice (see Lave & Wenger, 1999; Wenger, 1999) offer useful ways for considering the role of alternative sites in the production of identity. In the case of this study, I have attempted to re-conceptualise this within a Bourdieuean sociology by focusing on the ways in which such communities contribute to a process of socialisation or conditioning of the habitus through experience, and also facilitates the acquisition of new cultural capitals.

On Structure (Situation)

Jacklin (2001) writes about teachers, identities and space, highlighting how teacher identities are constructed in relation to and affected by markers of race, gender, class, as well as by spatial arrangements. Jacklin (2001, p.27) explains that teacher identities and experiences are shaped “at the level of language and meaning and at the level of social organisation and social practices”. Jacklin emphasises an important point: that people do not necessarily take up positions or stances ‘consciously’ but that most frequently, “people’s understandings and choices are limited by the sets of meanings to which they have previously been exposed” (Jacklin, 2001, p. 15). However, more clearly articulating the interrelationship between meaning, spatial practices and spatial organisation, Jacklin writes that “we *expect* to find dilapidated schools in rural areas, and more often than not we *find* what we expect because that is how resources have been distributed” (Jacklin, 2001, p. 28). Jacklin’s (2001) arguments weave together the complex interrelationships

between meaning, activity and arrangements. Her emphasis on spatial organisation and reorganisation suggests that closer investigation into the relationship between teacher identities, spatial arrangements and power relations in society is a productive line of questioning. The manner in which Jacklin (2001) connects identity to 'arrangements' or 'organisation' is indicative that identity constructions do not float-free, or rather, they are not without some anchoring or relationship to the spaces in which teachers find themselves. The account is not one which privileges structure, it is a relational account, though the aspects highlighted here are still relevant.

Vally (2018), exploring differences between South Africa in the seventies and eighties and exploring the marginalisation of social movements and activists in South Africa, argues that such shifts, have much to do with the social class. Vally (2018) writes:

Neglecting social class has contributed to the failure in addressing and overcoming the deep inequalities that characterise the South African education system. In a linked way it is imperative to question how and why social movements and social actors on the ground, who initially exerted a strong influence on policy formulation and critique, were largely marginalised once policies were institutionalised. The trajectory of the latter trend, related to the class nature of the post-apartheid state and the political economy of the transition from apartheid to democracy, I argue, is key to the seemingly intractable problems we face (Vally, 2018, p. 2)

Vally (2018) considers how local and international literature that highlighted class reproduction, as well as key texts such as Sennet & Cobb's (1972) 'The Hidden Injuries of Class', Bowles and Gintis's (1976/2012) 'Schooling in Capitalist America' and Willis's (1977/1981) 'Learning to Labour' as well as the work of Henry Giroux and Michael Apple had informed a "radical approach" (or discourse) in South Africa. Locally, for example, Vally (2018) cites Christie and Collins (1990, p.182) writing about Bantu Education:

...the central continuing feature remains, namely that schooling for the indigenous people of South Africa is in the main for the purpose of reproducing a certain kind of labour, as required by the particular form taken by the accumulation process at a particular time.

Vally's (2018) observations about the lack of class-based analysis in post-Apartheid South Africa and the favouring of technocratic approaches in policy-making, whilst they do not directly engage with notions of teacher-identity, are relevant because they highlight how the very mechanisms that are meant to enable democratic participation more than often limit genuine participation from the most marginalised communities. Additionally, in the present regime, which is more receptive to formal processes of policy enactment, it becomes clearer how certain voices may be side-lined. Perspectives such as Vally's more clearly privilege structure and class-based based analysis. Such analysis also raises questions concerning the incorporation of an emerging Black middle

class into more privileged spaces in an unequal system and the effects of this on democratic social movements.

For Bourdieu, structure translates as 'field': individuals are situated or positioned in fields on the basis of the capitals which they have amassed and are able to mobilise to gain advantage in the field. Quite pertinently, Bourdieu also views schooling as a relatively autonomous field, implying that while the field of education is a bounded space, it is also influenced by the broader field of power (or the political field) in which it is situated. Given this, we can reframe some of the issues presented in this study as being related firstly to the position of the teachers in this study who are marked as 'coloured' teachers under apartheid, and secondly to the changing position of a fraction of society within the post-1994 reconfiguration of the field of power. With Bourdieu, we can then assume a degree of homology between such positions and the dispositions and stances of teachers. However, what is also evident in this study, is, that like the teachers I interviewed, it is also possible for individual actors to act in the interest of others and to eschew speaking their position.

This section on teacher identities has explored how the making of teacher may be understood from the perspective of theoretical traditions which emphasise either meaning-making (where discourse constructs and produces new subjectivities and identities), activity (where teachers re-make their identity through participation in alternate sites of learning) or structure (where dispositions tend to correspond to positions). Following now, is a discussion and definition concerning teacher-activist identity (or disposition) in particular, which helps to provide clarity on how the notion of teacher activism has been deployed in this study.

On teacher-activism and resistance

In this section, I explore how i) all activism is resistance, but ii) all resistance is not the same as activism as defined in this study. In addition to this, i) all resistance is fuelled by imagination, but ii) not all resistance is infused with a radical/critical imagination which is a focal point for this study.

Since a significant focus of this study concerns the formation of teacher 'activist' identities, it is important to consider how teacher-activism has been defined in literature on teaching, education and resistance, and to position this study within the discourse on activism.

Resistance is often defined fairly broadly, including notions of 'self-defeating resistance' (Willis, 1977) or wilful non-compliance, including foot-dragging and deception (Scott, p. 16). Such

inclusions in defining resistance are significant and important because they provide us with a means to look beyond the surface of everyday behaviour and to avoid the traps of misrecognition that so frequently end up positioning the behaviours of marginalised and disenfranchised groups as 'delinquent'. In this view, the 'disruptive' student or the 'non-compliant' teacher may both be seen to be responding to the oppressive conditions which they find themselves in. This is a productive line of inquiry and one which highlights the agentic behaviour of marginalised groups, yet, the tendency to read all transgressive acts, as 'acts of resistance' may also have the effect of reducing resistance to simple non-compliance rather than requiring a critique of oppression and a motivation toward social justice. Indeed, even Willis (1977) and MacLeod (1987/2009) explain how the self-defeating resistance of 'the lads' and 'the hallway hangers' still end up reproducing the same inequalities and oppressions.

Delgado Bernal (1997) offers a useful typology of resistance which defines four types: reactionary, self-defeating, conformative and transformative. The first type, reactionary behaviour, is described simply as oppositional 'behaviour' and not 'resistance' since it lacks a critique of oppression and is not motivated by social justice (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p. 317). The second type, self-defeating resistance includes a critique of oppression but lacks an interest in social justice (Solorzano & Bernal, 2001, p.318). Conformist resistance, the third type, is motivated by social justice but lacks a critique of oppression and systemic injustices. The fourth type, transformational resistance is described by Solorzano & Bernal (2001) as having "both a critique of oppression and a desire for social justice" (p. 319).

Delgado Bernal (1997 as cited in Solorzano & Bernal, 2001) further extends this typology by the inclusion of distinctions between 'internal transformational resistance' (p. 324) which may best be described as the behaviour of someone who attempts to manoeuvre within the system. It appears as conformist but has a social justice agenda. External resistance on the other hand is reflected in "a more conspicuous and overt type of behaviour" (p. 325). The inclusion of these distinctions presents a helpful reminder, to look beyond the surface again and recognise that transformational resistance need not always be articulated in the most overt and openly visible forms.

Drawing on the concepts of Pierre Bourdieu and Nancy Fraser, Mills et al. (2019, p. 4) describe "activism-as-disposition as the tendency or inclination to struggle against the social order or doxa". Their study explores the formation of activist dispositions within the context of three differently positioned schools, one elite school, one public school serving mainly refugees and students of lower socioeconomic status and one disadvantaged Systemic Catholic school. The study

highlighted how different activist dispositions articulated in ways that were closely aligned to the context of the school and they interpreted such relationships using Bourdieuan concepts, suggesting that the “fields within which teachers practice are structured social spaces where complex relationships exist between the field’s objective conditions and subjective individual dispositions” (Mills et al., 2019, p. 13). In their study, Mills et al. (2019) employ Nancy Fraser’s (1997) conceptualising of affirmative (liberal-democratic, welfarism) and transformative (aiming to address underlying structural inequalities) social justice. They also suggest that these two types of activism can have an internal orientation, pertaining to issues within the domain of schooling or an external orientation, pertaining to social structures beyond schools (Mills et al., 2019, p. 4). By including such internal/external orientations to Fraser’s work, they construct a typology of activist dispositions that provides a meaningful way to analyse ‘activism-as-disposition’ in relation to how schools are positioned. Mills et al. (2019) work is relevant because it suggests that structure and positionality constrain the kind of activist dispositions which teachers adopt. Such constraints do not determine behaviour and stances but still powerfully influence how teachers act. Mills et al. (2019) pose a pertinent question when they ask:

If then, as we propose, there is a relationship between context and the activist stance of teachers, how can we facilitate movement between forms of activism? Particularly in question here are the problematics of moving from an affirmative to a transformative stance, irrespective of whether that is internally or externally focused (2019, p.14)

Engaging with the manner in which these authors have mapped ‘frameworks’ or ‘typologies’ of resistance/activism helps to better articulate what is implied in this study by the term ‘teacher-activist’. A teacher-activist in this study, is taken to reference teachers who a) are motivated by concern for social justice, b) have a critique of social oppression, and c) are engaged in transformative activism both within the classroom (internal) and outside the school gates (external). As a matter of fact, this definition also maps over Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of the ‘public intellectual’ who together with others, engages in the public sphere and affairs of the city, bringing to bear their cultural capital to make explicit and defend against symbolic domination (Bourdieu, 1998; 2000; 2002).

What this literature review has sought to accomplish, is firstly to position this study as a ‘Bourdieuian’ study which proceeds from a relational ontology and which favours the notions of ‘symbolic violence’ and ‘practical reason’ over more structuralist notions of ‘false ideology’. This will be elaborated further in the next chapter. Second, it has demonstrated through the literature, that Bourdieu is both a theorist of reproduction and a theorist of social transformation, and is

therefore useful in analysing both times of stability and times of crisis, or, times when heretics or prophets might be heard and times when heretical discourse struggles to find an audience. It has considered how counter-publics offer spaces for reflexive thinking and the cultivation of a collective imagination. Finally, it located this study in a broader conversation about the emergence of teacher-activism, as well as struggles over the identity of the teacher in society.

3. Theoretical and conceptual framework

In the literature review, I have examined theories of ideology, tracing very broadly the developments in thinking from Althusser to Bourdieu, I have engaged with the concepts of imagination, as enabling new thought and action, and imagined community as the collective space in which imagined futures are worked out, and I have explored typologies of resistance and activism that have enabled me to more clearly define what is implied by the term “critical teacher-activist” as I have deployed it in this study: that is a teacher having a critique of oppression, a desire for social justice, and who is engaged in transformative activism both inside and outside of the classroom. Arising from the literature review are tensions concerning a) how different theorists emphasise either structure or agency in the production of identities, b) the possibilities and constraints of imagination and action and c) the emergence of the activist disposition.

This research has been constructed as a Bourdieuean study, drawing on the principle of relationality as expressed in Bourdieu’s sociology. Given this approach, there are a few critical assumptions which will help readers to grasp some of the analytical and interpretative decisions which I make in the later chapters of this project. The first of these relates to the manner in which Bourdieu has at different times described his own work, as a “constructivist structuralism” or “structuralist constructivism” (Bourdieu, 1990/1987, p.123). The meaning of this is that the approach proceeds from the recognition that there is a social genesis of the perception of agents. This means that even when there is variance between the dispositions and perspectives of individual agents, there will be a range of dispositions which are identifiable and related to the broader social milieu. It also means that as researchers, we cannot take for granted and accept at face-value what individual agents say. For the researcher, what the participant ‘says’ is data that must be analysed like another kind of data. Working with this data in a Bourdieuean manner requires a cognisance of relationships between the subjective and the social and making an effort to describe the field in order to understand its effects on individual perception. Rather than privileging one or the other pole, or moving in a pendulum motion between these two poles, Bourdieu attempts to escape - or rather collapse - the binaries between objective and subjective, and between structure and agency. His sociology encourages a dialectical understanding that, while objective social structures constrain action and perception, the individual actors’ representations and actions also modify social structures. Secondly, Bourdieu recognises a relationship between words and things, between symbolic visions and social structures, and furthermore views the social as a product of symbolic struggles. In this manner, Bourdieu offers

a theory of change which involves critiquing and making explicit principles of vision which are often implicit and concealed, and which are the product of what he describes as a 'theory effect' or 'knowledge effect' based on position in the field and a corresponding taken-for-granted 'feel for the game'. Making this explicit opens up the possibilities for alternative social imaginings and arrangements. This differs in important ways from the ways in which "ideology" is employed in other theoretical frameworks. For Bourdieu ideology is not explicit. In fact, there is no "ideology" to the extent that the actors themselves may be unable to declare one (e.g. "I'm a liberal" or "I'm a Marxist-Leninist"). Rather, the "ideology" operates below the surface, is naturalised, embodied in practice and articulated through habitus (e.g. "that's how life is"). This does not imply that the researcher occupies a privileged position standing at some Archimedean point from which they are able to see the world objectively. Rather, encouraging reflexivity on the part of the researcher, Bourdieu suggests turning back the critical gaze onto oneself and recognising the conditions under which the interpretation itself is made. Lastly, as a field theorist, Bourdieu understands practice in relation to habitus (individual and group dispositions), capital (which also positions agents in the field) and field (a bounded space in which struggles over particular stakes play out). The summarising formula which Bourdieu (2007, p101) offers in *Distinction* is: "[(habitus)(capital)] + field = practice".

Bourdieu's 'theory as method' has provided a heuristic framework to guide my research process. In attempting to grapple with the question of "emergence" of teacher activists and teacher organisations, I have drawn on some key Bourdieuean concepts, namely habitus, capital and field, which are recognised as central to Bourdieuean work and which have dominated Bourdieuean research projects. This has enabled me to follow along a path of dotted lines, asking who the actors are, how were they positioned within the field, and what was the context or time-space arrangement in which the stories occur? I have however also made a conscious endeavour in this project to incorporate lesser-used Bourdieuean tools such as "social gravity", "heretical discourse" and the struggle over "legitimate vision" in order to re-situate Bourdieuean sociology and method within the political project of Bourdieu – it is Bourdieu after all who writes about struggles, weapons, combatants, martial arts, violence and self-defence. As productive as a project might be when focusing on a single concept (habitus or field for example), I suggest that there is value in analysis and interpretation which puts Bourdieu's concepts back into relation with the systematic understanding that he developed and attempted to put into practice in his own research projects analysing various fields such as education, art, media, politics, etc.

Taking into account this approach of 'theory as method', I will now introduce the key concepts which have been used to construct and guide my research. I also explain how these concepts have been operationalised in the study.

Habitus

The social game is regulated, it is the locus of certain regularities. Things happen in regular fashion in it; rich heirs regularly marry rich younger daughters. That does not mean that it is a rule that rich heirs marry rich younger daughters — even if you may think that marrying an heiress (even a rich one, and a fortiori a poor younger daughter) is an error, or even, in the parents' eyes for example, a misdeed. I can say that all my thinking started from this point: how can behaviour be regulated without being the product of obedience to rules? (Bourdieu, 1990a, p. 64)

The above quote from *"In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology"* highlights an aspect of social reality that Bourdieu attempts to grasp in the idea of 'habitus' — that the environments or fields within which we exist as social agents produce a range of regularities in behaviour, or dispositions, (habitus) that might render agents within a time and a place recognisable to others, but, that the structure of the spaces in which we live do not wholly define or determine what we choose, how we live, and who we become. We are neither free agents nor automatons. Through the notion of habitus, Bourdieu attempts to dispel false binaries between object and subject, and brings together the influences of structure and agency. In his own words, Bourdieu describes this as *"the dialectic of the internalisation of externality and the externalisation of the internality"* (1977, p. 72). Any myth that Bourdieu's theories are deterministic may then be rejected. In fact, Bourdieu himself, rejecting mechanistic 'explanation' of practice, writes:

It is necessary to abandon all theories which explicitly or implicitly treat practice as a mechanical reaction, directly determined by the antecedent conditions and entirely reducible to the mechanical functioning of preestablished assemblies, "models" or "roles"... (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 73)

Similarly, we are not entirely free agents, imposing our will, at our own will, producing the reality we desire. Rather, we are constrained (not determined) by the objective realities of the social structure (organisation of time-space) in which we exist. In this regard, Bourdieu proceeds to explain:

But rejection of mechanistic theories in no way implies that, in accordance with another obligatory option, we should bestow on some creative free will the free and wilful power to constitute, on the instant, the meaning of the situation by projecting the ends aiming at its transformation, and that we should reduce the objective intentions and constituted

significations of actions and works to the conscious and deliberate intentions of their authors. (ibid. 1977, p. 73)

Habitus is therefore both a “structured structure” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.72) conditioned by the field and the agent’s position within the field, as well as a “structuring structure” generating a range of practices, yet in relation to the agent’s conditions of existence. Bourdieu explains this double relation between habitus and field, as a relation of both conditioning and cognitive construction in *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*:

On one side, it is a relation of conditioning: the field structures the habitus, which is the product of the embodiment of the immanent necessity of a field (or of a set of intersecting fields, the extent of their intersection or discrepancy being at the root of a divided or even torn habitus). On the other side, it is a relation of knowledge or cognitive construction. Habitus contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 127)

Habitus will be operationalised in this study by investigating the positions that particular teachers came to occupy within the field (as critical teachers and as organisers), how they got there (how did they play the game?), and from what original position in social space (who were they? And what capitals did they bring to the field?).

Field

Thinking in terms of fields requires a conversion of one's entire usual vision of the social world, a vision interested only in those things which are visible ... In fact, just as the Newtonian theory of gravitation could be developed only by breaking away from Cartesian realism, which refused to recognize any mode of physical action other than impact, direct contact, in 'the same way, the notion of the field presupposes that one break away from the realist representation which leads one to reduce the effect of the milieu to the effect of the direct action that takes place in any interaction. It is the structure of the relations constitutive of the space of the field which determines the forms that can be assumed by the visible relations of interaction and the very content of the experience that agents may have of them (Bourdieu, 1982, p. 41; Bourdieu 1990c, p. 192, as cited in Hilgers, 2015).

Bourdieu’s concept of ‘field’ tracks with a theoretical development which cuts across disciplinary divides. The work Bourdieu does within the ‘discipline’ of sociology is homologous to epistemological shifts in physical science, mathematics and psychology. Hilgers and Mangez (2015, p. 3) explain that field theory “rejects an absolute space-time, which, by definition, would have to refer to an individual object, in favour of a relational space-time that no longer designates an individual but a system of relations”. Field theory therefore represents an epistemological

perspective in which “social reality is conceived of as fundamentally relational” (Hilgers & Mangez, 2015, p. 2)

Bourdieu’s use of field is also influenced by the work of Gestalt psychology and in particular the work of Kurt Lewin who treated behaviour as a function of both individuals and the environments in which they are located. In Lewin’s (1935) ‘Dynamic Theory of Personality’, he explains the difference in how environments are treated in Aristotelian and Galilean dynamics and argues that the latter’s understanding of the role of the environment should also inform how environments are treated in relation to understanding personality:

For Aristotelian concepts, the environment plays a part only in so far as it may give rise to “disturbances,” forced modifications of the processes which follow from the nature of the object concerned. The vectors which determine an object’s movements are completely determined by the object. That is, they do not depend upon the relation of the object to the environment, and they belong to that object once for all, irrespective of its surroundings at any given time...In modern physics, on the contrary, not only is the upward tendency of a lighter body derived from the relation of this body to its environment, but the weight itself of the body depends upon such a relation” (Lewin, 1935, p. 28-29)

For Lewin then, as for Galileo, the situation assumes as much importance as the object itself, the environments (or fields) within which individuals move and the relations between them are as important as the individuals which move in them.

Grenfell (2014, p. 66) draws attention to the French terminology “le champ” which Bourdieu chose to use in describing “field” and offers three analogies to better understand the concept of “field”: 1) the football field (le terrain), 2) the force-field (as in science fiction) and 3) the field of forces (as in physics). Firstly, social fields, like football fields mark a “boundaried site where a game is played” (p. 66). These games are played for particular stakes (p. 67) and “at stake in the field is the accumulation of capitals”. However, unlike football fields, social fields are unequal playing grounds and positions in the field are taken up on the basis of the forms and volume of capital which players have (p. 67). Secondly, social fields, like science-fiction force fields, are “constructed through the erection of a barrier between what goes on inside and what happens outside”. Bourdieu, in describing the economic field in *The Social Structures of the Economy*, describes it as a “cosmos” (p. 5) and a separate universe governed by its own laws” (p. 7) – this speaks to the relative autonomy of fields (in relation to other fields and to the field of power) and the way in which fields develop their own particular logic of practice (p. 68) and doxa (unquestioned, naturalised and accepted truths). Thirdly, social fields are like force fields in physics in that multiple or opposing forces shape the field and define positions within it. Positions

within the social field might be explained by the volume of cultural and economic capital an individual holds, with economic capital trumping cultural capital (p. 70). Bourdieu himself brings together these analogies in the manner in which he describes the field of television in *On Television*:

...a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality, operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies.” (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 40-41)

Invoking Bourdieu’s notion of field in this study requires a reconstruction or remembering of the events, situations, processes and interactions which exert an influence on the individual agents themselves, an understanding of the economic, social, cultural and symbolic capitals which positioned them within the field of teaching in particular yet regular ways. Yet sketching or re-sketching the oral histories of the subjects of this study would tell only stories about how these individuals come to take up positions as teacher activists. What is equally important to investigate in this study is the influence of changes within the field itself: how does changes in the broader field of power invite or invoke different ways in which the role of the teacher may be understood?

Capital

Bourdieu’s understanding of capital is articulated in his famous 1986 essay “Forms of Capital,” where he introduces ‘types’ or ‘species’ of capital in existence and which can be exchanged to generate a profit either directly or through processes of conversion:

*...**economic capital**, which is immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the forms of property rights; as **cultural capital**, which is convertible, on certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of educational qualifications; and as **social capital**, made up of social obligations (‘connections’), which is convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the forms of a title of nobility. (Bourdieu, 1986b, p.16)*

According to Bourdieu, in order to understand the social world, it is necessary to understand the forms of capital and how they operate within particular fields that are relatively autonomous (as in field of education) and within the broader field of power. Aside from positioning actors favourably or unfavourably within the field, capital is “objectified as habitus, and is embodied and realised in practice” (Grenfell, 2014, p. 108).

In this study, cultural capital in the form of 'the capacity for critique' and 'organising capital' was explored as contributing to the formation of the teacher-activists in this study and to their ability to be able to convert moments of crisis into critical moments.

Doxa

Every established order tends to produce (to very different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164)

Because the subjective necessity and self-evidence of the commonsense world are validated by the objective consensus on the sense of the world, what is essential goes without saying because it comes without saying. (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164)

Bourdieu uses doxa to describe the tacit acceptance of the social order on behalf of social agents. It is another way of expressing a 'common sense' knowledge of the world not consciously held but deeply internalised and embodied. It is an accepted knowledge of the world which is shaped by objective realities and which also reproduces it. Where orthodoxy and heterodoxy represent the world of what is debated and thinkable, doxa represents the 'universe of the undiscussed' (ibid., p. 168).

Bourdieu argues that notions of 'false consciousness' as expressed in some Marxist traditions, are inadequate to explain the submission of the dominated (doxic submission) because such notions misdiagnose the problem as intellectual, ideological, or belonging to the "order of representations" whereas doxa relates to "the order of beliefs" (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 177). Changes in habitus therefore cannot be invoked simply by appealing to intellectual agreement when they are forged in particular objective social arrangements.

For Bourdieu, doxic submission is better explained by "the prereflexive agreement between the objectives structures and the incorporated structures' (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 178), than as a result of the ideological apparatus employed by the dominant. For this reason, the ruling order is easily defended:

As a half-wise epigrammatist might put it, the established order is so well defended because one only has to be stupid in order to defend it. (This is, for example, what provides the almost insurmountable social strength of the doxosophers and their opinion polls, based on a not-even-conscious decision to let themselves be guided, in choosing and formulating their questions, in drawing up their categories or in interpreting their findings, by the mental habits and self-evidences of 'common sense'.) (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 182)

This description of doxa as tacit acceptance or perhaps a sort of internalisation of dominant frames of reference might suggest that individuals are once again locked into a structural grid in

which their beliefs are circumscribed by position. Yet, Bourdieu does not understand habitus as destiny or fate (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005, p. 45), it is “a generative grammar but it is not an inborn generative grammar” (p. 46). In fact, Bourdieu reminds us that “in rapidly changing societies, habitus changes constantly, continuously, but within the limits inherent in its originary structure, that is within” (p. 47). When the habitus is confronted with a situation different from the one in which it is formed, the possibility for transformation arises. Bourdieu writes:

There is another difference which follows from the fact that the habitus is not something natural, inborn: being a product of history, that is of social experience and education, it may be changed by history, that is by new experiences, education or training (which implies that long-lasting: they tend to perpetuate, to reproduce themselves, but they are not eternal. They may be changed by historical action oriented by intention and consciousness and using pedagogic devices.” (Hillier & Rooksby, 2005, p. 45)

Times of crisis in particular (like that of May 1968 in France) offer potential moments of rupture, but only potential, not guarantees. Crises may either result in critical breaks from the established order or result in hysteresis.

Functioning like a sort of collective ritual of divorce from ordinary routines and attachments, its aim is metanoia, spiritual conversation. The crisis leads to countless simultaneous conversions which mutually reinforce and support each other; it transforms the view which the agents normally have of the symbolism of social relations, and especially the hierarchies, highlighting the otherwise strongly repressed political dimension of the most ordinary symbolic practices: formulas of politeness, gestures of deference practiced between social ranks, ages or sexes, cosmetic and vestimentary habits, etc. (Bourdieu, 2008, 1988, p. 193)

In this study, doxa is mobilised in order to investigate both the taken for granted assumptions about the social world before and after 1994, as well as the moments of crisis in which such tacit beliefs are exposed. As an example, at the time of constructing this thesis, one school principal faced charges of misconduct for actions taken with the support of the school community during the Covid-19 pandemic. Such an event renders explicit contestations over the role of the teacher in the neoliberal era. In his book *Capitalist Realism*, Mark Fisher (2009) argues that neoliberal capitalism has been successful in installing a “business ontology” in every sphere of society including healthcare and education. The assumption under capitalism realism, Fisher argues is that everything “should be run as a business” (p.3). In the case of the teacher under fire then, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented a moment in which the public must question whether a school leader is to be viewed simply as an “employee” in a business called the department of education, serving “clients” called students, or, whether the school leader is a community leader, accountable to the wider community of which a school forms part. The moment invites the re-drawing of

boundaries and the challenging of accepted policies regulating labour but this does not necessarily imply it will be so. Similar contestations over the role of the teacher took place before 1994, albeit in different ways. For example, when confronted with the dilemma of teaching a racist curriculum or being disciplined by the state, on what basis and understanding of the work of the teacher should teachers have acted?

In the later analysis section, doxa and doxic submission feature in the descriptions of field effects in the post-apartheid era. This is taken up again in the discussion about a symbolic revolution of neoliberalism, where I argue that in South Africa, the neoliberal agenda has established a potent hegemonic vision that apartheid never had.

Classification Struggles and Legitimate Vision

For the sake of this study, doxa as a conceptual tool, which as explained before refers to 'common-sense' understanding, a tacit and taken-for-granted acceptance and a misrecognition of the social arbitrariness which constitutes the existing order, is limited. Doxa has limitations conceptually to the extent that it is unable to grasp the 'productive' symbolic power of alternative social imaginings. This problem becomes apparent when differentiating between discourse that enjoys dominance and subordinated discourses which still have a moving power (the socialist struggle, for example), and it is also apparent in symbolic acts of consecration such as flag-making, anthem-writing. In such examples, subjects may problematise the unquestioned truths of the dominant discourse, as they seek to establish a new order (they engage in classification struggles)

In order to supplement Bourdieu's notion of doxa, I include Bourdieu's discussion of classification struggles, and of social existence as both 'being' and 'perception' (Bourdieu, 2019). What is implied by this is that there is a relatively-autonomous power of the symbolic and that this power is the power of constitution, to name and bring into being. This power to name, or to socially construct meanings have tangible effects. Bourdieu, for example, describes the Occitan nationalist struggle in the following manner:

...the Occitans survived until the twentieth century without knowing that they were Occitans – and the term still makes them laugh; they are not yet fully aware of being Occitans. Someone who addresses the Occitans – because of a vested interest, because of a personal interest in being Occitan, etc. – and says: 'You have a right to know that you are Occitans', relies on objective foundations for his opinion, but they are often not the ones he thinks...I think that there are no very objective grounds for the Occitan movement, except for the fact that the Occitans are stigmatized. Throughout history, many groups

have been formed without any deeper grounding than the stigmatizing effects of a previous symbolic struggle. (Bourdieu, 2019, p. 86)

This description of the manufacture of Occitan identity by Bourdieu might be put into perspective with the work of Benedict Anderson, who describes this construction of the nation-state using the term 'imagined community':

It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion...In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined. (Anderson, 2006, p. 6)

Anderson's (2006) conceptualisation of the nation as an imagined (socially constructed) community, which is not "imaginary" (fabricated or falsified) nor "real" (based on essentialist notions of sameness) may be adequately reframed using Bourdieuean sociology, to the extent that Bourdieu also recognises such categories (including 'nation') as being socially constructed and does not subordinate symbolic (perception and meaning-making) to the objective (being). , Bourdieu himself has described 'the state' as an illusory object which is the product of collective belief:

The state is this well-founded illusion, this place that exists essentially because people believe that it exists. This illusory reality, collectively validated by consensus, is the site that you are headed towards when you go back from a certain number of phenomena - educational qualifications, professional qualifications or calendar. Proceeding step by step, you arrive at a site that is the foundation of all this. This mysterious reality exists through its effects and through the collective belief in its existence, which lies at the origin of these effects. It is something that you cannot lay your hands on, or tackle in the way that people from the Marxist tradition do when they say 'the state does this', 'the state does that'. I could cite you kilometres of texts with the word state as the subject of actions and proposals. That is a very dangerous fiction, which prevents us from properly understanding the state. By way of preamble, therefore, what I want to say is: be careful, all sentences that have the state as subject are theological sentences - which does not mean that they are false, inasmuch as the state is a theological entity, that is, an entity that exists by way of belief. (Bourdieu, 2015, p. 10)

Where Anderson (2006) comments on *maps, museum and census* as cultural artefacts in the production of identity, Bourdieu considers the imposition of *clock time and the calendar, which becomes internalised and therefore invisible*:

In other words, to sum up in advance what I am going to tell you, I would say that the state is the name that we give to the hidden, invisible principles - indicating a kind of deus absconditus - of the social order, and at the same time of both physical and symbolic domination, likewise of physical and symbolic violence. In order to make this logical

function of moral conformity understandable, I need only develop an example that I see as suited to making what I have said up to now apparent. There is nothing more ordinary than the calendar. The republican calendar with its civic festivals and public holidays is something completely trivial, to which we do not [pay] attention. We accept it as a matter of course. Our perception of temporality is organized as a function of the structures of this public time. (Bourdieu 2015, p.7)

For Bourdieu, nation-making might be described as a type of symbolic struggle, a struggle over legitimate vision of the divisions in society. With his example of clock-time, Bourdieu argues that “*revolutions revise the official calendars*” (Bourdieu, 2015, p. 7).

In this study, classification struggles present in a number of ways. The socialist imagination which the teachers in this study ascribe to represent a competing set of symbols and an alternative vision of society, and this frames their struggle against the existing social order. Classification struggles also exist in the teachers’ struggles against racial identities, imposed by the apartheid regime and in their commitment to an alternate, non-racial vision.

I have also explored how the reconstruction of a “South African” identity in the “post-1994” period aligns with reconfigurations of capital in this “post” period. With the (re)construction of South Africa, people are not only called into identification with a new imagined unity (collective) but they are also cast as individuals, or self-interested entrepreneurs, as new identities are constituted within the neoliberal project. Teacher identities then may be refracted through this prism of relations – whereas the teacher in a particular setting in a different moment might have been cast as a community leader, in opposition to the apartheid state, or as a ‘worker’ in opposition to ‘manager’ (labour movement), in the new era some of these oppositions and differences are either rendered invisible or subsumed into the whole, which presents a new array of identities for the teacher/school leader as “CEO” or as “employee” within a project where it assumed that there are no differences in interest.

Toward operationalising the conceptual framework:

The aforementioned concepts of *habitus*, *field*, *capital*, *doxa* and *classification struggles* have been operationalised analytically in this study, through the use of a conceptual short-hand of four analytical criteria, namely, *imagination*, *situations*, *events or critical incidents and processes*:

Situations - field transformations and effects

In the study, situations refer to broader socio-political and historical context. It is a reference to arrangements and social structure. For example, apartheid as characterised by legally and

spatially enforced racialised-capitalism, or, neoliberal capitalism following the GEAR reforms, might be considered as such social situations which have particular defining characteristics even if they are not tightly bounded. It is within or against these situations that actors must live and move and have their being. It is this broader situation and its particular political-economy that produces the range of the possible within a particular time and place.

Imagination - classification/symbolic struggles

Drawing on the discussion in the literature review of the study, imagination is deployed firstly in relation to a collective imagination of what kind of society is desired within particular discourse communities, secondly, a practical imagination of what the purpose of education and the role of the teacher is in relation to such a collective imagination of society. As an example, in a Freirean perspective, where the aim is liberation (relationships that are not based on domination and subordination), the role of the teacher is not to assist students to fit into society but to assist students in the process of transforming society toward more socially just ends. In particular resistance movements, texts like Freire's (2014/1970) '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*' were seminal texts and might be argued to have produced new discursive/imagined communities around the role of education and the teacher. Yet imagination is not only shaped through the written word but also through the kind of performance and theatre which von Holdt (2012, p. 201) highlights as having characterised popular resistance in South Africa, a key example of this being the ritual chanting of "Amandla Ngawethu" (Power to the People) or the ritual unbanning of the ANC. In these performances (or symbolic struggles against the doxa), people are invited to imagine a future which is not yet actualised but which is potentially available through collective action.

Critical incidents (individual and social) - habitus (trans)formation

Events or critical incidents are deployed in two ways in the study, first at the level of the individual in references to particular happenings in the individual's life that produce a sense of disequilibrium and which cause or invite them to change their mind or adopt particular stances (evidence of habitus transformation). An example which comes to mind here is the story of a teacher I once had, who told a story of being in a motor vehicle accident in which she was taken into the ambulance while her friend was refused assistance because of the colour of her skin. The death of her friend that night was a critical moment for her, which she often recalls and which has had profound influence on her life trajectory.

Critical incidents are also deployed in this study to describe inflection points and rupture moments at a broader societal level, such as the 1976 Soweto student protests or 1985 on the Cape Flats.

The interest here is in the potential of these moments of disequilibrium to awaken new possibilities for collective action.

Processes - habitus (transformation) and the acquisition of capital

In the study, the term 'processes' has been deployed in references to organisations, formations and movements which the participants in the study have been part. These might include overtly political organisations such as the Western Cape Teacher's Union (WECTU), sporting associations or religious groups. The term 'processes' is favoured because I want to highlight the reality that individuals do not only join or participate in groups but that these groups are changed by their participation and also that they are changed by their involvement in these groups. They also acquire capital through their participation in such groups. Furthermore, in some cases, what will be referenced are groups in the process of emergence, where the actors make substantial contributions to the formation of these groups. The imagination and expectation that characterises the formation of new groups can often be at odds with what groups eventually become, and, in the study, I have explored these disjunctures in light of the hindsight participants may now have.

4. Research Design

In the previous chapter, I introduced the theoretical framework for my research and laid the foundations for my application of Bourdieuean 'theory as method'. Here I make explicit the elements of my research design which have not been addressed in the earlier, more conceptual chapters. As a bridge between the two sections, I also briefly discuss the Bourdieuean approach to research and the implications this has in terms of the study, as well as the use of the particular research 'method' employed, before mapping out the particulars of this study in terms of participant/case selection, data production and analysis, validity concerns and ethical considerations.

Research Method: Life History/Social Trajectory

The research method that I have employed in this study is that of ethnographic biography or 'life history'. Life history is a qualitative inquiry method that involves the "production, interpretation and representation of storied accounts of lived experience" (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005, p. 156). What distinguishes 'life history' is the manner in which "narrative inquiry joins with a desire to exercise the descriptive and analytic processes of the sociological imagination" (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005, p. 156).

Hatch & Wisniewski (1995, p.125) differentiate life-histories from other narrations by suggesting that: "an analysis of the social, historical, political and economic contexts of a life story by the researcher is what turns a life story into a life history". Life histories, in other words, aim to situate individual stories within a broader temporal context. They are not reductionist accounts. Instead, as Behar (1990, p. 225) explains: "a life history should allow one to see the subjective mapping of experience, the way working out of a culture and a social system that is often obscured in a typified account". Life-histories therefore seek to improve our understanding of the relationships between the personal and the public; between the subjective and the structural.

In practice, life-histories may draw on various sources such as photographs, letters, film, newspapers and archival material. However, the most frequently used primary source of life-history data is the oral history as told in interviews (Shacklock & Thorp, 2005, p. 157). Such interviews, however, differ from other research interviews by placing emphasis on dialogue and narrative construction in which the interviewer is not seeking to simply 'collect' facts or reports but

acts as a 'participant-conversant' involved in the process of re-constructing the narrative (Chambon, 1995).

Bourdieu, research methodology and 'social trajectories'

Building on the previous chapter, I now wish to explicate Bourdieu's general approach to sociology, the study of society, but more specifically, to explain how life-history studies (or 'social trajectories') may be produced in a manner that proceeds from the critical assumptions which Bourdieu makes. I begin with the critical assumptions made by Bourdieu about the social world (non-dualism) and explain how Bourdieu's conceptual tool-kit (habitus, field, capital...) enable a rigorous investigation of the social world and agents in a manner that favours neither structure nor agency but which attempts to understand the interactions between and the limits of both. Following this, I engage with Bourdieu's own critique of life-history as a method with the potential to distort reality or dis-locate subjects from social, historical and political contexts, as well as Bourdieu's proposal for the '*social trajectory*' which re-locates subjects within the social worlds in and against which they are formed (Bourdieu, 1986a). The aim in doing so, is to sketch an outline of how the narratives accounts or 'life-stories' of the teachers who were part of this study have been interpreted.

Non-dualism / double-reality

Bourdieu's methodology rejects dualist constructions such as objectivism/subjectivism, structure/agency and mechanicalism/finalism which he considers as "false antinomies" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 10). He aims to transcend these dichotomies by adopting a "form of analysis designed to recapture the intrinsically double reality of the social world" (p. 11). This is accomplished by invoking macro-micro analysis through the deployment of the concepts of habitus (subject/agent) and field (object/structure) and capital (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 439).

Macro and micro analysis.

Following a non-dualistic view of the social world, Bourdieu's sociology has a strong focus on "macro-level structural effects" (Baur, 2017, p. 44) which is referred to by Bourdieu as the "social field" (p. 44), and an equally matched interest in micro-level individual interactions within and between social groups and argues that these interactions are dependent on people's specific position within the social field. (ibid, p.44). He is concerned with "why and how social change occurs" as well as with patterns of social reproduction and stability (ibid, p.45). Bourdieu describes

people's dispositions as routine, patterned and therefore durable, yet not fixed and determined (ibid, p. 45). Mills and Gale (2007) therefore succinctly explain that:

Utilizing Bourdieu's theoretical perspective to inform data analysis, then, requires researchers to look at the dynamic interaction between individuals and the surroundings in which they find themselves and situate their accounts within a larger historical, political, economic and symbolic context. (Mills & Gale, 2007, p. 440)

Reflexivity

The issue of 'reflexivity' is one which is consistently emphasised by Bourdieu, who rejects positivist sociology and recognises the process of interpretation and construction in research. Reflexivity is the attempt to subject interpretations, constructions and re-presentations of reality to the scrutiny of a critical gaze which is aware of the positionality and stances of the researcher involved. In this regard, Bourdieu writes:

The positivist dream of an epistemological state of perfect innocence papers over the fact that the crucial difference is not between a science that effects a construction and one that does not, but between a science that does this without knowing it and one that, being aware of work of construction, strives to discover and master as completely as possible the nature of its inevitable acts of construction and the equally inevitable effects those acts produce. Bourdieu, Accardo, Balazs, and Beaud (1999, p. 608)

To stress the point even more, Bourdieu calls for "reflex reflexivity" explained as:

...a reflex reflexivity based on a craft, on a sociological "feel" or "eye," allows one to perceive and monitor on the spot, as the interview is actually taking place, the effects of the social structure within which it is occurring (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 608)

Implied in such a description, is the necessity for the researcher to engage in continuous self-reflection throughout the research project and to actively attempt to manage the effects of both their position and presuppositions on the exercise. Reiterating this emphasis on reflexivity, Mills and Gale (2007) suggest that for Bourdieu, there is a concern that "researchers need to recognize these personal biases—their values, experiences and constructions—and acknowledge that these, as well as the historical, ideological moment in which they live, will influence the direction of their research" (p. 439). In the case of this study, given the social standing of the teachers I interviewed, I have taken care to manage projections from prevailing narratives, to resist the urge to see only the hero narrative and, to remember to engage dialogically, critically and reflexively through the points of view that are brought to bear.

Toward a Bourdieuan research methodology.

Wacquant (1998, p. 219) suggests that there are three related principles which guide Bourdieu's study of society, namely: 1) *methodological polytheism*, or the attitude of adopting whichever means of observation and verification which is most suited to the question, 2) *granting equal epistemic attention to all operations*, which concerns checking that each stage of the research is guided by the theoretical framework, and 3) *methodological reflexivity*, which concerns continuous self-reflection and critical engagement with the methodological choices which have been made.

Baur (2017, pp. 47–48) argues that a Bourdieuan research methodology might include the following foci and steps: 1) *self-reflexivity*, which is based on the critical assumption that the researcher cannot occupy a neutral or objective view, is partial and therefore needs to engage in self-reflective work to understand how interpretations are shaped by the researchers frame of reference, 2) *explicating the researchers theoretical perspective*, which implies making explicit the researcher's perspective and framing of the question 3) *reconstructing the socio-genesis*, to define a starting point for the analysis and meaningful periods within the long duration a field, 4) *reconstructing the micro-level for the present*, to identify an individual's position within the field 5) *reconstructing the macro level for the present*, to map the structure of the field and 6) *theoretical synopsis*, which involves triangulating the socio-genesis, the micro-level interactions (*habitus*) and macro-level structure (field).

Baur's (2017) steps attempt to render more explicitly what is demonstrated through the works of Bourdieu and therefore it is not difficult to see how these steps bring together the study of the *habitus*, the study of the field, the position of agents on the basis of their capitals and the concern for reflexive sociology that guides us through the process. While my own study does not follow these steps in such a mechanical fashion, I have ensured that academic rigor and methodical analysis is maintained through the integrative application of Bourdieu's concepts as explained in my theoretical framework.

Bourdieu & Social Trajectories.

As a 'life-history' type research which draws on the conceptual resources of Bourdieu, this study must attend to both the criticisms and the suggestions that are offered by Bourdieu, concerning life-histories as a research method.

Bourdieu (1986a) in his critical essay '*The Biographical Illusion*' warns about the risk of life-histories that attempt to present a life as a series of events along a uni-directional and linear path (1986a, p. 211). He further cautions that the life-history method has a tendency to make the interviewee an "ideologist of one's own life" (1986a, p. 211) because of the inclination of

interviewee's to select significant events and present them in a chronological manner that implies causal linkages, and, because of the biographer's inclination to accept these re-constructions of the interviewee.

In the essay, Bourdieu (1986a) argues for the use of the term "*trajectory*" (social trajectory) as opposed to a *life-history*, defining the trajectory as "a series of successively occupied positions by the same agent (or the same group) in a space which itself is constantly evolving and which is subject to incessant transformations"(1986a, p. 215) — this description of the trajectory obviously aligning to Bourdieu's notion of the 'habitus', a durable set of dispositions which is shaped and constrained by social structures but also constantly in flux, responding to new situations and contexts.

Bourdieu argues that the attempt to make sense of a life without attempting to make sense of the socio-historical, economic and political context in which a life is embedded, is like "trying to make sense of a subway route without taking into account the network structure" (Bourdieu, 1986a, p. 215). This invoking of spatial metaphors, including a 'trip', a 'subway route' and a 'detour', foregrounds the concept of 'field' in Bourdieuean sociology and reinforces the importance of reading habitus in relation to field, and of reading life *in situ*. The point is perhaps best made in the chapter called 'Site Effects' in *The Weight of the World*, when Bourdieu emphasises life as an embodied experience that is tied to both a social and physical space:

As bodies (and biological individuals), and in the same way that things are, human beings are situated in a site (they are not endowed with the ubiquity that would allow them to be in several places at once), and they occupy a place. The site (le lieu) can be defined absolutely as the point in physical space where an agent or a thing is situated, "takes place," exists: that is to say, either as a localization or, from a relational viewpoint, as a position, a rank in an order. The place occupied may be defined as the extent, surface and volume that an individual or a thing occupies in physical space, its dimensions, or better still, its "bulk" (as is sometimes said of a vehicle or piece of furniture). (Bourdieu et al., 1999, pp. 123–124)

While Bourdieu criticises life-history, he also employs it quite extensively in works such as 'Algeria 1960', 'The Weight of the World' and 'The State Nobility' among others. In *The Weight of the World*, he describes the strength of personal narratives, by asserting that "narratives about the most 'personal' difficulties, the apparently most strictly subjective tensions and contradictions, frequently articulate the deepest structures of the social world and their contradiction" (Bourdieu et al., 1999, p. 511).

On handling self-accounts

As mentioned earlier, one particular concern in conducting a study of a social trajectory (or life history), involves the manner in which the self-account of an individual actor is interpreted. Barrett (2015), in exploring how a Bourdieuean sociology might approach life histories, reminds us that for Bourdieu, “insider accounts” are dangerous. Barret (2015) suggest that what Bourdieu fears is that deployments of insider accounts can ‘unwittingly introduce an implicit philosophy of practice as driven by processes of reflective justification, rather than an intuitive “feel for the game”’ (p.2). At stake is the reading of personal narratives or life-stories as accounts derived through reflection rather than the result of habitus formation (disposition). Bourdieu himself writes about this error of interpretation in ‘*The Logic of Practice*’:

They thus conceal, even from themselves, the true nature of their practical mastery as learned ignorance (docta ignorantia), that is, a mode of practical knowledge that does not contain knowledge of its own principles (Bourdieu, 1990b, p. 102).

And further cautions in ‘*The Weight of the World*’:

Social agents do not innately possess a science of what they are and what they do. More precisely, they do not necessarily have access to the core principles of their discontent and their malaise, and, without aiming to mislead, their most spontaneous declarations may express something quite different from what they say. (Bourdieu 1999, p.620)

In the process of ‘narrating’ a self-account, a further problem follows whereby the agents themselves are invited into a process of quasi-distancing and quasi-theorisation, which has the effect of obscuring what happens in the moment (the time of action) and which has the tendency to produce a uniform or smoothed over logic, which discounts the often fragmentary logic and nature of what people actually do and why they do this. Bourdieu (1977) in *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, writes:

Invite by the anthropologist's questioning to effect a reflexive and quasi-theoretical return on to his own practice, the best-informed informant produces a discourse which compounds two opposing systems of lacunae. Insofar as it is a discourse of familiarity, it leaves unsaid all that goes without saying (Bourdieu, 1977, p.18)

These interrogations of life-history as a research method will shape how I approach the research design and the and data production process in this study. Bourdieu’s own deployment of his conceptual toolkit in the *Biographical Illusion* also demonstrates three pertinent issues to deal with when studying the lives of individuals: 1) habitus formation, in relation to 2) field and 3) capital, to which I would add (since I am investigating both the formation of resistance to and the absence thereof), 4) symbolic struggle and doxa.

Research participant (case) selection

The particular selection of teacher participants in this study was important because my initial research aim was to understand both the emergence of teacher activism during apartheid and the relative absence of large-scale and organised teacher activism in the post-apartheid era. Originally, I had intended to engage two sets of teachers, but I abandoned this in favour of focusing on a group of teachers who emerged as activists under apartheid and exploring what might be learned about the question of emergence by a closer investigation of their trajectories in relation to field transformations. The teachers who I interviewed are all fairly well-known to other local school and community activists and all of them played significant roles in the social movements to which they belonged.

When I recruited them into my research project, I did so in a purposive manner, seeking compelling cases of subjects that fit the following description (constructed from the broad typologies introduced in my literature review).

- Teachers
- who have a critique of oppression and
- a commitment to social justice;
- who have demonstrated transformative (as opposed to affirmative or conformist) activism both in 'teaching' and in the context of social movements, and
- who have participated in anti-apartheid struggle.

The reason for selecting participants according to this constructed definition is that it aligns with the rationale of this study. Understanding the making of the teacher-activist identity within the context of total apartheid provides a most compelling account (or 'extreme case') of the interplay between critical incidents, discursive moments, structural arrangements and critical agency.

Data Production

In this study, I have attempted to understand the relationships between situations (field), imagination (symbolic struggle), critical incidents (habitus) and collective processes, and the emergence of teacher activists.. Using life-history as method, I have focused on the life narratives of individuals who might be described (according to the typologies already identified) as teacher

activists. To do so, I have engaged in a series of semi-structured, qualitative interviews with each of the four teachers whom I recruited into the study. These interviews (personal narratives/reconstructions) have in the analysis been complemented with information derived from existing data available in existing institutional archives and publicly available information, allowing me the opportunity to construct a more rich and textured study. Such supplementary information has included the WECTU collection from Political Ephemera Collection Box.20 (UCT Libraries), and publicly available resources from the South African History Archive (SAHA) and South African History Online (SAHO).

Interviews:

Through the interviews, I facilitated discussion that was focused on the four key aspects identified in the study (events, situations, imagination and processes) without being too rigid so as to lose valuable insights that arise within the process of interview. This technique was best suited for this study because the study concerns living individuals, their identity-making and stories of becoming, as well as their subjective experiences and sense-making within the historical time and place, and the events, situations and processes within which they have found themselves at different points in their own lives.

The following question set was used as a guide for my interviews. In the series of interviews, I, however, chose to allow the participants in the study to narrate and frequently to follow along the detours which they wished to explore. I also made significant adjustments in terms of technique - an example of this was to use an archival photograph as a conversation starter. The sets of questions are grouped thematically.

To learn about the background of the participant and degree of access to particular forms of cultural capital:

- What was it like where you grew up?
- How would you describe your childhood upbringing?
- What were your own educational experiences like at home, at school and in other social spheres (religious, sports clubs, etc.)?
- What occupations did your parents and grandparents have?

To learn about the participants' rationale and philosophy of teaching, and the degree to which the participants' conceptualisation of the role of the teacher is informed by critical discourses and counter-cultural politics:

- Why did you decide to take up a “career” in teaching?
- What are your most memorable moments as a teacher?
- Were there any teachers you had in school who had a profound influence on your own life? Who were they, if any? And in what way in particular?
- What is your understanding of the role of a teacher in school and society? Has it changed at all during your career as a teacher?

To understand the inflexion points in the participants life-course which they are able to self-identify as critical moments or turning points in thought and action:

- Are there any moments in your life as a young person when you felt a strong need to stand up for a belief you had or something you felt wronged yourself or other people?
- When did you decide to get involved in political action and resistance?
- How would you describe your first encounters in these processes?
- What did you hope for when you were engaged in this (resistance) work?

To learn about how the participant interacts with situations and events (the arrangements of a particular place and time) and the stances which the participant adopts in response:

- How was your personal and family life affected by the rule of apartheid?
- What did this mean for you in the classroom, in the staffroom and beyond the school?
- Can you describe your experience of the social and political climate in South Africa in the 1980s?
- How did you understand the transition period in the 1990s, particularly after the elections in 1994? Looking back now, do you think about this moment any differently today?

To learn how the participants imagine themselves within the world, and the influences on their own life and political sense-making:

- How would you describe your political ideology or position?

- How do you think you came to this position?
- To what extent are your political, moral, spiritual beliefs shaped by the particular experiences you have had?
- Would you describe yourself as an activist? If so, why? or why not?
- Do you think there is a place for the activist teacher today?
- Do you think it is easier for a teacher to take up a critical position today than before 1994? Or do you think certain kinds of actions are more difficult for teachers today?

To understand the different significant groups to which the participant belonged and how these shape their outlook and action, as teachers:

- What social groups and clubs were you part of in your youth and early career teaching? How did you get involved in these groups?
- What did you hope to gain from joining these groups, or what did you find compelling about them?
- What influence do you think your involvement in these groups had on your work?

Validity

Yin (2011, p. 78) describes a valid study as “*one that has properly collected and interpreted its data, so that the conclusions accurately reflect and represent the real world (or laboratory) that was studied.*” Yin (2011) further adds that the researcher may approach the issue of validity as a problem “*of whether another study, given the same lens or orientation, would have collected the same evidence and have drawn the same conclusions as those in your study.*” These definitions of a valid study are helpful starting points. However, what is most critical to remember within the context of life histories method, is that it is an approach which works with (re)constructed narratives. The aim of such a study therefore is not to reproduce or present any single interpretation as the correct and only valid interpretation but rather, through careful attention to the ways in which the participant narrates, to present both the account of the participant and produce an interpretation of such an account which leverages the theoretical toolkit employed in this study.

Reactivity

One concern to attend to in conducting qualitative inquiry is that of 'reactivity', the influence the researcher has on the setting and the individuals being researched. Maxwell (2013) suggests that attempting to minimise such influence is not a meaningful (or attainable) goal for a study. One should rather attempt to understand how this influence might affect the study and the valid inferences that may be drawn from it (Maxwell 2013 p.124). In this study, the risks are only relevant to the extent that the teachers, now with the benefit of hindsight, may craft their narratives by selecting which stories to share and which not to tell. In my study I have treated this as an aspect of life stories that may not be avoided and have instead proceeded from the critical assumption that what the teachers in the study elect to share, indeed what they may be able to recall and how they wish to be remembered, may also reflect what they value and consider important, and this is significant in its own right.

Bourdieu, validity and reliability

A significant validity concern in conducting research which draws primarily on participants' own narrative accounts, is whether the accounts themselves are "true" and in what ways they may be taken to be "true". In relation to the participants' subjective accounts of their own experiences, there always exists the possible objection of another participant who does not remember or recall events in the same way and holds to different interpretations of the same events. There is also the trouble with accuracy in recall on behalf of the teachers interviewed, which did arise in the course of my research. For example, those being interviewed could not always recall precise dates and times, but were able to recount events and the ways in which they were impacted by them.

While the above examples present particular challenges, some of which could be overcome by some basic 'triangulation' (for example, cross-checking when the Salt River High student march took place, in order to place the event into context), the object of this study was to understand the emergence of the radical habitus and teacher activist identities, and because of this, what matters is how the teachers in this study re-member their own stories because this is the stuff from which they make meaning and construct themselves as an "I". In this regard what participants elect to include or exclude from their own self-accounts, may be treated as what is important to them in how they construct their identity. But this does not mean doing away with any notion of objective conditions, since this would only fall into a second trap of treating the study as a purely phenomenological account. In this regard, I also wish to bring Bourdieu's relational epistemology

to bear on this question, in particular, the value which Bourdieu places on subjectivity within what he constructs as a “rigorous science”:

I have suggested that a strictly rigorous science of social classifications should endeavour to integrate a rigorous theory of objective classification as well as a theory of practical classification that social agents use in their everyday activities. It should go beyond the limits of those over-familiar alternatives in sociological thinking: ‘physicalism’ or semiology, objectivity or subjectivity, realism or nominalism. For instance, it would be easy to show that the principals of theories of social class are divided between these alternatives, one camp claiming to find their classes rooted in the real world, the others reducing them to subjective or at least nominal constructions produced by the researcher. (Bourdieu, 2019 p.64)

When Bourdieu constructs the object of sociological research, he seeks to transcend the binary opposition between objectivist (or realist) research which subordinates meaning-making and practice to social structures, and subjectivist (or phenomenological) research which prioritises the way things appear and are experienced by the subjects of research. Bourdieu sought to do more than oscillate between these two polar positions, and rather to integrate both of these poles into his own method. Bourdieu understands that “the way social subjects represent the social world is part of the objective truth of the social world” (p.67) and that social subjects themselves do not inhabit and experience the world in the ways in which the researcher constructs in their model of the world. Bourdieu helpfully provides an example through an explanation of the economy of the gift, in *Habitus and Field: General Sociology, Volume 2*, in which he cautions against the researcher’s bias/egocentricity in mistaking the model for reality itself.

Here is an example that shows us the difference between the things of logic and the logic of things, as Marx said: when the exchange of gifts is reduced to its logical formula, the model somehow destroys what it describes. Levi-Strauss’s model, which renders the gift and the counter-gift instantaneous, makes it clear that there is no gift without a counter-gift, which is very important, but we need to defend a theory of practical logic that is not the same as logical logic, for it introduces something that logical logic destroys — that is, the sequence of events. Levi Strauss’s model is true on the condition that we acknowledge that it is a theoretical model that confronts a model whose practice follows a different logic. Even if the gift does imply a counter-gift, it is experienced at the moment when it is given as being a one-way gesture, and, even if the counter-gift is a response to the gift, it is seen at the moment when it is made as a generous gesture and not as a response to the initial gift. (Bourdieu, 2020, p. 53-54)

Applied to this study, the subjective accounts of the teachers, each with their own practical vision of the world and characterised as they are by partial views, are in fact part of the “objective” or the “real” and therefore should be taken seriously, and examined in relation to objective conditions

or social structures — this is what I have attempted to do in my analysis by reading the accounts of the teachers in relation to the broader external socio-political and historical conditions.

Research Ethics

Given the nature of life history as a method of research, a few critical ethical concerns arise, none of which are insurmountable but all of which deserve careful attention, reflexivity on the part of the researcher and an attitude of utmost respect for the persons involved.

Authorial Capacity

One such concern is the problem of authorial capacity (of writing somebody else's story) and the challenge of handling self-accounts. The researcher, though engaged in a process of dialogical inquiry and interpretation, has the task of penning somebody else's story. For this reason, the researcher must be careful to adopt a reflexive stance. Behar (1990, p. 323) explains that reflexivity is "*to tell the story of how I came to the privilege of my pen*" - in other words, to be clear about the interpretive frames of reference the researcher holds and how these critical assumptions influence the process. The problem of authorial capacity presents unique ethical considerations that must be taken when considering what constitutes informed consent. I have sought in this project to render as clearly as possible the narratives of the participants themselves, in their own words, and to clearly indicate my own interpretation, on the basis of the theoretical framing employed in this study.

Consent

Concerning interview participants, I have obtained informed consent from each participant in the study via a written letter which each participant was required to sign, acknowledging their agreement to participate in the study before proceeding with my research. Participants held the right to withdraw from the study at any stage, without needing to offer a rationale for doing so, in which case data relating to the participant would not be used in the study. Smythe and Murray (2000), however, argue that informed consent, in the context of narrative research can be problematic in the sense that participants do not always know beforehand what they will share, and that this often depends on the rapport built between the researcher and the participant. In this regard, I adopted their recommendation to not treat informed consent as a "once and for all" event but rather to revisit the issue of consent throughout the research process and for the participants to have the opportunity to choose if they would prefer certain information to remain out of the study.

In my research I utilised voice recordings of interviewees and so I included in my consent form a request for permission to audio record the interviews using a digital recording device. Such recordings were securely stored and used expressly for the purpose of this research project. Doing voice recordings has allowed me to present what the participant said in the most accurate way possible. It is however important to differentiate between the participants' own narratives and my own 'analysis' of their narratives, guided by the theoretical framing I have adopted for this study. The challenge in this regard concerns what Smythe and Murray (2000) identify as the problems of 'narrative ownership' and the 'multiplicity of narrative meaning'. In the final analysis, my analysis and interpretation represents "*an*" interpretation, based on the epistemological assumptions adopted, rather than "*the*" interpretation, and can fairly be defended only on those grounds.

Naming Strategies: Actual names or aliases?

I let him know his name should be Friday, which was the day I saved his life: I called him so for the memory of the time. I likewise taught him to say Master; and then let him know that was to be my name. (Defoe, 2007, p. 174)

Raising concern about the power asymmetry between the researcher and the researched, Wang et al. (2024) contrast this act of objectification in the English adventure novel '*Robinson Crusoe*' with the act of naming participants in research. Recognising such inherent power dynamics, they urge researchers to consider the implications of naming strategies, to be conscious of the ways the particular risks related to the strategies that are employed and, to be explicit in discussing the rationale behind the particular naming strategy that is adopted. In approaching the issue of naming, conflicts often arise between generic 'macro-ethical' principles and guidelines of review boards, and the micro-ethical practices that are grounded in honouring preferences and cultural practices of participants.

Macro and micro-ethical principles and challenges

While ethical review boards and handbooks on qualitative research may propose generic guidelines on the basis of 'macro-ethical' principles, such general principles (e.g. anonymity, confidentiality, do no harm) abstracted from specific contexts and communities, cannot guarantee 'ethical' practice and may at times also be in conflict with more grounded, 'micro-ethical' concerns and challenges (Wang et al. 2024).

Creswell (2013) asserting such macro-principles writes that: "*qualitative researchers need to be mindful of protecting the participants' privacy through masking names and developing composite*

profiles or cases" (p. 60). In contrast, examples of conflict between local concerns and generalised conceptualisations of anonymity and confidentiality, are presented in the work of Gordon (2019), where one participant explained in dismay: "No, why would I want to be anonymous?" (Pratibha Kumari, 2017, as cited in Gordon, 2019). In light of this contradiction, which may present in various ways and for various reasons such as existing cultural practices, personal preferences of the participant or the concern for emancipatory research, both feminist and post-colonial critiques offer helpful arguments in favour of the participant's decision-making about a naming strategy in research.

Feminist standpoint theory: researcher paternalism and marginalisation

Utilising feminist standpoint epistemology, Gordon (2019) argues for the need to move beyond "abstracted notions of ethics" (p.543) and to rather place "care at the heart of research practice" (ibid.). They consider both how anonymity can be a form of erasure, and a form of researcher paternalism. Furthermore Gordon (2019) proposes that: "*Not fully crediting or attributing participants' voice can play a role in replicating experiences of marginalisation and does not allow individuals to address these oppressive structures, which goes against the core aims of feminist research*" (p. 544). While Gordon does not suggest a one-size-fits-all approach to research, they place a strong emphasis on being cognisant of the reality that the assumed 'universality' and 'neutrality' supposed in generic ethical guidelines, are underpinned by unequal power relations, that the act of naming is political and therefore not free from error.

A postcolonial critique: erasure

What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet"
(*Romeo and Juliet*, Act 2, Scene 2, Line 46)

Unlike the scent of the rose, the careless renaming of research participants can have negative consequences according to Allen & Wiles (2016). They suggest that "*renaming participants—the common practice of allocating pseudonyms to confer anonymity—is not merely a technical procedure but has psychological meaning to both the participants and the content and process of the research.*" (Allen & Wiles, 2016, p. 149).

More specifically to the points of anonymity, authorship and **erasure**, Berkhout (2013) suggests that an uncritical acceptance of anonymity "*may undermine the acceptance of such experiences [of vulnerable groups] as evidence and reinforce the kind of epistemic politics that treats some assertions as incontrovertible, while silencing others*" (p.19). In a similar vein Moore (2012)

asserts: *“For much of history anonymity did not protect the vulnerable, but excluded women and others from authorship and ownership of their own words, erasing them from the archive, even from history, and in the process creating vulnerability through rendering people nameless.”* (p.3)

Invoking Bourdieu

Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of symbolic struggles may also be helpful for thinking about what is at stake in naming strategies. Firstly, recognising research as a field, with all the characteristics of a field as already described, implies that only a naive view could fail to grasp the power imbalances which structure the field of research. This recognition of research as embedded within unequal power relations then requires a much broader and all-encompassing research ethic which takes into account the stakes in the game. In layman’s terms, Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of the field enables us to see that there are political consequences for the naming strategies deployed in research. To name is an act of power. Pseudonymity does not protect that research participant from all harm. In fact, it may inflict harm where political marginalisation of particular voices may also be understood as harm. The pseudonym effectively erases the participant out of history, where abstracted, they exist only as composite identities.

In a similar vein, because this project has a double-task of exploring emergence of a militant (radical or activist) habitus and of engaging this more theoretical question through a history from below which takes into account the life trajectories of the four teachers in this study, there is a second struggle at stake. I engage in oral history, precisely because it allows the accessing of accounts which are not dominant, and because the re-remembering of these stories have political potency. There are numerous biographical accounts of the Mandelas but what of the many individuals whose work has contributed to liberation struggle in South Africa? To undertake research that engages their stories and then to render them obscure or invisible, is to do an injustice both to the teachers and to undermine the historical value of this study.

In this study, I have made the decision to use the real names of the four teachers represented. This decision was made because all four teachers in this study have issued their consent to use their real names, and, because I have understood this to be the most ethical decision in relation to the concerns discussed above. In addition, because of the nature of this research and the positions the teachers have held, the use of pseudonyms would be superficial.

5. Biographical sketches

The following set of brief biographical sketches of the teachers in this study shift our focus from the abstract definition of the teacher activist constructed in this study to the lived experience of the teachers themselves. The sketches provide an introduction to the teachers against which the data analysis chapter might be more easily read and better understood, without the reader having to meander too much, for the sake of context-setting, within the analysis chapter.

In designing this study, I have drawn on Delgado-Bernal's (1997) typology which, following Giroux's (1983) work, defines a teacher activist as a teacher who critiques oppression and is motivated toward social justice.

I have also drawn on a typology constructed by Mills, Gale, Parker, Smith & Cross (2019) who define types of activism along two axes. The first axis, drawn from Nancy Fraser's work, differentiates between transformative activism aiming at systemic change and a more welfarist affirmative activism. The second axis, which is their own addition, differentiates between activism that is internally oriented within the context of the school and externally oriented activism which is concerned with social structures beyond the school. Such typologies will inevitably have shortcomings, in the sense that they can be misused to project ideal types or fail to recognise how people move between the neatly organised categorisations. To re-articulate this problem in Bourdieuean terms is simply to say that one must be cautious of mistaking 'the reality of the model' for 'the model of reality'. Such abstractions are however useful in that they provide ways to describe, with greater precision, the kind of teacher-activism which is the basis of this study. Defining teacher activism in this way is not to neglect the everyday resistance of teachers, or to totemise a particular form of activism. Rather, such a definition enables me to speak with greater clarity about a particular kind of activism with regard to both how it emerged in the eighties and its relative absence today.

The four teachers are all well-known teacher-activists from Cape Town, South Africa. Marcus Solomon is a founding member of the Children's Movement and Children's Resource Centre. He was part of the Yu Chi Chan Club with Neville Alexander, Dulcie September and Oillie Abrahams, and was imprisoned for ten years on Robben Island, followed by a further five years of house arrest, under charges of conspiracy for his involvement with the National Liberation Front. Brian Isaacs was the principal of South Peninsula High School for more than 30 years, a school synonymous with New Unity Movement politics and known for its academic excellence. He was

also a founding member and the chairperson of the Western Cape Parent Teacher Student Forum. Clement Meyer is part of a family of sporting champions and organisers in the well-known Stephanians Table Tennis Club and Stephanians Football Club, as well as the non-racial sports organisation SACOS. He was also the chairperson of the Athlone Branch of SADTU. Yousuf Gabru was a founding member of the Western Cape Teachers Union (WECTU) and held the post of MEC for Education in the Western Cape. Like all the other teachers in this study, he was involved in a host of grassroots anti-apartheid movements.

The four teachers have been strategically recruited in this study on the basis of the alignment of their life trajectories with the conceptual categories constructed in this research. While they were all part of organisations involving many people, they all offer exceptional cases in terms of their level of participation in the organisations they belonged to or helped to initiate.

As a researcher, born in 1985 and coming of age in post-1994 South Africa, I am cognisant of the fact that many of the readers of this thesis may have far more intimate and longstanding relationship with the teachers in this study. I do not claim to have strong connections to, or knowledge of, the political organisations associated with these four activists. However, I am not attempting in this project to do a traditional life-history in which I attempt to construct a linear narrative of four teachers, or one in which I attempt to demonstrate an intimate knowledge of the quirks and idiosyncrasies of the individuals involved. Rather, what I have attempted to do is maintain a sharp focus on their emergence as teacher-activists, with the utmost respect for the ways in which they narrated, re-membered and re-constructed their own stories in our interviews and conversations.

Notwithstanding this disclaimer, my contact with the teachers has extended beyond the official 'interviews' for this project. Yousuf joined a reading group I am part of, where he helped us to read Marx's Grundrisse and where I began to see the analytical and 'teacherly' side of Yousuf first-hand: he arrived with carefully written notes and diagrams. Marcus and Clement have both supported the youth work I am involved in and have shared their stories and lessons with participants in this group. Brian and I have kept in touch, as we have both been involved in the Progressive Organisations Formation (POF) and the struggle to reinstate the principal of Heathfield High School, who was removed during a departmental conflict concerning the reopening of the school during the Covid-19 pandemic. I cannot tell a story in the way that speaks to friendships that span decades. But I can offer an account, based on careful data production and analysis, of the trajectory of teacher-activists with a history of involvement in political struggle

for liberation, and whose conduct in the present continue to demonstrate their values. These four men are not only old activists who are nostalgic about the past; they are current teacher-activists who continue to teach and who continue to be activists. While much of the project is about memory, much of it is also about the present.

Below are brief chronological introductions derived from my interviews and supported from secondary sources. These are intended to give the reader an idea of the people behind the voices which come through the interview extracts in the analysis chapters which follow.

Clement

Clement was born in Greenpoint, in Prestwich Street. His family lived in Loader Street, near Bo-Kaap in Cape Town. He lived in Loader Street until he was about six years old, when his family was forcibly removed from the area through the implementation of the Group Areas Act.

He is the eldest of his siblings, with two brothers, Marc and Jerome and two sisters Annemarie and Claire. Their home was a religious Catholic home and the family are able to trace their lineage back to the Philippines.

Clement's family is well known for their involvement in sport. His father - Pedro Meyer – is considered to be a legend of non-racial sport and table tennis in South Africa. His name is synonymous with that of the Stephanians Table Tennis Club which started in 1950 in Loader Street.

When Clement was seven years old the family was forcibly moved to Lansdowne, where the Stephanians Club continued to meet in the double garage of his family's house.

...all the children in the area grew up playing table tennis there, so there was table tennis from the afternoon right through to the evening and also the football club, the Stephanians Football Club, my dad was involved in the juniors so he used to organise the junior players, so the whole neighbourhood we were all very ... we concentrated in that by the house.

In these sporting organisations, Clement acquired skills which arguably laid the foundation for other forms of political organising. As Clement put it:

...they brought us up like, you know, we organised ourselves as juniors. I can remember he taught us basic skills to run our own club like we had our own, we had meetings, religiously we had meetings every week, we had report backs and we learnt the skills like secretarial, chairing meetings and giving reports and all those things right through into our teens.

After moving, Clement attended St. Ignatius Primary School in Claremont and then moved to Turfhall Primary. He attended high school at St Columbus until the first term of his standard 8 (Grade 10) and then attended Livingstone High School from 1980 to 1982

Much of Clement's politicisation occurred in his youth. At Livingstone High School, for example, Clement would have been taught by Unity Movement teachers. During the same period he was a member of the Student Representative Council of the school. In 1983, Clement went to UWC where he encountered several different political traditions. Clement explains:

I was exposed to much, just politics on the campus, it was just broader, everywhere you looked it was different organisations, Azanian students, Congress; Azanian Students Movement and there were other black consciousness organisations and it was just...I never, ever attached myself to any kind of I would say stream or anything, I was more, I would go wherever I felt at that time...I was there at the height of the student struggles '83 to '86.

Clement was also involved in the Lansdowne Youth Movement, Crawford Cultural Society and the Cape Action League. While he expressed reservations about the broad church approach of the UDF, he saw the UDF as the most active in organising and said that it appealed to him as a young person.

On 17 September 1985 Clement was arrested in Belgravia Road in Athlone by Major Dolf Odendaal. Ten students were arrested and taken to the Athlone Police Station. After questioning they were taken to Brackenfell police station where they were forced to do exercises and were beaten. He was arrested again on campus at UWC and was kept in the police van, while police fired on protesting students, until the evening when he was dropped off along the road.

In 1987, Clement started teaching at Groenvlei Secondary School. There, in his early years of teaching, he met teachers who were part of WECTU, which - following a conference in Harare in April 1988 - committed with other unions to forming a national, non-racial teachers union (SADTU). Clement became a Sporting Council officer for SADTU and was later the chairperson of its Athlone Branch.

And obviously during that period, especially before '87 I was organising and going around to schools and I think to organise a union and, you almost look back and I think at that time we [unionised teachers] had much more power than we have now... a number of principals were put there to bring us right, from the department...and they never lasted because we were so strong...how we operated in the school... we [unionised teachers]

basically ran the school and obviously with the learners on the side and the PTAs that we organised. We were basically a People's School.

Following his time as a teacher at Groenvlei, Clement went to London where he taught for two years. When he came back to Cape Town he taught at Plumstead High School, Mount View and Hanover Park before starting at Athlone High in 2000, where he was still a teacher at the time of writing this dissertation.

Marcus

Marcus was born in 1939 in Grahamstown (now Makhanda). He speaks fondly of Albany Road, the main street in the Coloured township. His father was regarded (in South African terms and according to the racial classifications of apartheid) as being an 'Indian', from Natal, although his parents were from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka). His mother was a 'Coloured' woman, with Khoi and Scottish lineage. Marcus's father was Hindu while his mother was a deeply religious woman who raised the children in the Congregational Church. His father was a waiter and his mother worked as a 'housewife'. She had nine children but died with the birth of her last child.

Marcus grew up in Grahamstown. The family moved to Durban for a short while but came back and then moved to Port Alfred, which Marcus considers to be his spiritual home because it is where his mother passed away. Port Alfred is where he attended his mother's church, where preaching happened in Afrikaans and isiXhosa. After his mother passed away, he returned to Grahamstown where he was raised by his aunt, who also religiously attended church.

In 1956, Marcus completed his junior certificate (Standard 8 or Grade 10) at the Rhodes University College Coloured Practising School (RUCCPS) which was used as a teacher training facility for student teachers, and which was renamed Mary Waters High School in 1963. In the two months after completing his training he worked as a train 'bedding boy'.

Garden boys and the kitchen girls, it's groot vroumens, so now today they call them bedding attendants who work on the trains. Of course there's also the kitchen staff, the waiters and so on, but you were the maintenance people, ensure the train is clean, but then you also sell...of course people must buy the beds, they sort of a roll-up bed when you buy your ticket. But there were beds on the train stored in the part of the compartment of the carriage, then you buy your bed for the night or two nights if you travel from Cape...Port Elizabeth to Cape Town, the one night you get on, you travel the whole day and the second night you sleep and on the morning of the second night you land in Cape Town, you arrive, so that's what we used to do. Now that's when I got ...my first trip was to Cape Town and I was blown away, Parada, Hanover Straat and the vibrancy and we got in in the morning and you must go to where you sleep, it's off the station there in

Woodstock. Then that first...after you book in where you're sleeping with other bedding, the beds with the boys, you go to...if you know people you go, and I went to my...two of us we went to Parade, and we spent the whole day on the Parade and the night, it was like, wow, Kaap

In the following year, 1957, Marcus moved to Cape Town to attend Trafalgar High School which he described as “the hotbed of Trotsky’s political teachers, Unity Movement, Anti-CAD...” and where Ernie Steenveld was the school principal. He describes the move to Trafalgar High School as “the beginning of the second phase of my life” and sees himself today as still “on that sort of trajectory” although he has moved away from particular political currents. During his time at Trafalgar, he began attending lectures of the New Era Fellowship, a group of Cape intellectuals who aimed to interrupt ruling-class ideology (see Soudien’s, 2019, *“The Cape Radicals”*).

Marcus matriculated in 1958. In 1959 he went on to attend the Hewat Teachers’ Training College, where he joined the Cape Peninsula Students Union, on which he served as librarian and treasurer of its bursary committee. There, he met Neville Alexander, Abe Fataar, Carl Brecker, Fikile Bam, Arche Mafeje, Pallo Jordan, Kenny Abrahams and the Schimming sisters from Namibia. During that time Marcus also became an associate member of the Teachers’ League of South Africa, which was a category of membership for people studying to become teachers. The CPSU was affiliated with the TLSA and many of the CPSU leadership were from the TLSA.

In 1960, Marcus became a founding member of the African People’s Democratic Union, which later became the African People’s Democratic Union of Southern Africa (APDUSA). In 1961, he was invited by Fikile Bam to join Society of Young Africa (SOYA), which he describes as “the youth league of the Unity Movement”.

After his graduation from Hewat in 1960, Marcus taught at Kensington High School (April to December 1961) and then at Walmer Street Primary School in Woodstock.

In 1962, Marcus became a founding member of the Yu Chi Chan Club (YCCC), in Grassy Park, a study group that was reading about guerilla warfare. In 1963, the YCCC was replaced with the National Liberation Front, which aimed to build a network of cells for studying guerilla warfare. In 1964, the eleven members were arrested. Marcus was sentenced to go to Robben Island for 10 years. In 1974, after his release, he was placed under an additional five years of house arrest, during which time he studied history, at honours level, through UNISA. After his release, Marcus become involved with civic organisations, and in 1983 became a founding member of the Children’s Resource Centre

We [Desmond and Virginia Engel, Johnny and Shahieda Issel, Peter and Norma Gabriel] started our own alternative crèche. And my then wife [Theresa Solomon], she was highly, she was then already beginning to be involved in underground ANC, she became the coordinator of the crèche. So, this project is not about, 'I was getting tired of struggle', it is what we began to see as the most important aspect, where to begin with this creation of this new person, is it with a high school student or the many males in NUMSA? The new person, the struggle for Socialism. There is a whole thing about the future of Socialism, build it now, where do you start? Again, we came across Vygotsky, what does he say; no, children are our co-constructors, even before they are born, the minute you conceive your partner conceives, that child is beginning to impact on his or her environment. Now, isn't that amazing?

In 1975 Marcus married Theresa Solomon, an activist who helped to set up the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee (CAHAC), was a member of the UDF general council (1983), and who later become mayor of Cape Town (1996-1998). Theresa also later held roles as high commissioner to Tanzania (2000-2004), and high commissioner to Canada (2004-2006).

Marcus continues to be involved with the Children's Resource Centre and holds a strong belief in the power of children to change the world.

Brian

Brian was born in Matthew Road in Claremont. He attended Rosmead Primary School, where his father had also attended school. He recalls the drama club at the Claremont Civic where they used to attend the plays.

When Brian was in his last year of primary school, under pressure of forced removals, the family was moved out. In 1966, when Brian was 13 years old, they moved to Joanne Road in Lansdowne. One thing Brian remembers about Rosmead was the emphasis on non-racialism:

And somehow it was embedded in our Claremont community, that we were human beings and we were never referred to as coloureds...it was sort of embedded in us at Rosmead (Brian).

Brian's parents had intended to send their children to Livingstone High School. However, his father who was a carpenter, had done some work for a maths teacher, Mr Ravens (Cliffy Ravens) who worked at South Peninsula. Mr Ravens suggested to their parents to send Samuel (Brian's eldest brother) to South Peninsula, and so Samuel went to South Peninsula High School and the four brothers, including Brian, followed.

At South Peninsula, Brian would have been educated by teachers who were part of the Teacher's League of South Africa, which was affiliated to the Non-European Unity Movement. This no doubt has shaped Brian's political trajectory and his own later involvement in the New Unity Movement and the Western Cape Parent Teacher Students Forum.

Interestingly, a teacher who left an indelible impression on Brian was one he describes as "not a very political person":

The one teacher that I hero-worshipped was Fred Coker, I very often write about him. He was a biology teacher, one of SP's top students. I am sure that if he had gone into the science field post his degree, he certainly would have been one of the top people in science at the university. He decided that he preferred to be at the school and he devoted his entire life to the school. And, you know, The Scientific American, science magazine, we were told that he buys it, and then we could actually borrow it from him, and would read it... And what he would also do in class, he would bring the Scientific American, and he would say, "Now, here is something on DNA. And now it is something that you do not know, but I want you to read it," and he used to give us copies. And then in his class he would say, "Okay, now you read the first paragraph and explain to the class what you have just read." And so he got us used to reading scientific magazines and articles.

The above story of Mr Fred Coker attests to the calibre of teacher which students had access to in schools like South Peninsula. While the political education of students was emphasised, the induction of students into disciplinary knowledge was equally important.

After high school, in 1972, Brian went on to study a Bachelor of Science, majoring in Zoology and Botany, at UWC, during a period of intense student resistance. He could not study at UCT, then a 'white' university, because the courses he registered for were being offered at UWC which was designated for 'coloured' students. Studying at UCT would have required a permit and this would not have been granted in such case. He tells a story of student discontent with the chemistry lecturer, which is indicative also of the complexities of the situation in higher education, even at UWC, under apartheid:

I failed Chemistry one. We had a chap there, Professor [Georges] Delpierre... He was a Canadian. He came here to South Africa, became a professor at UWC. In actual fact later on, when I left UWC, they burnt down his office because of his attitude towards students, because you have two hundred students there in the organic chemistry class, and he would say, only twenty of you are going to pass Chemistry one. And only twenty passed Chemistry one. We all failed. And nobody thought about it: how can two hundred students start Chemistry one, and only twenty people pass? And, of course, I repeated Chemistry one, and then of course, did my degree, instead of three years, four years.

He completed his B.Sc. (UWC) in 1975, after which he completed a Secondary Teacher's Diploma in 1976. In 1977, Brian returned to South Peninsula High School to teach life-sciences. He later completed his B.Ed. (UWC) in 1981, and MEd (UWC) in 1992.

During his time at South Peninsula High School he was introduced to the Teachers League (TLSA) Grassy Park Branch.

In 1984, he was appointed as the principal of the school, a post in which he remained in until 2016, when he was dismissed by the Western Cape Education Department on charges of misconduct and insolence. Many teachers, principals and community activists believe the dismissal was unfair and that it is part of a longer history of targeting school leaders who adopt critical stances.

Brian regularly comments on education matters in his newspaper column in the Cape Argus and continues to be engaged in community activism.

Yousuf

Before meeting Yousuf, I had met a number of activists, academics and educators who spoke highly of him as an activist, teacher and politician, and who encouraged me to include him in my study. In the course of this research, our interviews took place at Yousuf's home in Wynberg where I learned about Yousuf's family history and involvement in the Natal Indian Congress movement, his involvement in community organisations such as the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee and WECTU, among others.

Yousuf has been incredibly generous with his time. In our conversations he always came across as willing to patiently and carefully explain to me some of the developments of his own life trajectory. He has demonstrated a particular attention to detail and a great concern to not "obscure or distort history". He is very unassuming in his demeanour: for example, when joining a Marxist reading group of which I was part, in 2023, he came with a plastic shopping bag with copies of the Grundrisse to share with the group. Later he gifted me books from his collection of Marxist texts. Apart from the generosity, the books - which include analysis of political economy in various parts of the world - demonstrate much about his interest in international politics and Marxist critique. Among them also were books about organising committee meetings, which speak also to Yousuf's commitment to praxis.

Yousuf grew up in Vrededorp in Johannesburg, in an area commonly known as Fietas, which he refers to as “the District Six of Johannesburg”. Like District Six, many buildings in Fietas were demolished, and in their place affordable housing was built for lower-income whites. Yousuf remembers it in the following way:

It was a fairly mixed area. By that I mean there were so-called Coloureds, so-called Indians and in the initial stages, African people as well. So, the Group Areas Act first moved African people out of the area. For a long time, it was Coloured, not so many Indian but also a large, “some Coloured area”. In fact, at some stage, I think it was called the Malay location but not the part that we lived in. I am saying that because, from the day that we became conscious of anything, we became conscious of Apartheid. So, we lived on one side of the main road and opposite us on the other side of the main road, was basically a poor-White area and so even from a very young age, there was always tension between us and them.

His paternal grandmother was a Capetonian woman and his paternal grandfather was from India. Yousuf’s father took the racial classification of his mother and so was classified as Malay, but the family lived in an ‘Indian’ area. He started school in Vrededorp, first attending a state school above the mosque complex and another state school above a shop in the street where he lived. He then went to a primary school in Fordsburg, and thereafter to the Johannesburg Indian High School. Some of his relatives could not attend the same schools because they were registered as Malay and they had to go to the schools for ‘coloured’ people in Coronationville. In the case of Yousuf’s family, as he put it, “people just made the assumption that we were legally Indians and nobody ever questioned what our legal status was”.

When he was in Standard 8 (Grade 10), the government decided that Vrededorp should become a White area and indicated an intention to close down parts of Fordsburg to Indian people. Yousuf spoke about the resistance to these forced removals and the moving of the school:

Well, people resisted moving. So, what they did was to move the schools first, to a place called Lenasia which was way out of town. It was at least 30 or 40 kms from Johannesburg. So, in my Standard 7 and Standard 8, there were already big protest movements in the school against the Group Areas Act, against moving the school to Lenz. So, in Standard 7 and Standard 8, we were all active anti-Apartheid activists. There were major demonstrations organised by our students. Schooling was very difficult.

When the schools were eventually closed, Yousuf had to attend a school in Lenasia, a suburb south of Soweto. Initially objecting to attending school in Lenasia and Coronationville, Yousuf went to Cape Town and attended Alexander Sinton but after a month or two at Sinton, Yousuf went back to Lenasia.

So, I spent the last two years of my schooling in Lenz. At that time, Lenz had nothing in it. There were two schools. There were three or four schools actually. There was Lenz High and there was Nirvana High. It was not called Nirvana. It was Lenz Number 2 or something like that and there were a whole lot of council houses that government had built for, "Indian people". We used to travel every day. We had to get up at 5:00 in the morning to take a bus from Vrededorp to Lenz and come back every afternoon.

After the moving of the school to Lenasia, students continued to protest, leveraging critical moments to voice their opposition to the political state of affairs.

At that school, one of the main protest focuses was this Republic Day. The state had of course declared itself a republic before that and in those days, they used to expect all schools to celebrate Republic Day and they would send some raw Boer from the department to come and give you a lecture on that day. And of course, it was completely stupid because it was an opportunity for people to protest, which we did on the two years that I was there. We refused to take the medals which they handed out. We booed the speaker and so on and so forth. And of course, immediately after that there would be a Special Branch visit to the school and so on.

Yousuf matriculated in 1965. After finishing school, Yousuf had intended to pursue a degree in mathematics at University of Cape Town (UCT) but he required a permit to do so. He did not receive a permit to do so, as he was expected to go to University of Western Cape (UWC).

I was expected to go to, what was then, the Bush College. UWC did not exist in the form that it did now. There were four or five pre-fabricated buildings almost on the site where they are but basically, it was surrounded by bush. There were literally four or five pre-fabricated buildings and of course it was run by the Broederbond and that is where we were expected to come. At that time there were ... I think, in general, you probably know the Unity Movement has almost always opposed going to UWC. Well, then it was not UWC. Anyhow, there was a reasonably good reason for people to boycott it at that stage.

Not wanting to go to UWC, Yousuf obtained a permit to study architecture at the University of Witwatersrand. Yousuf had wanted to switch to mathematics but the university did not allow him to do this, and so he left to go and study in England. He returned having obtained a BSc (honours) degree in Mathematics and a General Certificate of Education. He later obtained an MEd from the University of Bristol.

Yousuf worked as a schoolteacher between 1976 and 1984, At Salt River High and Crestway, in Cape Town as well as in London and Eastbourne in the United Kingdom. He started teaching as a history teacher at Salt River High in 1976. In that year there was a student uprising and Yousuf was detained under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act. Following this it was hard for Yousuf to find work as a teacher but he eventually got employed at Crestway Senior Secondary.

After '76, I could not get a job obviously at any school and then I went to work in my father's shop in Retreat. One of the teachers there came past one day. Well, they had now heard about me because I had been in jail and so on and so forth, and said to me, you are a maths graduate, why do you not come and teach at our school? So, I said I would love it but will I get a job? So, I went to Crestway and the principal was a guy called Yusuf Da Costa, an amazing fellow. So, Yusuf Da Costa's background is in the Unity Movement but he subsequently became quite religious and disassociated himself from the Unity Movement but not from its fundamental principles. So, the department refused to employ me and he just insisted.

Following his time at Crestway, Yousuf has held several significant positions including lecturing at UWC, UCT, Khanya College and the Polytechnic of Central London. He was appointed as the Director of the Teaching and Learning Resources Centre (TLRC) at UCT and Regional Editor of the journal *Perspectives in Education*. Regarding his time as the Director of TLRC, Yousuf mentions the following:

From a personal point of view...and it needs to be mentioned because everybody knew about it, I was very heavily involved politically and used the space that was created for me to continue my engagement. I think that the whole Department knew that I was the chairperson of the Western Cape Teachers Union and quite frankly used whatever resources there was available at UCT to help with the organisation of the union. We met there and so on. You know, people came there – because there were states of emergencies – often under the pretence of coming to a maths education workshop [for instance], but it was to discuss the politics of education and to have a union meeting, which could not have happened at other places (Gabru, 2013, as cited in Dorn, 2013)

He was a founding member and former Chairperson of the Western Cape Teachers' Union and the Wynberg Branch of the African National Congress. He was also part of the executive committee of the Steenberg/Retreat Housing Action Committee, the Cape Areas Housing Action Committee, Musical Action for People's Power and SADTU, and held the position of Regional Coordinator of the UDF in the Southern Suburbs.

In 1994, Yousuf was appointed to serve on the provincial executive of the ANC. He served as a member of the Western Cape Parliament, was a member of the standing committees on Education, Health and Culture and was chairperson of the standing committee on education from 2002 to 2004. In 2006 he was appointed as Deputy Speaker of the provincial parliament and in 2008, he was appointed as the MEC for Education in the Western Cape Province.

The four teachers in this study are very different. They represent different political tendencies in the broader liberation struggle in South Africa, they come into their activism through different trajectories and they enact their politics in different ways. All of them however played crucial leadership roles in the anti-apartheid movement within the education sector, in Cape Town.

6. Thematic Analysis

In this chapter I present ten themes, each of which has been produced through a systematic analysis of the interview transcripts, from which data extracts were identified according to the research questions for this study. This coding and theming process was guided by the Bourdieuean conceptual framework for this study explained in chapter three. Each theme is discussed in relation to all four activists. Where contrasting narratives arose, these are identified in my analysis as the aim was not to straitjacket the analysis or assume that individual pathways into resistance need all be the same but rather to understand enabling conditions for activism in a manner that leaves rooms for multitude of individual accounts. The following table shows how each of the themes presented in this section relate to the sub-questions of this research.

Research Questions	Related Themes
<p>Sub-question 1</p> <p>What critical incidents, temporal contexts, social conditions and discourse communities enable the development and formation (or 'coming into being') of the teacher activist?</p>	<p>Theme 1: "Apartheid was ever present in our lives"</p> <p>Theme 2: "And my top was split in two"</p> <p>Theme 7: 'Catch us if you can!' Performance, Affect and Emotion in Activism</p> <p>Theme 8: Embodied Politics</p> <p>Theme 9: "That's it! There's no more politics"</p>
<p>Sub-question 2</p> <p>What is the role of imagination in liberatory/critical praxis and how do people break through the limits of what is imaginable?</p>	<p>Theme 3: "They were all political"</p> <p>Theme 4: "Histories are made by people"</p> <p>Theme 5: "The new person"</p> <p>Theme 6: 'Whatever the hell I was supposed to be'</p> <p>Theme 10: "A Kind of Socialism": Symbolic struggle and the cultivation of critical capital through sports and cultural associations.</p>

Theme 1: “Apartheid was ever present in our lives”

In the narration of their biographies, the participants in my study frequently referred to stories involving (critical-)incidents in which the violence of apartheid reaches into their personal and professional lives. These stories describe the highly visible and immediate violence of apartheid, which characterised the time and place within which their own identities as students, teachers and activists were shaped. In the coding process, stories like these were given an in vivo categorisation, “Apartheid was ever present in our lives”. The data extracts analysed here include accounts of a) forced removals, b) family life and c) spatial and educational arrangements. They are included firstly to give readers a sense of how participants’ formative years of childhood and youth were shaped by state and racialised violence, and secondly, to demonstrate i) the visible ways in which the apartheid state confronted the four teachers in this study, and ii) the immediacy and urgency demanded by such confrontations. Writing this section, I am conscious that not everyone experiences the same phenomena in the same way and that there is a sense in which many people, during apartheid, attempted to make a living in spite of oppression. Rather than generalising these experiences, I hope to explain how punctuated moments like these, which were common under apartheid, are moments in which the taken-for-granted is made explicit – they are moments which demand a decision, even if it is the decision to do nothing.

Forced removals and the Group Areas Act

First-hand accounts of forced removal are featured in the narration of three of the teachers in this study. My decision to include their comments on forced removals here is first because they offer vivid examples of the immediacy of apartheid, which may be somewhat commonsensical but which, nonetheless, when placed in relation to the other data extracts in this thematic set, offer a fuller account of the pervasiveness of apartheid.

Brian, for example, early in our first interview, recounts the following story:

Well, you know, I was born in Claremont in Matthew Road. Claremont. And I went to Rosmead Primary School...And then, of course, we were moved out. When I was in Standard Five...we came to stay here in Lansdowne, in Joanne Road

At the same time, we were affected by the Group Areas Act and we had a plot of ground in Matthew Road. No. 21 Matthew Road, and, we also had a house built on the other one, and then of course, at that time, people felt threatened that if they don't sell they going to get rid of them and they won't even get any money for their property, so my dad decided that he was going to move here to Lansdowne

No. 21 Matthew Road is in Harfield Village, in Claremont. Homeowners like Brian's parents would have been among the first to move out. The South African History Organisation explains more about how this process worked:

Estate agents bullied many homeowners into selling their properties. The homeowners acceded because they felt intimidated. According to a former resident in Claremont, officials from the Group Areas Board came and valued people's houses – for example, a three-bedroom house could be valued at R3 000. Homeowners were made cash offers a little above the board valuation. Once a house was sold a time limit would be set on moving. A seller was penalized 25% on any profit made above the valuation price for every year that he or she stayed on. (SAHA, 2020)

Clement, similarly, tells of his family's experience of forced removal.

So, my family life, I was born in Greenpoint in Prestwich Street, Greenpoint. My family comes from an area called Loader Street. And it is just below Bo-Kaap, and so till about five, six years old, we lived in that area. The whole family lived there basically, in Loader Street...and then the Group Areas Act obviously forcibly removed them.

The connection to Loader Street for Clement's family, the Meyers, runs deep and dovetails the history of the Stephanians Table Tennis Club, which was established in 1950 by the Pastor, Andrews and Meyer families. The club is an expression of the spirit of community and place-making, which was disrupted by apartheid. After the forced removal, the Stephanians club continued to meet in the garage of the Meyer family's home in Pinati estate, Lansdowne.

Yousuf speaks about the way in which the government attempted to reclassify the area in which his family lived, and about how young people were drawn to protest action against forcible removals.

And, when I was in Standard 8, the government had decided that Vrededorp should become a White area, and they wanted to close down large parts of Fordsburg to Indians as well. So, they started off by, well, people resisted moving, so what they did was to move the schools first, to a place called Lenasia which was way out of town. It was at least 30 or 40Kms from Johannesburg. So, in my Standard 7 and Standard 8, there were already big protest movements in the school against the Group Areas Act, against moving the school to Lens. So, in Standard 7 and Standard 8, we were all active anti-Apartheid activists... The Security Branch used to come on a regular basis to photograph us. In those days, they had those small, I still remember what kind of cars they were. And we would stand outside the school singing Indian resistance songs like the Indian Congress anthem, and the police would come and take photographs of us.

(Yousuf Gabru [Emphasis my own])

It is challenging to think about how forcible removals may have been processed by children and youth, and how this affected their social trajectories, because we cannot talk to participants in this

study, within the moment. Yousuf's account, however, is insightful in that it shows how a community in crisis, strengthened by an oppositional discourse and an organisation (in this case, The Natal Indian Congress), creates enabling conditions for resistance.

Family life

Apartheid's presence, however, also showed itself in everyday life as people attempted to go about their business. In the following quote, for example, Clement speaks about his experience on a train journey into town (central business district) with his father:

*I also remember what really shook me was the, I think **my politicisation** at that time was also an incident also when my dad, we used to go to town a lot, I remember, my dad always used to go back to Loader street, to go visit you know, from just going to town and whatever cause that time you do everything in town. You'd do your banking and everything... he lost his ticket and then he was confronted with this railway policeman. You know, and I can remember that time. And this white policeman actually was abusive. And smacked him through the face, you know. – Clement*

Clement recounts a number of other experiences like this, in which childhood, youth and family life are interrupted by the apartheid state's attempts to undermine and humiliate through the exercise of power. Here are two more examples:

I can remember growing up as a child and experiencing apartheid first-hand and going to, being chased off beaches; I can remember...when we were all sitting as a family and then this policeman came over, my dad was very insistent that we must remain, and my mom was "no, we must leave".

I can also remember...cycling around, we were young, maybe 12, 13 years, maybe 12 years old, and we cycled, and in Fish Hoek our bikes were all parked on the pavement, and this naval guy came, and because our bikes were parked near where he had parked his car, he just came and he just kicked us all.

Clement's accounts invite a consideration of the role of memory itself in the formation of a radical habitus. It is evident when he talks about "politicisation", that these memories have a profound effect on his own coming into being first as a student and then as a teacher-activist.

Spatial and educational arrangements

Emphasising the ways in which the spatial arrangements themselves shaped the relations between people, Yousuf says:

...from the day that we became conscious of anything, we became conscious of apartheid. So we lived on one side of the main road and opposite us, on the other side of the main road, was basically a poor white area. And so even from a very, very young age, there was always tension between us and them. – Yousuf Gabru

Yousuf affords a kind of primacy to influence of apartheid in his life. It is more than a background against which life happens, rather, it is like a **force-field** which impinges on everyday life. This critical awareness of the limiting situation is not only academic, rather, Yousuf, like Clement, recalls very particular moments in his life in which the pains are acutely felt. As an example, he speaks of his attempts to apply for a maths degree at UCT:

*So, the point I am really making is that we grew up in a political milieu from the time that we were born. **Apartheid was ever-present in our lives**...Apartheid has dominated my life as it did everybody else's. I wanted to do a maths degree but I needed a permit to go to UCT to do it...But they would not give me a permit because I was a "Coloured" (Yousuf Gabru)*

To speak in this way about systemic oppression stands in contrast to the ways in which contemporary suffering tends to be normalised (or naturalised) today. Critical incidents such as being refused a study permit are qualitatively different to the ways in which racialised youth are excluded today. While in contemporary South Africa, racialised youth (here I mean those who may never see the inside of the university) may feel they were financially excluded or that their university admission point scores were inadequate, the ways in which race is entangled in these stories are not as immediately apparent, as it is when being told that you need a permit because of your skin colour. Understanding this critical distinction between how the causes of suffering are attributed is helpful to think about why particular people and also sections of society may choose to engage in struggle or not. In this regard, Yousuf insightfully reveals that "not everybody but many students engaged in movements that opposed Apartheid".

Accounts such as those presented by the teachers in this study were not isolated but widespread and all of the teachers in this study were able to offer their own versions of how these acts of violence were present in their lives. Further examples of racial aggressions like these, which speak to the social and cultural milieu of apartheid, as well as how people resisted them, are analysed in theme four, "histories are made by people". What becomes evident from the stories presented above is that the teachers interviewed were confronted, both in their ordinary and professional lives, with the injustices of the system, in a manner that was overt and bluntly oppressive. Embodied encounters included being removed from beaches, watching family members smacked by police, being arrested, and for some, also being beaten or tortured (see theme two: "And my top was split in two"). The critical incidents they remember read as a series of encounters of physical, psychological, symbolic and institutional violence against their family, their school and the person. The violence of the apartheid state confronts them as naked violence such as that of being held at gunpoint. It was a violence that demands engagement and where the stakes are rendered visible in ways that are less tangible today, even if they are no less humiliating or life-threatening.

The examples of the pervasiveness of apartheid, which have been offered in this chapter, demonstrate the ways in which the reach of the apartheid state touched everyday life, the sense of home and place-making, as well as the schooling arrangements of the teachers in this research. Each of them illustrates the violent ways in which the state attempted to remind people of their place and position in society, in no uncertain terms.

At this point I want to draw an analytical juncture between times of crisis, the potential in such moments for the formation of an activist habitus, and the sense that life is not fair, which in existing emancipatory theories is often viewed as a first step – Freire (2014/1970), for example, writes about 'conscientização' and the perception of the 'limit-situation' as essential for critical praxis;

Greene (1978), similarly posits the notion of 'wide-awakeness', as a prerequisite for deliberate and meaningful social engagement.

Even today, it is in the punctuated moments...the gunshot, the ambulance that did not arrive, the sign of the police tape and the sound of the mothers' cry, for example, that the sense of time is out of sync and for a moment the appalling situation becomes intolerable. But the protest is short-lived. The translation of these moments into organised resistance depends also on what discourses are available, that can be mobilised for interpreting the social world, understanding the cause of the problem, and offering an alternative vision for the future. Apartheid, ironically, generated its own crises even in its attempts to more stringently enforce its rule. Apartheid, as systematic oppression, articulated through naked violence like forcible removals, already proceeds with an oppositional framing that constructs a space for the activist to occupy. In its constant attacks, it continually exposes its contradictions. Apartheid laws did not intend to be fair. Explicitly encoded in racial terms, the law provided its subjugated with fuel for contestation. It provided the glue that bound people together. Death or the shortening of life in the township and the ghetto¹, on the other hand, does not produce the same effects because it is not always interpreted in the same way and its causes are obscured.

¹ The term "ghetto" is not used pejoratively but sociologically to describe a community which the state has enclosed and abandoned. Wacquant (2001) for example, describes the ghetto as having "structural and functional kinship with the prison" (p.103).

Theme 2: “And my top was split in two”

The following theme extends the observations from theme one. Where theme one concerned the ways in which apartheid was ‘ever present’ in the lives of teachers in this study, including in incidents of violence, this theme highlights the intensity of violence which the teachers experienced and puts forward an interpretive argument that what these stories amount to is a construction of a culture of violence in which on one hand the unsettling nature and absurdity of violence becomes normalised and, on the other, extraordinary acts of resistance become imaginable. Here again, Bourdieu’s notion of field is useful to describe the manner in which the violence and ‘absurd’ of apartheid constructs a force-field in which the extra-ordinary responses of teachers may, without trivialising the role of individual agency, alternatively be read as actions and responses which are less ‘out of the ordinary’ than contemporary readers might suppose.

Speaking about the Salt River High march of 1976, Yousuf says:

Anyhow, our students organised, I cannot remember the exact date, this magnificent march into Cape Town. And of course, when we got into Cape Town, the police were waiting for us and they just flooded the whole central area with teargas. Unbelievable. And they whipped and beat the students up and so on and, of course, they all dispersed and ran away. We all ran in different directions. - Yousuf

And then on one day during the interrogation they took me on a staircase to go take my photographs and every time they went up a stairs, they push you over the banister and say they want to kill you and drop you down below. And it is one of those periods that Spyker Van Wyk said to me, I can’t remember his exact words, but to the effect, don’t be very clever this is where we killed Imam Haron - Yousuf

There is an entry in the TRC final report which describes the story, in more detailed manner than in my interview:

Salt River High School teacher Mr Yusuf Gabru was detained in 1976 under Section 6 of the Terrorism Act and held at Caledon Square. Spyker van Wyk, his brother, and two other security policemen interrogated Gabru and beat him with their fists and knuckles. He was forced to sit on his knees for a day. After two weeks he was told that he was being released. He was then taken into the room next door, his belongings were once again removed and, after a severe beating, was told that he was being detained. Gabru describes this as the most devastating moment of his detention. Other methods of abuse included trying to force a pork sandwich into Gabru’s mouth because he came from a Muslim family. Gabru says that the physical torture was far easier to bear than the psychological torture. On one occasion Spyker van Wyk and another policeman took him up a staircase, spoke about slippery staircases and suicides and pushed Gabru’s head over the railings. Spyker van Wyk also told Gabru that Imam Haron had been murdered. (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 1998, p.408-409)

During the apartheid era, several political prisoners' deaths were falsely described as 'accidental' through the use of fabricated accounts such as having 'slipped on a stairway'. This was the modus operandi of the apartheid police. In fact, Yousuf has been called upon to participate in the recently reopened Imam Haron inquest, which took place during the writing of this thesis, to give evidence about this incident.

Clement similarly mentions the first time he was arrested as a student. He describes in detail what happened to him as well as the other students who had accompanied him.

...about six boys and two girls, we were arrested and we were taken to Athlone police station. We were asked questions...and we were taken to Brackenfell where we were tortured basically. We were forced to do exercises but when they put us in the vans we were beaten with the back of guns and things like that, and my top was split in two and I had marks all over my body from where the sjambok, right across, so my shirt was basically shredded - Clement

What was striking for me, as a listener in this interview, was the manner in which Clement put it — “we were tortured basically” — and the way in which this account exists as just part of a series of events in which the apartheid state and its violence was present in his life.

Clement continues:

And so we were tortured, but we were about three, four days there. And the girls they took cigarette butts and burnt them on their breasts and all those things. But the policeman who came there actually bragged to us, you know that Spyker van Wyk, and he said; ek is Spyker van Wyk en ek het Steve Biko doodgemaak. He bragged to us; he told us that.

While some of those who were arrested would eventually participate in the Truth and Reconciliation hearings, Clement never did. There is a one-line entry in the TRC victims list which reads as follows:

“[Clement Meyer] Was one of ten students arrested after a political rally in Athlone, Cape Town, on 17 September 1985. He was then severely beaten by named and other members of the SAP at the Brackenfell police station.” (South African History Archive, n.d)

Brian and Marcus did not share with me any stories of such encounters with the apartheid police or the carceral system. Only in passing did Marcus mention a story about reading Gutierrez's “Theology of Liberation”, having been introduced to it by Llewellyn MacMaster, while detained at Victor Verster prison. In my interviews with Marcus, he focused more on his early life and on his work *after* imprisonment on Robben Island and his commitments within the Children's Resource Centre. Despite this, Marcus's journey as a student within the CPSU, the Yu-Chi Chan Club and the NLF eventually lead to his arrest in Winnie Mandela's car, driven by Brian Somana, while they

were attempting to leave the country (Phahle, 2019). Without describing the detail or the run up to those events here, I want to place this broader trajectory back into the context of this theme. How does the street preacher and train bedding boy from Port Alfred end up imprisoned on Robben Island? And how does the primary school teacher find himself in a 'National Liberation Front' studying guerilla warfare? While no simple answers or causative explanations might suffice to understand these changes, I want to suggest again that the absurd suspension or absence of normality which the apartheid system created, rendered what may in 'normal' times be unimaginable, both imaginable and possible. Notably, The National Liberation Front emerged in the early 1960s in a moment that also saw the emergence of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo, though its scale, composition and its activities differed from the those of the latter organisations. I use the term 'absurd suspension' in this section to try to grasp something particular about these stories. They are stories about a state that was quite ready to exercise violence on students and teachers, and about teachers and students quite ready to submit themselves to the brutality of the state for the sake of a collective cause.

Engaging Bourdieu

Writing about the Algerian war of independence, Bourdieu engages directly with pertinent issues related to colonialism, racism and violence. In his attempt to sociologize what he was witnessing, Bourdieu offers what may be understood as a schematic representation of field analysis, in which colonial society may be interpreted as a field, an objective situation and a struggle with specific positions and stakes:

This conflict was not merely the sum total of the individual passions involved, that is to say, the irrational and subjective manifestation of inner tensions, nor was it by any means a mere misunderstanding which could be cleared up by a conversion of minds induced by propaganda or education or even by some simple economic changes; but in reality it was based objectively on an objective situation of which the individual tensions are only the resultants. Its underlying causes may be found in a bitterly real drama: the overthrow of a vital order and the collapse of a whole world of values (Bourdieu, 1962/1958, p.144)

Bourdieu goes on to describe the colonial system as a caste system, characterised by dominant and dominated caste relations (p.146). He explains how the structure of colonial society which is "experienced through humiliation or alienation" (p.150) produces its own counterforce and revolutionary agents:

The colonial situation thus creates the "contemptible" person at the same time that it creates the contemptuous attitude; but it creates in turn a spirit of revolt against this contempt; and so the tension that is tearing the whole society to pieces keeps on increasing. (Bourdieu 1962/1958, p. 134)

It is in applying this same approach which Bourdieu takes to the war of independence in Algeria and from which he constructs his theory of field, that I have considered apartheid in South Africa as a force-field and a field of struggles. Analysing apartheid as a field, with dominant and dominated relations organised into a racial caste system, illustrates on one hand the attempts to erode and devalue the life and culture of people othered in the four-race mythology of apartheid. On the other hand, this apartheid force-field also contained within itself seeds of resistance, through its construction of an opposing force. The dominated are in a sense bound together by oppression, and anti-apartheid resistance is a consequence already contained within the logic of the field.

In short, when carried along by its own internal logic, the colonial system tends to develop all the consequences implied at the time of its founding—the complete separation of the social castes. Violent revolution and repression by force fit in perfectly with the logical coherence of the system; while the colonial society is as unintegrated as ever, the war now became completely integrated within the colonial system and allowed it to be recognized for what it really is. (Bourdieu, 1962/1958, p. 146)

The acts of violence described in this section, whether through forced exercise, cigarette burns, beating and whipping, illustrate the need of the dominant to employ violence to manage both psychological insecurities and political instabilities generated by the system. In a manner, the sjambok that tears Clement's shirt in two, also tears into the edifice of apartheid, bringing people directly into contact with violence-backed social relations. What is remarkable about the teachers in this study is that their responses within the physically violent situation, is to commit themselves to collective organising and building alternatives that anticipate a more desirable future.

Theme 3: “They were all political”

In my discussion of theme 5, “the new person”, I consider how the discourse of socialism seemed to offer the participants in the study a language through which suffering and struggle could be articulated as well as a common vision around which collective resistance could emerge (even if the organisational manifestations were multiple). Here, I want to note more specifically the influence of an older generation of teachers whose paths intersect with those of the teachers in this study, during their school-going years and as newly qualified teachers. Since all the teachers in the study were recruited within the Cape Town region, many of them had crossed paths with the political tradition of the New Unity Movement (and its precursor, the Non-European Unity Movement, launched in 1943), for example. Marcus tells of being taught English by Cosmo Pieterse at Trafalgar High School and of how students were taught the work of Bertolt Brecht. (In

the interview, Marcus affectionately recited the poem A Worker Reads the World). Similarly, Brian talks about his relationship with educationalists such as R.O. Dudley, and Clement of his admiration for school leaders such as Basil Snayer.

Marcus

Marcus, arrives in Cape Town in the late 1950s and attends high school (upper secondary) at Trafalgar High School. As a high school student, he is immersed in a context of towering teacher-intellectuals whose pedagogical practice is influenced by their radical views (see also Soudien's, 2019, 'The Cape Radicals'). He describes Trafalgar as a 'hotbed of Trotskyist political teachers'.

I finished my JC [junior certificate] in 1956 and I came to Cape Town in 1957, to Trafalgar. I was supposed to go to, wat is die skool se naam in Port Elizabeth; it was also very political environment but I came to Cape Town, it was that year I worked on the trains on what they used to call then a bedding boy. Of course, now they call them bedding attendants in the New South Africa. So, two months and I came to Trafalgar, 1957. Of course, Trafalgar was the hotbed of Trotskyist political teachers, Unity Movement, anti-CAD...Benny Kies, Cosmo Pieterse, Ernie Steenveld, Polly Slingers, the whole bunch. And that was maar the beginning, the second phase of my life. And I am still on that sort of trajectory though I have moved away from the Unity Movement. But it had a very great influence on my life, it still has.

Marcus offers brief vignettes of their pedagogical interventions in the classroom, and it comes across in his storytelling that the teachers themselves were intellectuals who attempted to meld politics into their classroom practice.

Polly Slingers...he was a brilliant history teacher. He would teach the French Revolution but he would also refer to a play or a novel and of course, the outstanding novel is Dickens's A Tale of Two Cities. I will never forget the opening lines because he always used to quote it; "It is the best of times, it is the worst of times."

*Cosmo Pieterse... Tall, lanky dark, and he taught English, he was a double masters, Afrikaans Letterkunde and English Literature, Shakespearian actor of note, played Othello in the play of that name. [...] And he would take us to plays and Hiddingh Hall and we had to go and see War and Peace; you know War and Peace? The great, I should probably say the greatest novel and movie and then, of course. Then there was Ernie [Steenveld], in his very unassuming way who would...and I think some of them, Polly was much more extrovertish probably because that was the nature of teachers teaching history, he had to be sort of be dramatic. Cozi more so. But the others were always, even the maths teacher, Solly Edras, he a gold medallist at UCT in maths, he would tell you about JD Burn or the history of science, I would only read it later, a great British Marxist. Also [Ernie] Steenveld, "Giffie", a science teacher, **they were all, they had this, it was just more than just science.***

But they created a lovely environment, but very disciplined, they were not easy teachers, they would not, very warm but very firm about their teaching and so on. But the more I think you became related to them, the more they became your mentors, basically. You

know, if you showed interest. That is Trafs [Trafalgar High School], of course, you had to play sport, chess, and you had to read and they would discuss and all sorts of things.

Cozi reads us, Brecht, in high school, in fact, that was the most beautiful history lessons I have ever had. The worker reads history, do you know the poem? Who built the pyramids, but Cozi turns it into a small drama. He says; Alexander on this beautiful white horse, goes into India, crosses the Andes and conquers India, and I ask you class, here is this General, no army, no cooks, he conquers India. And all these millions of people by then already India had millions of people, he just sweeps aside and he conquers India. Amazing né? We knew, of course, there is some trap somewhere by now. He says; now is it possible? And then he engages with you, is that possible? So, this whole thing of who makes history, no cook in the army, no soldiers who cried in Thebes or wherever, were there no tears there?...

After finishing school in 1958, Marcus studies teaching at Hewat Training College and is recruited into the Cape Peninsula Students Union by Frankie van der Horst. In the CPSU he meets several other politicians.

I joined the CPSU, I am sure you know the CPSU, the Cape Peninsula Students Union. Neville [Alexander], Abe Fataar, Carl Brecker, Fikile Bam, Archie Mafeji, Pallo Jordan, [...], Norah Shimming from Namibia; yes, and I was invited to join the Society for Young Africa...

Marcus's teaching career starts at Kensington High School and Walmer Estate Primary in the early sixties. His teaching career was, however, interrupted upon his arrest and sentencing to Robben Island in 1964. Yet he continues to teach in prison, offering literacy classes to other prisoners.

Yousuf

Yousuf's politics is shaped firstly as a student in high school, where many students and their families were involved in the Natal Indian Congress movement:

Anyhow, we were in the Johannesburg Indian High School and so at that age already we were protesting and we used to gather outside of the school and have demonstrations outside the school. The Security Branch used to come on a regular basis to photograph us. In those days, they had those small, I still remember what kind of cars they were. And we would stand outside the school singing Indian resistance songs like the Indian Congress anthem and the police would come and take photographs of us.

After the state shut down the Johannesburg Indian School, Yousuf came to Cape Town to attend Alexander Sinton High School but this was short-lived, and he returned to Johannesburg to attend a school in Lenasia to complete his final two years of high school. Yousuf recounts the following experience that highlights the level of political awareness at the Lenasia school and attributes the politicisation of the school partly to the principal, who was a fervent member of SACOS.

At that school, one of the main protest focuses was this Republic Day. The state had of course, declared itself a republic before that, and in those days they used to expect all schools to celebrate Republic Day and they would send some raw Boer from the department to come and give you a lecture on that day. And, of course, it was completely stupid because it was an opportunity for people to protest, which we did in the two years that I was there. We refused to take the medals which they handed out. We booed the speaker and so on and so forth. And of course, immediately after that there would be a Special Branch visit to the school and so on. We were very fortunate. Our principal at that school...was a very fervent member of what became SACOS. So, the school was a highly politicised school.

His teaching practice, similarly, begins in a school with highly politicised teachers. He does not elaborate too much but also makes mention of the influence of the Unity Movement.

There were a whole lot of Unity Movement people, very disciplined, very clear about what their views were and I think they made an enormous contribution to society. At least these days there is beginning to be some recognition of that. (Yousuf)

*Yes look, when I came here [to Salt River High] in 1976, I was in a small clique of people. They were largely influenced, at that time, by the Unity Movement. All of them eventually joined the Congress Movement. I am just stating that as a matter of fact. I am not making any political comment. So yes, it was in that year that there was beginning to be a move in Cape Town to introduce, on a large scale, Paulo Freire's method of teaching. I remember going to some of the groups in the township where people were beginning to introduce those ideas...I had started to get to know a lot of teachers obviously. **They were all political.** (Yousuf)*

Following significant protest action at Salt River High School and Yousuf's subsequent detention under section 6 of the Terrorism Act, he could not find employment as a teacher so he went to work in his father's shop in Retreat. While working there, he was approached to work at Crestway High School where the principal, Yusuf Da Costa was also a member of the Unity Movement.

Well, they had now heard about me because I had been in jail and so on and so forth, and said to me, you are a maths graduate, why do you not come and teach at our school? So, I said I would love it but will I get a job? So, I went to Crestway and the principal was guy called Yusuf Da Costa, an amazing fellow. So, Yusuf Da Costa's background is in the Unity Movement but he subsequently became quite religious and disassociated himself from the Unity Movement but not from its fundamental principles

...Mr Da Costa was the principal. Mr Da Costa was a really interesting human being, he used to be in the Unity Movement, a staunch member of the unity movement. And on the left, he is dead now, may his soul rest in peace. But in fact, he was the ultimate Trotskyist. His first son was called Leon...

Brian

Brian attributes his philosophy of education to R.O Dudley, the former Livingstone principal, member of the Anti-CAD movement and part of the early formation of the Non-European Unity Movement, and Victor Ritchie, former principal of Harold Cressy.

I have a philosophy which I learned from Mr R.O Dudley and Mr Ritchie also. Mr Ritchie was a behind-the-scene person politically, whereas Dudley was upfront there. And they believed that if you gave the students a good education and you politically gave them the reasons why they must have a good education to change society, then you have a winning recipe.

Yet, Brian's high school days at South Peninsula are also influenced by the politics of the Unity Movement and its various organs:

...at high school, we were given thorough people like Ms Wilcox who belonged to APDUSA and also Ms Wessels, Daphne Wessels, Antoinette Wilcox. Daphne Wessels belonged to the Non-European Unity Movement and Mr Rudolph Murphy, who also belonged to the NEUM. We were given the journal [The Education Journal of the Teachers' League of South Africa] and they brought it out once every three months and it would relate to all topics on education and obviously relate to the nationalist party and how they were ruling and their rules that they brought in and how we should combat it... and things like black consciousness, is it something that we should believe in or do we believe in the whole question of non-racialism as opposed to black consciousness?

Later upon starting his teaching career, in 1977, Brian says he attended meetings with TLISA members in Grassy Park, eventually joining the organisation.

Clement

Clement, the youngest of the teachers I interviewed, was in high school at Livingstone in the early 1980s and started teaching in 1987 at Groenvlei High School. Livingstone, of course, like Trafalgar where Marcus attended school and South Peninsula where Brian attended school, was a bastion of Unity Movement politics but also home to several political currents such as the Black Consciousness movement and Congress movement. Clement was involved in the Livingstone SRC himself, as a student.

When Clement attended UWC from 1983 to pursue a teaching qualification, he was exposed to several different political currents:

I was there at the height of the...I can say the student struggles '83 to '86. So I mean that was just like, it was hectic, so we had at that time obviously the UDF, I was never a member of the UDF, but I used to be part of a Lansdowne Youth Movement... at the same time, I was also involved in the Crawford Cultural Society and that time it was Marcel

Golding...he was a leftist! And I remember we used to go to the mountain and used to like, you know, study Marx and all those, socialism and all those things.

Like the other teachers, his teaching career, began in a school which was highly politicised and organised. Clement speaks here about how the teachers together with the Parent Teachers Student Association “*ran the school*”.

The four teachers in this study all encountered, in both their schooling and their early teaching years, other politicised teacher-intellectuals who were leading the field, whether in their analysis of the political and educational context or in their organising activities. On one hand, their political activities pushed against the grain of the ruling regime but on the other, they (the four teachers] were embedded in a context where an alternative or ‘counter-public’ discourse held significant sway. In this latter sense, they worked with, rather than against, the grain, and they were able to find community and camaraderie in the collective.

Reading their accounts in relation to Bourdieu’s concepts of ‘habitus’, ‘capital’ and ‘field’, it is possible to see how the four teachers in this study could benefit from having their teacher and activist-identities ‘authorised’ by the senior teachers they mentioned. Their induction into the field, and, into the role of the teacher, was supported on entry by other teacher-intellectuals and activist-communities. As young teachers acquiring a teacherly habitus, they did so within social networks where pedagogical practice and politics were explicitly inter-related. Circulating in their networks was not only a form of critical cultural capital but also strong social bonds of solidarity and support.

Their experiences can be contrasted today to new models of the ‘good teacher’ as described in existing literature (i.e. the teacher as entrepreneur, technician or curriculum implementer), with more rigid framing of teachers work from within the system (through curriculum and assessment policies, and quality assurance practices), as well as externally (through international benchmarking tests). Significantly also, alternative teacher communities in which counter-public discourse may circulate are hard to come by today, and often fail to successfully recruit and organise teachers.

Theme 4: “histories are made by people”

This theme, *‘histories are made by people’*, highlights stories from the participants' narratives, which offer insight into the ways in which working-class people enact their resistance. The significance of these stories in relation to my research question is, firstly, that they demonstrate the way in which oppressed people often do resist, even if their resistance is not recognised. While this research has set out to talk about ‘becoming stories’, it is necessary to consider how the long history of colonialism and apartheid in South Africa was inscribed into the bodies of the teachers in this study and their families as counter-cultural sensibilities which must be accounted for analytically. In constructing this theme about both ***origin stories*** and the ***everyday resistance*** of working people, I raise the question of how a young child might interpret the visible subjugation and humiliation of their parents and what role this plays in the ***self-formation*** of activists who emerge from oppressed communities. I also consider how affirmative resistance through the enactment of care work may lay a foundation of ethical engagement in the world that precedes the elegance of social theory.

Origin stories

Origin stories represent a genre which attempts to give a back-story of how things have come to be. In film and media (the tragedy that makes the hero or the villain), as in religion (how the world became or the story of the first man or woman...), they are stories about transformation and identity. In a similar manner here, I treat the stories which the teachers have shared with me as origin stories, not so much as myth-making but as stories about identity formation. In the first sense, the injuries of a race and class identity presented by Brian and Clement bear a likeness to typical origin stories. Secondly, as in Marcus’s reflection on the role of mothers, a further dimension is added by describing the work of mothers as contributing to the development of an ethical engagement in the world. Yousuf’s description, already when he says, *“I am saying that because from the day that we became conscious of anything, we became conscious of Apartheid”* (see Theme 1) might be treated in the same way. I have not included Yousuf’s account here again, but it adds a contrast, in that his interviews show (see Theme 3) that he had parents who had access to a developed counter-discourse through their participation in the Natal Indian Congress.

Everyday resistance

Given that this section engages with 'resistance' in a different manner than other parts of my research, it is necessary to say a little more about how I am treating more affirmative resistance here. There are, of course, many perspectives that could be drawn from here. For example, Paul Willis' (1977) '*Learning to Labour*' in which opting-out or rejection is understood as 'self-defeating' to the extent that Willis' young lads remain stuck in their class position, or James Scott's (1985) '*Weapons of the Weak*' which views the multiple acts of peasant resistance which fly under the radar (non-compliance, foot-dragging, resistance, etc.) as ultimately forming a barrier capable of undoing the status quo:

Everyday forms of resistance make no headlines. But just as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, so do the multiple acts of peasant insubordination and evasion create political and economic barrier reefs of their own. (1985, p.xvii)

In this section, however, I am simply recognising and registering the stories shared by the teachers in this study as stories about acts of everyday resistance . I am also recognising the engagements between the teachers and their significant others (a mother, father or community member) as pedagogical encounters that play a role in the habitus formation of the teachers themselves.

In the following extract, Brian shares a story about his father's interaction with an employer on a construction site. This kind of story may not be unusual to those familiar with the '*on site*' social relations in the construction industry, where reference to Black men as "boys" have not fallen completely out of the common parlance. In the story below, a similar kind of humiliation is felt by Brian's father but the response illustrates how, even within a situation of power asymmetry, working people are able to employ strategies of resistance.

My father was a carpenter, and he would come home and tell us the stories of how people treat him when he goes to work in the so-called white areas. And they would want to bring him food outside, and he must have the food outside. And he would just tell them, no, he is not hungry. He did not want to sort of embarrass them. So he would just say, no, do not worry about food for me. I have brought my own lunch, because he knew that they were not going to share their food with him inside. In their own home. And he said, no, if they want to treat me like a sub-human being, then I do not want to be part of it. So I think we were sort of always at the supper table, discussing these issues. My father talking about the attitude of the so-called whites towards him as a builder...So, politics was always discussed at our supper table. (Brian interview one)

Brian's father enacted his resistance by bringing his own lunch to work. Over and above this, the resistance became pedagogical when he relayed this story to his children. Brian's retelling or 'recollecting' of the story suggests that this is a memory or story worth sharing and that he attributes his own politicisation partly to these engagements in the family household.

Clement's father, faced with a similar assault on identity, eventually decided to leave his work and open a fruit & veg stand.

my father is a, my father works in a factory, I mean he was a printer and he also used to ... I mean he left his job so many times to play table-tennis you know, like go to Jo'burg or whatever and eventually in his 50's he retired from, and he said, I'm not going to work for a white man anymore so he opened his own Fruit & Veg; he used to sell fruit and veg I mean I remember Mitchells Plain...we used to go with the truck there to sell and that lasted for a couple of years. (Clement, interview one)

In both cases, we see the enactment of a politics of refusal. A refusal to participate in rehearsing the rituals of humiliation and subordination. The supper table becomes a classroom for a pedagogy of indignation, and a space for the retelling of stories in which the dominated becomes the hero ("I have brought my own lunch"... "I'm not going to work for a white man anymore").

Marcus chooses to share a story on the contribution of working-class mothers in the socialisation of children, in care work and in community organising. He links the development of a critical consciousness together with early childhood, in ways that are possibly neglected in dominant views of both activism and on childhood.

I'm very big on culture and sports because I come from there you know and we can then...because people forget and then you can challenge, you say no you're now a PhD student, as if you started there, you know, excuse me! where do you come from? what did you play...who did you learn most from? and I can tell you now your mother...and how did she do it? Well...did she run a workshop with you? No, you know...no she just told me...you must regularly wash the dishes, you know, I must look after my little brother, or...but then you realise that Jesus, this is how we socialised, if your father drink or...you know, did your mother drink? my mother drink? you must be crazy! you know, that sort of stuff you know, and you put together a story that you can generalise from, if you say the same thing with ma, your ma, the ouma, who encouraged you to play, oh my father but it's really my mother that made sure I went to play, did you play sports?

Marcus makes an interesting move in the story above by highlighting the role of women in organising family life (fathers encourage sports, but mothers get the children to sports...) and this he later builds into a comment on the role of women in community organising.

You see where we are at, we are in a very serious danger of society imploding, in many ways it already has, so, we need to bring together everybody, who is anybody, who is doing anything. Of course, my big thing now is that from the experience we've got, is that

only...most of the staff, they used community kitchens...and it is almost exclusively mothers, everything that's been done in communities. Well, it's almost exclusively done by mothers and women. (M)

In fact, for Marcus, it is quite clear that understanding resistance and the development of consciousness requires a much longer view of history.

*The history of our people must be written because it was not this start 1943 with the formation of the [Non-European] Unity Movement, or the 1955 Congress [of the People] although I think the process with the formation of...**our people have been agents for change ever since they started walking this planet***

The above examples are particularly provocative when thinking about 'becoming stories' of activists. The latter part of the 20th century in South Africa is ablaze with people heaving to end apartheid partly because of the intellectual heaving that preceded this and provided counter-narratives that could bind people together. When the teachers in the study came into being, they had the benefit of strongly cultivated discourse, a strong imagination that another world is possible and within reach, as well as communities of like-minded people to organize with. However, what I have tried to show in this section, is that an ethic of care, community and resistance was cultivated even in childhood through the practice of affirmative resistance and the relaying of this message in the household. In the sense-making stories which the teachers in this study shared with me, they reproduce accounts from ordinary life that precede any carefully worked theorisation of power, oppression and inequality in society such as that reflected in a Marxist social critique which they refer to later in their lives. This work of tending the soil, the pedagogy of the supper table and the women's labour to raise good children must not be neglected when we think about the formation of activist identities, and it *prefigures* the work of the teacher-intellectuals already discussed in the theme "They were all political".

Theme 5: “the new person”

The crisis of ordinary language calls for, or authorizes, the language of crisis and the criticism of ordinary language. Revelation, that is, to state that which is going to be or to state that which was unthinkable because inexpressible, requires those moments where anything can be said because anything can happen. (Bourdieu, 1991a, p. 35)

In the following section, I engage with extracts in which the political ideologies and identities of the participants in this study are made explicit. Notably, all four of the teachers in this study express a strong commitment or striving toward a people-centred ethics, toward being moral individuals (as expressed in Brian’s “values”) or simply toward being decent human beings (as expressed by Marcus “becoming a new person”). More particularly, and peculiarly (from today’s perspective), their strivings are also articulated through socialist discourse.

For Marcus, this is expressed in his conceptualisation of becoming a ‘new person’ which carries with it echoes of his youth, playing the role of the street preacher, only now re-articulated through the lens of socialist thought. Marcus’ strivings toward becoming a ‘new person’ is about a struggle to live justly in the world and always to be conscious of the contradictions in society. His focus is on what it means to live differently in the world, rather than simply on understanding socialist theory, which he also has a firm grasp of as an avid reader, teacher and founding member of a creche inspired by socialist thought and Vygotskyian psychology.

No, no, no that...in fact, I made the point, it’s only...in fact even my Marxism or historical materialism, and this is the other thing we have to be...there’s a progression, a consciousness you know, you may be attached to socialism or whatever, but I don’t think...for example my questions...I would also ask what do you understand by socialism you know, what do I understand, I must know Marx, I must know what socialism is, take the higher of the economy, take charge of the economy, nationalise, the state must take charge of all the resources. I’ve come to...what does it mean to be a socialist? what does it mean to be a Christian? Not what do you understand by Christian, so that progression, deepening of your understanding of the whole struggle... transformation is really about yourself, how do you become the new person, both in the Christian religious sense and also in the politically conscious sense, the new person, what becomes about transforming yourself...actually one guy, [...] he said becoming conscious is like...trek uit jou baatjie, trek uit jou onbeskofte baatjie and trek on your...hoe se hulle, respectable baatjie [take off your disrespectful jacket and put on your respectable jacket], no, no, it is a process of consciousness and I think that’s why it’s so important coming back then, to create an environment...It’s not about teaching, in fact, I’m completely over this whole thing of teaching, creating an environment so you can learn and teach, there’s a game, children are probably the best persons we can interact with to learn because they see you and they see adults as hypocrites by the way, most children, I’ve tested that, they say nee [...] jy praat een en doen jy die teenoorgestelde[you say one thing and then do the opposite]. (Marcus 2A)

While Marcus grew up in his mother's congregational church, and continued to attend church with his grandmother, after his mother's death, Marcus no longer self-identifies as a Christian, although he often quips about Comrade JC (Jesus) being one of the first revolutionaries. It is interesting to note how, in Marcus's discoursing, he melds together different cultural resources in his strivings toward living as a 'new person' and how his conceptualisation of the 'new person' (a form of Christian symbolism) is infused with new meaning reinterpreted through the lens of socialist consciousness.

Clement, coming from a Catholic background, similarly combines Christianity and socialism, although in his interview he still identifies as Christian. For Clement, capitalism becomes almost symbolic of all that is antithetical to the Christian tradition (greed, corruption, environmental destruction...), so that for him, it is an inherent contradiction to be a capitalist and identify as a Christian. Interestingly, in the extract below, he references an argument drawn from an often quoted biblical story, *'The Anointing at Bethany'* which includes the statement "the poor you will always have among you..." (Matthew 26:11). However, instead of interpreting this in the traditional (conservative) way, or even drawing on more subversive readings of the text, he draws on an historical example (the French Revolution), showing that what appears inevitable is also open to change through human action.

I mean capitalism is a dominant thing in society and you see what is happening the inequalities, the greed, the corruption and obviously climate it is not sustainable there has to be some other alternative in how society is run.

People always argue they say it is inevitable there will always be rich and there will always be poor and we had an argument and then I would say you know this capitalism is there what you going to do you can't change it, and I say many years ago that President in France was also probably saying the same thing they are... "what do you want to change?" and then the French revolution came and changed that.

So I'm under no illusion that capitalism is strong but it's also vulnerable and things can change. For me we have to be an optimist you have to look at the better society and if I identify myself as a Christian there is another thing, you have to be a socialist you can't be a capitalist. You cannot be a capitalist if you are a Christian. How can you be a capitalist? There is no way. Christianity and socialism sharing and if I look at... (Clement)

Brian speaks less of religion but with a strong belief in "values". Brian associates socialism with an alternate economy of "sharing". Whilst he does not provide an overly theoretical description or definition of socialism, the examples he offers speak to the current realities in South Africa and the realisation of socialism is presented as the eradication of the entanglements of poverty and lack. Brian's first example of begging for food is placed side by side with what he calls begging to

get into school (referencing the ways in which access to quality education is fortified) and university (referencing financial exclusion from university). He also sets a story of development in other parts of the world within a context of oppression and colonial conquest, suggesting that developed nations might enjoy better experiences because they reap the rewards of exploitation. Brian's socialist utopia is one in which 'everybody has the right to share' and is an egalitarian society in which the benefits (of labour) are fairly distributed because people 'value' this way of living.

My answer is socialism. It is where everybody has the right to share. Where I don't want to see somebody knocking on my front door asking for food. I don't want to see a youngster begging to get into a school. I don't want to see a youngster begging to get into a university. Now, I think there's no such country at the moment, where we can say that that is happening. Very often, countries are living like that, because they are reaping the benefit of the past. You know, they oppressed other countries. And they are they are living on that reward. You want people to actually believe in a set of values that will benefit everybody. That's my idealistic world. - (Brian)

Yousuf elaborated more and emphasised something different about the milieu in which people were attracted to socialism. The collective "we" that Yousuf refers to obviously does not extend to everyone, but when we remember that Yousuf refers to what may be considered a peak period of mass mobilisation in South Africa and also an historical epoch before the ultimate collapse of the Soviet Union and the realisation of a global hegemony of neoliberalism, the contrast (or milieu) Yousuf refers to becomes clearer.

I think that when we were growing up, many of us were in a milieu where we were attracted to the idea of socialism. And I think that the people at the time who wrote critically about capitalism and Apartheid for me, their analysis was always the most beneficial. (Yousuf)

In his interview, Yousuf begins to engage with contemporary social issues, analysing them through the lens of Marxist critique, identifying profit as the driving force of capitalist production and describing how even the production of life-saving medication is hindered through the capitalist struggle to preserve surplus value. He further links climate disaster to processes of capitalist production and extraction ("the earth is being abused").

I have been influenced by socialists writing. I consider myself a socialist. I think that the fundamental problems are society is capitalism in all its different forms. I have got a very firm belief that when profit becomes the driving force in a society, then there is something fundamentally wrong. I heard a guy from Oxfam on TV last night and of course, I cannot remember the figures again exactly, but he was saying how much money the pharmaceutical companies are making every second or every day because of COVID. And that obviously is the reason why they are not going to release the patents for other people to be able to even make generics even though they did release some of the stuff.

I saw on the news that we would be able to produce some of the drugs in South Africa. I think that when society is governed by that then obviously ... I think that it is quite clear now, in this day and age, that capitalism is not good for society. I do not think there should even be a debate about it. If you look at the way the earth is being abused, if you look at climate change, if you look at poverty, if you look at the disasters, and society has got no answer to this because in most of society, people are so, not everybody, but the dominant form of society is one in which profit is the fundamental motive. (Yousuf)

Critiquing the present, rehearsing the future

In the literature review for this study, I engaged with the notion of imagination as: an intellectual labour that involves constructing objects in the mind prior to action (via Marx), a resource for critical and reflexive thinking (via Levitas), providing motivation and drive (via Olin Wright) and as an ontological need of human beings (via Freire). I also showed how critical scholarship, including Bourdieu, engages with imagination in relation to desire, drive and possibility, and how utopian thinking or 'optimism of the will' (via Gramsci) are indispensable to both radical scholarship and radical social struggles. This literature is helpful to put into dialogue with the extracts above. Doing so, it becomes clearer to see how the socialist strivings of the teachers in this study provides both a critique of the times *and* a forward looking vision of more desirable social and economic relations. Marcus's struggle to become a 'new person' is an envisioning of new social relations and the attempt to practice this in the radical creche, despite the shortcomings which may be proffered, might also be read as a rehearsal for the future. Brian's struggle is articulated also in forward facing language — "*I don't want to see somebody knocking on my front door asking for food*" — which is a criticism of society that fails to distribute resources, access and opportunities equally while defrauding people at the level of production, but it is also a vision of a future in which no one needs to beg for food because they have both food and dignity. Clement says it outright: "For me, we have to be an optimist" [sic], and notice how Clement's language of optimism is grounded in the collective "we". The future imagination of socialism offered a framework to interpret the present and future. Within the context of the unfolding crisis at the height of apartheid it offered a glue for social movements and a catalytic force for mobilising people into action.

Circling back to Bourdieu.

The sentiment that things tend to persist in their being, that there are careers, probable futures [...], this all totters in the periods of crisis. [...]It's favourable terrain for prophetic intervention. From the moment [...] when one doesn't see too much what is going to happen, the prophet intervenes. It's the poet in precapitalist societies. In societies like ours, a politician comes to the fore. It's not at all an ordinary politician, it's Cohn-Bendit [the student leader of May 1968], it's someone who speaks when everyone else is mute. ..." (Bourdieu, 2016, p. 139; cf. 2000, p. 234-236).

So long as the crisis has not found its prophet, the schemes with which one thinks the world overturned are still the product of the world to be overturned (Bourdieu, 1991a, p.37)

Drawing on Bourdieu's understanding of the role of prophets and his analyses of how crises are converted into 'critical moments', it is possible to see how the discourse of socialism, within a long and enduring crisis, provided a language through which coherent alternatives could be articulated as well as a common vision around which to organise. In his own description of the role of the prophet, Bourdieu suggests that the prophet offers a new schema of thought contrapuntal to the existing frame. This description also mirrors more religious descriptions of the role of the prophet, such as those offered by Brueggemann (1978) in *'The Prophetic Imagination'*, where the role of the prophet is interpreted as involving both criticism and pathos, as well as prophetic 'energizing'. Socialism offered both a social analysis **of** apartheid as well as a language **for** struggle. Without oversimplifying the many forces and reasons for engagement in struggle, it is reasonable that, at least in part, mass mobilisation is more easily achieved and sustained when the terms of recognition are commonly shared. This is insightful when returning to the present day, even limiting the discussion to the field of education in South Africa: crisis and brushfire protest abounds, but does the lack of a common discourse through which the terms of struggle may be articulated hinder the development of sustaining organisations? Not only is the cause of suffering more nebulous than before but the prophetic critique and energising which socialist discourse provided also appears to have been disarmed by the real symbolic revolution through the globalisation of neoliberal capitalism.

Theme 6: “whatever the hell I was supposed to be”

And one thing about the school... And somehow it was embedded in our Claremont community, that we were human beings and we were never referred to as coloureds. There was this kind of thought that was running through the community there, that we are just ordinary people. - Brian

Mr [Wilfred] King, I think he taught me about how you address people, and he also had this whole concept of that you are a human being. That is the first thing, you are a human being. We are not going to be considering all these tags and names that they put on people. - Brian

Each of the four activists had a clear position on the issue of racial identity.

Brian shares the commitment of the New Unity Movement, to non-racism and recognition of the humanity of all people. He strongly rejects the idea of a ‘coloured’ identity, viewing it as a construction of colonialism and apartheid. Situated within its time, one can see how counter-cultural and forward looking the unity movement’s discourse of non-racism was. There are however strong tendencies of what might be described by some as ‘classical Marxism’ in how non-racism articulated within the New Unity Movement. In classical Marxism, there is the idea that changes within the economic base (social arrangements) will result in changes within the superstructure (culture). Applied to particular forms of inequality, exploitation and cultural domination, it is implied that when the underlying structure of the economy and its governing principles are changed, problems of racism, sexism, ableism etc will gradually (and automatically) disappear. This view of social change has been contested by feminist social theory, critical race theory and Marxist social theory generally following the so-called ‘cultural turn’. In the latter theoretical perspectives for example, there exists a far greater degree of balance in the dialectical relationship between economy and culture. Culture is no longer viewed as merely reflecting the base but also as exerting great influence on how the base is organised. Over and above this, there is also a strong tradition of ‘Black Marxism’ stemming from the works of W.E.B Du Bois, Cedric Robinson, Walter Rodney, Neville Alexander as well as more contemporary scholars such as Ruth Wilson Gilmore and Robin Kelley, who have developed a theory of “racial-capitalism” in which race ideology and capitalist political economy are viewed as co-constitutive of each other. These discussions aside, what is profoundly clear in the discourse which Brian espouses is a profound commitment to a world in which people see each other as human beings and equals. His rejection of a ‘coloured’ identity is not a naive dismissal of the ways in which race continues to organise social arrangements or of the gross inequalities that persist but an expression of a commitment to building a world in which race does not prefigure what we may aspire to be, who

we may become and how we deserve to be treated as humans. This version of non-racism must be seen as a defence strategy also within a context where the prevailing regime used all at its disposal to categorise people and treat them differently on the basis of such categories.

I mean, there was so-called Coloured, so-called Indians, and then the initial stages, African people as well - Yousuf

Similarly, for Yousuf, when referring to racial classifications of Apartheid, he frequently chooses to use the description “so-called”. This is both a conscious choice and a political statement in the South African context, where the ways in which people from marginalised groups are manifold, from those who attempt to embrace or reclaim ‘Coloured’ identity, and those with overtly nationalists claims to ‘Khoi’ identity. Yousuf, in mobilising the use of “so-called”, is rejecting racial classification in a similar manner to which those in the New Unity Movement do. While he was affiliated to different organisations and was also a founding member of WECTU, he also speaks admirably of Yousuf Da Costa, then the principal of Crestway Secondary School where he taught and a member of the Unity Movement. Again, this is not a naive position that neglects the ways in which structure inhibits the developments of groups of people but rather a fundamental claim to humanity made within the context of oppression. On another occasion, Yousuf says:

but I'm saying Indian very deliberately, uh, because the, the Group Areas Act and the race classification act [Population Registration Act] had a huge impact on my life and everybody else in my community.

Of course, Yousuf knows this in a very intimate way, coming from a situation in which his own family members were classified differently. Some were classified as Muslims and attended so-called ‘Coloured’ schools and some were seen as Indians and had to attend schools designated for Indian children. This reality speaks of course to the absurdity and ambiguity of colonial and apartheid racial classifications but also to the ways in which these systems of oppression sought to organise life even within the domain of family.

Yousuf says:

So the point I'm really making is that we grew up in a political milieu from the time that we were born. Apartheid was ever present in our lives and not everybody, but many students engaged in movements that opposed Apartheid.

Marcus troubles the notion of race, in a similar way to Yousuf and Brian. In the following extract, Marcus proceeds to offer a history of his family lineage, attempting to demonstrate a diversity of origins. What Marcus does here is reminiscent of the approach of Homi Bhabha in deconstructing race and identity, through the concept of hybridity, in that Marcus is shattering the socially

constructed categories which colonialism and apartheid projected onto others and used to divide and rule. Marcus's approach deconstructs the fixed identities which continue to persist in post-colonial South Africa by showing that the categories cannot really grasp his family's origin stories, and that the moment that you may think you have grasped a root, further deconstruction is possible.

And the whole thing of South Africans, most come from a diverse history that my parents, my father was Indian, my mother was Coloured but she had a Scottish background, but also Khoi. So, the whole issue of racism and gender. And my great-grandmother was actually the mainstay of her family, the MacMasters, the Khoi side of the Rademeyers, and ja. So, all that, if you can put it... and it can be very interesting, so you begin to get your own identity, but you also develop a new identity. You already are a new identity because you're not Khoi, you're not Indian, you're not Scottish, you're a combination, but also in terms of consciousness, you want to move away from this Coloured....not in a bad sense but raise awareness about you're a South African, what does that mean? – (Marcus)

While I was working on this section, I was fortunate to hear Marcus deliver a keynote address to high school students at a Bottomup youth summit, and what he said in the speech expands on his attempts to wrestle with the question of identity. In the speech, Marcus posits 'internationalism' as an alternative identity, which in the manner he describes, transcends the imposed categories of racial classification. Marcus also speaks of such internationalism, or being a 'citizen of the world', as transcending even a Pan-African identity, ultimately seeing the world as one, but building this argument in a more sophisticated manner, anchored in Marxism rather than liberal notions which lack a critical analysis of power or the mutually constitutive issues of race and class.

...the whole idea is that you must become an internationalist. Someone who sees the world as your home, and other people as your family. By the way that is also in the Christian faith, and in Islam and in Hinduism. In Christian faith, you are the creation of the creator and all your people around you are your brothers and sisters, isn't that so? So why do we then, you Christian but you see other people as foreigners, and you still see yourself as Xhosa, Hindu...I always wanted to be an internationalist, a citizen of the world...I have an association with an organisation called Africa is One Country... but some also go further...the world is one...That's what I want to be, I want to live in harmony with nature, with other people, and that is the identity we must all be striving for. (Marcus)

What becomes immediately apparent is that discourses or 'an imagined' is produced and circulated within the context of communities of different kinds (historical, geographical, institutional etc.) where people wrestle with real life problems and that these available discourses are drawn upon to shape identities and worldviews. How the teachers in the study grappled with the questions of their place in society, in this instance through discourses of non-racism', were likely to have a bearing on the kind of teachers they would be in the classroom. Indeed, their

engagements inside and outside of the classroom were always about something 'more' or 'bigger' than any instrumental purposes of education, it was about building a new society, one feature of which would be non-racism.

Theme 7: “Catch us if you can!” Performance, Affect and Emotion in Activism

At the individual level, social movements are emotional movements. Insurgency does not start with a program or political strategy. This may come later, as leadership emerges, from inside or from outside the movement, to foster political, ideological and personal agendas that may or may not relate to the origins and motivations of participants in the movement. But the big bang of a social movement starts with the transformation of emotion into action. (Castells 2015, p.13)

Smoke billows from a heap of fires that are set alight, as a group of teenagers throw their fists into the air in the black power salute. A canister of teargas flies overhead as someone takes cover behind a parked car. In the next scene, a yellow police helicopter with blue underside is seen, followed by a series of photographs of Ashley Kriel and Anton Fransch, both with broad smiles, before the video montage shows students marching through the streets singing, clapping, some smiling, some laughing, some with stern faces. This is how the video of ‘Butterflies Fly By’ by Emile YX, which reminisces about the 1985 student protests in Cape Town, begins. What appears almost self-evident from the protest footage, which seems to be partially neglected from some theoretical standpoints, is a rigorous analytical engagement with the role of affect, which Ann Cvetkovich describes “as a category that encompasses affect, emotion, and feeling, and that includes impulses, desires, and feelings” (2003, p. 4). The following section of analysis directly engages with the role of emotion and affect in activism, honing in on interview extracts in which the teachers name and use emotion and affect as they reflect on their own activism. In this section, I put Bourdieu into conversation with other perspectives, exploring the utility of habitus to grasp the affective dimensions of political action.

In the extract which follows, Clement verbalises a range of emotion from fear to excitement and *feeling* ‘alive’. He succinctly describes what participating in political action and social movement offered to him: a feeling of purpose, belonging and goal-direction:

*Obviously, I think that, you know – I look back at my life and I think it was the most, I think – it was a lot of emotion. You have **fear**, you have the **excitement**, and the solidarity. You have this unity in action, you have, I mean, you have all these things which actually made you **feel very alive** you know, it made you **feel like you part of something** – You, you living something and when I look at what’s happening today and I see our kids with no kind of no direction I think that, I think to have purpose like that you actually lived you know, and I will never take that... I mean, throughout that period, I think that was like a purpose and made you want to... and I’m not saying I was like Bravo and whatever you want to go run into something but obviously...I mean all young people, you don’t look at consequences. You engage in an action and we don’t see when you get older you will sit back a little bit then reflect on what will happen, you know, so, so I think that that*

***exhilaration**, I think the purpose made you feel alive I think it was best time on although we were oppressed. (Clement, interview two)*

The latter part of the above quote is quite striking. How could someone who experiences oppression, also feel “alive”? In the interview Clement clarified this juxtaposition of vitality and struggle. It is the sense of solidarity with others and the sense of purpose, of being part of a story that is greater than oneself that he misses. Clement’s longing might be rearticulated using a theory of alienation. His participation in anti-apartheid struggle as a high school student, as a university student and as a teacher, was ‘un-alienating’ in the sense that it offered him an opportunity to exercise agency and a sense of significance as participating in history-making or building a more desirable future. ‘Activism’, in other words, is a collective labour with a perceived use-value for those who engage in it. Ironically, this sense of agency and of “unity in action” is not amplified but subdued in the post-1994 context. Many of the organisations which were the expression of the collective labour of activism are defunct. Some remain but lack a significant social base of support, and perhaps more pertinently, larger organisations that remain have become embedded within the state and have, to a greater or lesser degree, lost a critical edge. Clement lamented the loss of direction of the union SADTU of which he had been an organiser, an executive member and a chairperson (in the Athlone Branch):

you have to mobilise...every union on a certain basis but there is no willingness to do that. To mobilise and to really organise the teachers effectively, and campaigns there’s no campaigns, you know what I am saying. It is just the zeal. There’s no campaigns around anything, there is just a blind acceptance of everything. (Clement, Interview One)

The prevailing situation is experienced as alienating. The participant in history becomes the observer of history, and grassroots mobilisation is replaced with legislative justice.

Brian similarly lamented a loss of agency on behalf of teachers, and a loss of political education in and through schooling:

Unfortunately, today if you look at what is happening at schools, there is hardly any of that taking place where people are talking openly about what needs to be done in education. Even if you look at newspapers, especially teachers writing to newspapers, sort of expressing how they feel about what is happening in the school and what should be happening, you find nothing like that. I mean I write an article on a Thursday, and I would look for other articles in the newspapers from teachers and where you should be. I mean, this should be a well of information where teachers are writing about their experiences in the classroom, even if they are good experiences – to write about them so that you can also energize teachers as well. (Brian)

Brian does not necessarily mention in his interviews the same sense of 'feeling alive' as Clement does, but this comes through in the way his posture and tone animate while recalling a story such as this one, in which he engages with a department official:

And then he said to the teacher [the department official]: "Why are you not here in the front teaching the students? Because this is supposed to be a normal school day." So I said, "Excuse me Sir, can we just go and speak outside?"

So I said, "If you are going to stop this, I am taking my jacket and I am walking out of the school, because you are not in charge of this school, I am. And I have to work with these students. They have decided that because of what is happening outside there [political protest], they are going to boycott classes, and they are going to have awareness [programmes]. They want to make themselves aware of what is happening. You can tell me now, I can leave the school."

I do not know where I got the courage because I was only twenty-nine. (Brian)

At age 29, as a young principal, Brian finds the courage to take up a stance, and there is a sense of excitement in his voice when talking about this:

*And then he said, "I am sending the inspector here. He must monitor. He must come sit here. Monitoring what is happening." But then nothing happened. We had the week of awareness programmes, and I called his bluff. Now, of course, if I had now said to the students, "I am sorry," and to the teachers, you must now go back to.... I think that was the end of me. I could have just closed up shop now because they would have no faith in me. **So sometimes you call their bluff, and sometimes you win, sometimes you lose, but I think you must attempt to call their bluff.** (Brian)*

This analogy of calling their bluff again brings to mind a kind of thrill of challenging the system and beating the game.

Perhaps, it is Marcus's comment which evokes this sense of the thrill of the game most clearly when he says:

*You see now, a struggle is not a sacrifice. You must see it as a journey. **In many ways, for us, it was an adventure. Catch us if you can!** (Marcus)*

The above data extracts, along with examples of embodied politics such as throwing an apartheid history textbook out of the classroom (following section) all invite a rigorous engagement with the role of affect and emotion in political struggle. Recruiting Bourdieu, it is possible to illustrate how the political field affects bodies in its reach, and we have the concept of habitus as the incorporated social, or the social which becomes bodily dispositions and feelings (as in the amor fati which Bourdieu so often mentions in his General Sociology). In *Pascalian Meditations*, Bourdieu offers a little more by specifically drawing on the language of 'affect' and 'emotion':

It is because the body is (to unequal degrees) exposed and endangered in the world, faced with the risk of emotion, lesion, suffering, sometimes death, and therefore obliged to take the world seriously (and nothing is more serious than emotion, which touches the depths of our organic being) that it is able to acquire dispositions that are themselves an openness to the world, that is, to the very structures of the social world of which they are the incorporated form (Bourdieu, 2000 p. 140-141)

We learn bodily. The social order inscribes itself in bodies through this permanent confrontation, which may be more or less dramatic but is always largely marked by affectivity and, more precisely, by affective transactions with the environment. (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 144)

Yet, the challenge is that much of Bourdieu's own engagement with affect and emotion is locked into his elaboration of processes of social reproduction, where affect and emotion (such as the amor fati) as dimensions of habitus are homologous with the opportunities availed within the field. What is needed, however, is an in-depth engagement with both how affect and emotion carry a motive force that can move people to build social movements, and how the movements which people build have the power to affect people in ways that can transform both habitus and field.

While Bourdieu's conceptual toolkit offers some explanatory power through the avenue of habitus as disposition, it does not go as far in dealing with emotion and affect as have feminist theorists and performance studies scholars. Soares (2021), describing an 'affective turn' in cultural and feminist studies, argues that "feminist theorists have long been interested in how seemingly personal attributes —emotions and feelings—have political valences" (p. 941) and in a similar vein how "performance studies scholars have long theorised how performance—including activist demonstrations—is a container for the production of affect" (p. 944). Soares (2021) highlights works like that of Audre Lorde who wrote about "The Uses of Anger" (Lorde, 1997) and "The Uses of Erotic" (Lorde, 2007) and offers the empirical case of the Women's Caucus of The Young Lords, most notably their struggle against colonial gender stereotypes within the organisation and their use of a Lysistrata style sex strike, as an illustration of how both rage and joy animated their organising work.

Augusto Boal's description of theatre offers another opportunity to consider how active participation and embodied action create the possibility for change. For Boal, to 'act' has a double meaning in that it refers both to acting to 'perform' and to 'take action', and it is this double meaning which may also be put into dialogue with Bourdieu on habitus (trans)formation by considering the ways in which situations of conflict open up spaces of possibility for particular forms of engagement and action that invoke a sense of agency. The sense of 'vitality' or 'adventure' which

the teachers refer to may be interpreted as an effect of the real-life theatre which avails a range of possibilities through which the teachers make or discover themselves. Boal says:

...all human beings are actors (they act!) and spectators (they observe!). They are spect-actors... Everything that actors do on stage, we do throughout our lives, always and everywhere. Actors talk, move, dress to suit the setting, express ideas, reveal passions – just as we all do in our daily lives. (Boal 1992/2022, p. 15)

Some more direct attempts have however been made by Bourdieuan scholars to extend Bourdieu's work into the realm of affect. Deborah Gould, for example, usefully explores the relationship between affect and the social world, recognising that "affect is autonomic, involuntary, and physiological, but it is also inseparably intertwined with the social. Indeed, affect presupposes sociality: a body's affect system is about being affected and able to affect in turn, and thus is all about being in relation to a world populated by other beings and things" (Gould, 2010, p. 31). Introducing the idea of an *emotional habitus*, Gould argues that "An emotional habitus contains an emotional pedagogy, a template for what and how to feel, in part by conferring on some feelings and modes of expression an axiomatic, natural quality and making other feeling states unintelligible within its terms and thus in a sense unfeeling and inexpressible. A social group's emotional habitus structures what members feel and how they emote" (Gould, 2010, p.34). Gould agrees that habitus is durable and stable, but pays greater attention to its malleability and explores the ways in which social movements "generate schemas of perception, ways of understanding the world, sentiments—habitus—that dispose participants to question the status quo to engage in specific forms of activism" (p.36).

Literature that adopts the vantage point of this 'affective turn' in scholarship, affirms the necessity to not gloss over, methodologically, those moments in the data in which emotion and affect are rendered visible. Following Bourdieu, our habitus predisposes us to be affected by particular stimuli in particular ways. However, social movements can and do provide alternate framings, which reshape how we are affected. Social movements may also be described as movements of people who are affected in particular ways by the political. The political affects us, as do the movements we participate in. The performance of affect, as opposed to performative activism, changes us. Anger, joy, the feeling of beating or mocking the system, may all catalyse people to action, and should not be ignored in how we think about the emergence of the activist.

Theme 8: Embodied politics

Inasmuch as the four teachers in this study experienced the oppressive conditions of the apartheid state in embodied form (see themes: “Apartheid was ever present in our lives” and “And my top was split in two”), so too their activism was ‘embodied’ and visible in everyday practices. For all of them, activism extended beyond raising consciousness or awareness of power imbalances, to praxis – it is pedagogical and practical. Rooted in a commitment toward building a new society (and the new socialist person, see *Theme 5*), they all involve themselves in the work of organising, mobilising and confronting injustice, and for all of them these are lifelong commitments. There are however, in the course of the everyday, inflection points where resistance is ‘performed’, not in the sense of being ‘performative’ but in the sense of taking up a stance, or taking up space. In this section of analysis, I engage with data extracts which are similar to those I engaged with in the previous section where I considered the role of affect in activism, but this time considering another dimension, the physical body itself. The theme ‘embodied politics’ was constructed from a set of extracts with the original codes “take a stance” and “insurgence in the classroom”. The extracts which I analyse here, all reference embodied practices with spatial dynamics (e.g. ejecting, subverting, occupying).

Yousuf

One example of what I mean by “embodied politics” is the story below in which Yousuf, during his teaching appointment at Salt River High School, threw a textbook out of the classroom window:

And I can remember my first lesson as a young history teacher. I opened the window. I took the Van Jaarsveld textbook and threw it out of the window and said to the students, that that [sic] is not history. We are going to do real history in this classroom and that we would come back to the thing for the purposes of exams. (Yousuf, first interview)

On a different occasion, Yousuf remembers another confrontation with an inspector, while teaching at Crestway High School:

*I have got an honours degree in mathematics from the University of London. I am only saying that, not to boast about it please, but a maths inspector one day opened the door, barged into my classroom. I was shocked. I had never seen this guy before. **He just sat at the back.** I asked, “Who are you? What do you want here?” He said, “I am an inspector.” I said, “Now, can you not knock on the door? Why did you not tell me you are coming?” I said, “No, you cannot stay here. You must get out of the class. You cannot just barge into my classroom like this. I am not going to teach. You must go back to the principal.” So, I **forced him out** of my class. (Yousuf)*

There are many ways to interpret the accounts above. They are both pedagogical and political and demonstrate a range of forms of activism which sometimes express resistance or rejection (See: Theme 4: “histories are made by people”), and at other times build alternatives. The actions taken by Yousuf illustrate the contestation of power over what happens in the classroom, at the chalkface of the schooling system in South Africa, and express agentic dispositions and behaviours. The act of throwing out the Van Jaarsveld history textbook was a symbolic rejection of apartheid history and a refusal to become complicit in the reproduction of state ideology, but also a refusal that played in and through the body. Similarly, the ejection of a departmental school inspector from Yousuf’s classroom and the refusal to proceed until they leave, was an example of a form of resistance which is embodied, which assumes a fair measure of risk, and which also takes control of space. In this moment, Yousuf ‘occupies’ the classroom through an assertion of authority as a teacher, in opposition to a form of hierarchical authority which the inspector attempted to assert by entering and seating himself without requesting permission.

Bourdieu, recalling the hagiographical account of Michealangelo before Pope Julius, says:

I think that this was a historic act: the liberty that Michelangelo took as an artist - not to wait for any temporal power, even with spiritual dimensions, to exercise the slightest authority over him - was not a personal liberty: he was taking this liberty on behalf of all artists, and also potentially for all the men who, through him, can understand that they may sit down before the prince invites them to, whereas there are crowds of intellectuals and artists who remain seated when they should stand, and stand when they should remain seated. (2020, p. 179)

In Yousuf’s story, it is the inspector who exerts their power by sitting down, and it is Yousuf who claims power through refusal to continue until the inspector stands up and leaves.

Clement

Clement, a youth activist in the student representative council (SRC) movements of the 1980’s and a teacher union organiser, narrates an account of how he attempted to connect curriculum with the lived-realities of students, in a manner that Wieder (2003) might describe as ‘wedding pedagogy with politics’:

*I try to **bring that history home to them**...we are doing the Russian Revolution in grade 11 so it is a whole question on communism and capitalism and all, and just mentioning, you know it is so amazing when they begin to understand things like the inequalities in the world, you know I show them some stats from Oxfam and they could not believe it, that Oxfam stats and the high degree of inequality and so I always bring that into the class. That kind of history and how it affects them. (Clement, emphasis in bold is my own)*

Here the idea of bringing history home to students might be read as an attempt to move from abstract knowledge to embodied knowledge, or as an ‘un-alienating’ pedagogy. Clement isn’t teaching for social justice in a way that is abstracted and generalised. Rather, his is a pedagogy that engages the lived experience of students. In a similar manner to which Boal (1979/2008) in *Theatre of the Oppressed*, describes the movement from ‘spectators’ to ‘spect-actors’, these classroom moves which Clement describes constructs a drama that demands that students assume a role in the story – because it affects them:

[I] speak to them about the conditions under which they live...you have to accept the way we lived and you have to accept the youth sitting fifty in a class there. Must you accept that? Or must we just go to church and pray about it and hopefully the things will come? So, hopefully when these learners leave, they can become little revolutionaries or something.

Clement’s spatial practice is to claim and subvert the classroom. Yet, Clement’s activism is not hedged in by the school fence: during the Covid-19 pandemic, which interrupted this research, Clement was participating in community dialogues and actively engaged in attempting to organise teachers to picket. In his time as a teacher, Clement has similarly participated as an active union organiser going to schools to meet with teachers. These seamless movements between the school and society speak to the embodied politics of the four teachers in this study who, being ‘wide-awake’ (Green, 1978) to relations of power in society, choose to invest themselves in the drama of society and take up a stance.

Brian

Brian’s story is also full of accounts similar to the ones mentioned above. While interviewing, I asked Brian about a story I had heard from a friend who taught at South Peninsula High where Brian had been the principal. It involved the students at his school marching to an abandoned school building, which used to be called Central Primary. Central Primary was opened in the 1950s but then closed again because of the Group Areas Act. During Brian’s principalship, he had led a march to the school and students used a bolt-cutter to open the lock on the fence so that they could occupy the building. In the interview Brian makes it clear that such protests were well considered beforehand and represented the collective action of the school’s parent teacher student association (PTSA). Moments like these sit outside of the range of activities that might ordinarily be expected from a school today, yet they do not appear out of place at South Peninsula High School, which has also been a school with deep ties to the New Unity Movement. In these moments, students do not take a back seat but are involved in matters affecting their education

and, in embodied ways, they learn about the spatialisation of race, the histories of unequal schooling provision and the Group Areas Act, while also learning that change requires activity. In marching, they perform their resistance. In many ways, South Peninsula still offers an example of a school that is able to excel academically without sacrificing a commitment to fostering political consciousness.



Brian Isaacs leads a picket in front of Central Primary School buildings. Photograph by Henk Kruger/ [Cape Argus](#), 2015

Brian remembers a moment during his principalship of South Peninsula when a department official came to check on the work of teachers and requested to see the student exercise books. This kind of request to see books is commonplace but also tends to be fairly performative when work in books is treated as evidence of learning having taken place. Recalling the visit, Brian says:

...an inspector was going through my experiment book. And they give you prescribed experiments that you must do, and I did not do one, but I did something else instead of that one. And this person said, no, but this must be here. And I said, now come with me to the class there, and you can question, but you see, this was a bureaucrat coming in. It was not a science teacher. So he was not prepared to do it, or she was not prepared to do it. To go to the class and ask the students about that experiment which I did in class, but it was not recorded. (Brian)

This stand-off is an example of resistance being enacted in a way that takes up a position, communicates discontent and points toward contradictions in policy and practice that do not serve students or teachers, and it is embodied. To those unaware of what takes place in the daily life of schools this may appear as superficial but this should really be read against the background of compliance in response to ‘inspection’ which occurs in schools, where for example, teachers seeking to meet superficial accountability measures (performativity) inflict pedagogical violence (Matusov & Sullivan, 2019; Giroux, 2010) on students, such as dictating notes for students to copy into their workbooks, or teaching to the test. In the account above, we can see that Brian cared about the education of students more than he did about pleasing inspectors, and he was prepared to take a stand on it.

Bourdieu and Embodiment

In this section on ‘embodied politics’ above I have gone beyond the dominant ways in which habitus is deployed in Bourdieuean scholarship. I have gone beyond considering habitus as the embodied social, to looking at how enactment of resistance trains the habitus. For Bourdieu, habitus consists of both a set of acquired dispositions, tastes and a ‘feel for the game’, and a bodily hexis which is reflected in the way we move in our bodies – our gait, the way we seat ourselves, our posture, and perhaps more noticeably, our accent in speech. When Bourdieu engages with bodily hexis however, it is mainly a further description of the habitus, showing how our bodies convey our histories and our position in the field. Drawing on Pettit (2019) and Augusto Boal, what I try to convey here, in addition, is that enactment is also a way in which the actor trains their bodies. Supplementing this analysis, I have deployed the concepts of Miller et al. (2006) to differentiate between ‘claimed space’ which is opened up by activists to enable them to “negotiate the own agendas” (p.5) and ‘autonomous space’ which is created outside the sphere of control of dominant power, suggesting that all of the actions parsed below may also be understood as acts which claim space.

Our bodies understand and experience power in ways that our conscious minds do not. Somatic and emotional reflexes serve as living maps of our past experiences with power, through which we trace and re-perform habituated patterns of hierarchy and domination. It is in our bodies that agency and structure converge...” (Pettit 2019, p. 79-80)

Pettit (2019) recognises the body as a site of struggle and proposes that “Embodied practices of learning and action need to be repositioned from their fringe status as fun or entertaining activities, or as stages toward critical consciousness, to the very core of what it means to generate meaningful civic and political agency” (p.80). Drawing on the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu

(habitus) and Judith Butler (performativity), the pedagogical philosophy of Augusto Boal (Theatre of the Oppressed) and the cognitive sciences of Francisco Varela (the embodied mind) Pettit argues that “invisible power...is also manifest in our individual and collective embodiment of social dispositions, such that critical consciousness alone will not catalyse civic and political agency” (Pettit, 2019, p .69). Pettit (2019) suggests that “enabling civic and political agency requires a ‘pedagogy for the embodied mind’ that integrates critical consciousness with embodied knowledge.”

If the confrontational politics of the apartheid state (and for that matter, the neo-liberal post-apartheid state) constructed a theatre, through the imposition of skewed history texts and/or visible inspectors, then **throwing** a textbook out of the window, **standing off to** or **forcing** an inspector out of the classroom and confronting the performative and contradictory values of a subject advisor, like **marching** to an abandoned school and **cutting** open the locks, are practices of agents who choose to take up a role in the drama and who, through active participation and improvisation, are able to introduce new possibilities into the script. Evans’s (2022) work on violence, which reminds us that violence is performative and demands an audience, also invites a reading, here, that the embodied resistance of these teachers subvert messages of domination and passivity by relaying back to the same audience (i.e. the students in the classroom the inspector walked into, other teachers, or the community who watches) that something else is also possible.

In closing this section, I am arguing that embodied forms of activism produce different affects, and, responding to Pettit’s (2019) discussion on embodied cognition, that embodiment trains the habitus in new dispositions and attitudes. Extending Pettit’s (2019) argument, I want to add that the theatre of real-life and of spaces which are claimed (as opposed to the created and autonomous space of the theatre or the workshop) may produce more profound affects because of the real investments and risks involved. One of the implications of reading embodied action in this way is that activities which might otherwise be treated as simply part and parcel of what happens in crisis and protest should be re-interpreted as carving new ways of thinking and being in the world. The one who burns a tyre doesn’t only set the tyre alight, they also change themselves (or their habitus) in the process.

Theme 9: “That’s it! There’s no politics” (imagination)

*People administer and administer, just the way the right would do it, perhaps a little bit differently, but it's administration they do ... (...) There's nothing left, there are no more activities. So there are no more activists, people have become just like me, they see all this from a distance and they haven't the motive for doing whatever it might be ... (unionist in *Weight of the World*, p. 318-319)*

The quote above is from Pierre Bourdieu's (1999) *'The Weight of the World'*, in a chapter aptly named *"The End of a World"*. The particular quote expresses the sentiments of a unionist in the metallurgy industry after the sector had undergone significant transformations following the economic recession, deindustrialisation and the subsequent closure of the majority of metallurgy plants in the region. As a result, the trade union experienced a significant decline in its power and membership. The lament above expresses a notable shift from activism to bureaucratisation and depoliticisation. I have chosen to open this section of thematic analysis in this way to demonstrate parallels between the field transformations and effects noted by Bourdieu in France, and those expressed or alluded to by the teachers in this study, which I will discuss below. In doing so, I follow Bourdieu in demonstrating how changes in the field (the objectified social world) also affect changes in the habitus (the incorporated social world) of individual actors. The main idea in this section, derived from an analysis of the data, is that shifts in the field generate a social gravity of their own, a new doxa, new positions and new ways of playing the game. Specifically, I want to show that the relative absence of organised teacher resistance in South Africa today must take into account the ways in which these shifts have restructured, repositioned and reinterpreted the work of teachers.

The following extracts from my interview transcripts show a common concern among three of the teachers in this study. In each of the snippets, the teacher looks back to the engagements which they had in the classroom and/or in the context of teacher union work lamenting what they view as a sea change in the political and educational field, and possibly a reconstruction of teacher identity and teachers' organisations much like 'the end of a world' of which Bourdieu writes. Two things must be noted before I do so. The first is that I am not attempting to take these commentaries by the activists at face-value: I will later describe some of the field changes which give credence to what the teachers lament. Secondly, on a methodological note, I want to illustrate that the differences and ruptures which are more acutely felt by individual agents whose formative years takes place in a social world strongly shaped by discourses of socialism, change and people's power, and the attempts by these activists teachers to *remember* the past, have the

potential to make the familiar or taken-for-grantedness of contemporary society strange. The de-politicisation today is rendered more starkly when contrasted with the experience of the teachers in this study.

As an example of this, see the following quote from Brian:

I tried to bring education into politics and politics into education so that students could understand what their role was when they left school. Unfortunately, today if you look at what is happening at schools there is hardly any of that taking place where people are talking openly about what needs to be done in education. (Brian)

This lament must be put into the context of Brian's ongoing commitment and advocacy for fair schooling, and his concern for critical education which leverages knowledge of the world toward the purpose of building a more egalitarian society. I say this to avoid criticism about a hagiographical representation of a teacher. This aside, the quote is a lament about a context which appears to be characterised by a depoliticization of teaching. Brian takes for granted the idea that students have a "role" to play in society, and that such a role necessarily involves the intersection of knowledge and power. For him, parents, teachers and students *should* be engaged in discussion about what needs to be done, within a context of unequal education. There are numerous ways in which to parse Brian's discontent. In the context of this study, it is most useful to consider how post-1994 or post-GEAR field transformations may render strange the idea of the teacher as a politico, or why such ideas are not more widely accepted despite continuities in the racialisation and (class)ification of space, as well as the spatialisation of race and class in South African education and society. Brian's lament highlights the significance of an alternative imagination in the mobilisation of teachers.

The next extract is from an interview with Clement. In this extract Clement problematises whether school principals (who occupy a different structural position in schooling) should be leading the union. Clement bemoans this as an inherent conflict of interest that has served to de-politicise the union (SADTU).

*So, most of the union leadership are principals, and this is the reality and that like is especially after, I can remember when were in the union at that time, in the 90's we were all post level one, teachers on the ground that were doing whatever... and now it is only principals, so it is obviously a conflict of interest in terms of how and what they believe and it is non-politicisation, there is no politics in the union anymore. **That is it, there's no politics** [emphasis my own] (Clement)*

There is no critical analysis of whatever is coming from the authorities, it is just a blind acceptance or if there is something it is always a reactive thing, there is no definite thing

in like even during the whole of COVID, the unions were all reactive they do not come forward with saying this is what should be done (Clement)

Clement offers an insider critique of SADTU, as someone who was an active member in its Athlone branch and involved in the early formative years of SADTU. Clement's sentiments are not anti-unionist. On the contrary, Clement firmly believes that teachers need to be organised and that labour unions have an important role to play in society. Clement also opines in the same interview that teachers can be organised but that there is lack of initiative from unions to engage in the grassroots level work of political education, organising and campaigning. What comes through most strongly in this lament is the view that things have changed, that there was a time in the formative years of the teachers' union when it was driven by the concerns of teachers and characterised by a critical edge and a willingness to mobilise teachers toward political action. Here, again, there are field transformations I will elaborate on later, that coincided with the formation of SADTU, and which need to be taken into account to understand the developmental trajectory of the union. Most pertinent to this study is that a teacher such as Clement places high value on the role of a vibrant union and sees a relationship between the strength of the union and the political engagement of teachers.

In a similar vein, Yousuf laments the persisting inequalities in the state of education provision, the lack of vigour from teacher unions and the narrowing vision of SADTU in contemporary times. In the following quote, Yousuf emphasises that the purpose of the union, WECTU, which he served as a chairperson, was to serve a much broader social project which had as its goal the fundamental transformation of society from apartheid racial capitalism, to a more egalitarian society. While reflecting on SADTU, which was formed through the amalgamation of several grassroots unions such as WECTU, Yousuf says:

Normally a trade union gets together because they are interested in the working and living conditions of their members. I am not saying that we were not interested in them but that was not our primary objective. We did not form WECTU because we wanted cheap tyres or a good medical aid, even though that would have been a benefit if we could get that. But the fundamental reason for forming the union was to participate in the working-class struggle, to change the nature of South Africa, to become a more egalitarian society. And I think that that is what we imagined SADTU would participate in when it gets into COSATU (Yousuf)

The fact that we do not have decent working-class schools in our townships, is a complete and utter disgrace. And teachers can play a big role. Teachers should not hand over to government the role of changing the nature of education. We did not do that. In WECTU, we did not hand over. We said we are going to change the education system. We had and we managed, we were part and parcel of change in the country and I think that that

is the issue. The union must be far more vigorous about changing the nature of education. It should produce teachers that are concerned about what is happening in education. I am not saying that it must endorse the politics of course. You cannot do that. We were very clear that you cannot divorce education from politics, then, and I do not think you can do it now. (Yousuf)

A WECTU pamphlet titled “Everything you always wanted to know about WECTU (*...but were afraid to ask...)” which was available in the UCT African Studies Library archive offers an affirmation of the WECTU position:

*WECTU believes that teachers in apartheid schools **cannot be neutral**. They are either on the side of **progress** and **liberation** or they support the forces of **oppression** and **exploitation**. We see ourselves as participating in the struggle for liberation. We believe that teachers must translate their verbal rejection of oppressive education into reality by **actively engaging** in progressive activities in the schools and the broader community. As teachers, however, our **primary site of struggle** should be the school. (emphasis is part of the original text)*

Yousuf notices a change in the orientation of SADTU from a commitment to a more expansive social project toward a form of trade unionism that is primarily concerned with working conditions. This critique, like those of Brian and Clement, suggests that broader social transformations have reached both into the organisations of teachers and into the political imagination of its membership base, and must be noted alongside the fragmenting of interests along class fractions which Clement alludes to.

The laments and discontent expressed above, rearticulated through the Bourdieuean framework which this study employs, may be viewed firstly as the inclinations of actors whose habitus have been shaped in world that has passed. Rather than a typical reading of hysteresis as misrecognition, the discontents felt by the teachers in this study seem to register quite profoundly a sense of what has been lost and these **memories** rather than misrecognitions offer the potential for the problematisation of what is taken for granted in the present moment. Secondly, the shifts in identity (reflected in statements such as “I tried...” or “we were...”), in imagination (reflected in ideas such as “working-class struggle” or notions of “what should be done”) and in institutions (reflected in ideas such as “non-politicisation”) also appear to describe a new *doxa* and a new sense of what is valued (or *illusio*) within the field of education and the practice of teaching but also of *the world of work* more generally.

The commentaries of the teachers in this study regarding developments since 1994 are best understood if placed in the context of the changes that have taken place in South Africa during this period..

The transition from apartheid to neoliberal capitalism, since the 1980s but most profoundly registered in the dilution and abandonment of the RDP (Narsia, 2002), the introduction of the Growth Employment and Redistribution macroeconomic strategy (RSA, 1996), as well as the new era of democracy in South Africa, have significantly altered the political landscape. The nature of work itself has been reconstructed within a nexus of *competitive-individualism and market ideology*, and this transition has been sped up by structural changes in the workforce. For four decades now, South Africa has been on a long trajectory of privatisation which has included the privatisation and deregulation of healthcare (Price, 1988), telecommunications (Mfuku, 2004), water services (von Schitzler, 2008; Narsiah 2008), and waste-collection services (Miraftab, 2004) among other sectors. Privatisation across all these sectors has had profound impacts not only on service delivery to the poor but also on the availability, quality and nature of work through casualisation, contract or 'gig economies' and other forms of precarious employment. Teachers, on the other hand, who have some measure of job security, have experienced significant *work-intensification*, increasing measures of *work-surveillance*, as well as increased *external framing* of their work driven by new curriculum policies, as well as the influence of industry on agenda-setting activities in education (Jansen, 2001; Chisholm et al., 2005; Bertram & Mxenge, 2022;). Where Bourdieu has described the field of education as relatively-autonomous, all of these new currents signal an increasing *heteronomy* of the field.

With regard to trade unionism, COSATU's (the largest trade union federation in South Africa) has repositioned (structurally) from being a militant critic of the state, fighting apartheid, to being aligned with state power within the tripartite alliance between the ruling African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. In addition to this, trade unions in South Africa have suffered a loss of leadership to management and government in the transition to democracy (Buhlungu, 2005), as well as a fragmentation of the labour force because of the ways in which neoliberalism has reshaped work. Yet, the transition moment is also marked by divestment from a broader social project (socialism, democracy, anti-apartheid struggle) toward a more conservative form of unionism which concerns itself primarily with working conditions and protecting workers from abuses. Of course, working conditions cannot be easily disentangled from broader claims for social justice. Patterns of intensification, surveillance and external framing may all serve to constrain opportunities for critical thought, gathering together and contestation. The issue I highlight here, however, is the loss of a unifying discourse and an animating vision of social transformation, that is embodied in practice. This is what the teachers in this study, who all believe in the important role unions have to play, bemoan.

At the level of the individual teacher, there are homologies between field and disposition, where a neo-liberal commonsense has subsumed an understanding of the teacher as an intellectual, a critic or a politico. The new doxa is that the worker post-1994 is supposedly free of the fetters of racism and apartheid, the world has changed about them, and the ways to effectively proceed within the system today is by getting on with the (technical)work of teaching – perhaps even to be a little entrepreneurial about it. If the concept of sacrifice may be employed, to be the activist demanded a kind of sacrifice for the sake of building or beckoning an alternative. The neoliberal marketplace similarly demands a sacrifice, only this time for the sake of the system, where good governance, efficient management, technicism and instrumental rationality are taken to be enough to improve standards of living across the board. When taken to extreme, this new '*neo-liberal subjectivity*' might be exemplified in trends such as the micro-celebrification of teacher influencers and performance of professionalism evident on social media platforms such as Tiktok, Instagram and other platforms (Davis & Yi, 2022; Schmeichell, Kerr & Wurzburg, 2022; Schroeder, Shelton & Curcio, 2023,) as well as the marketised forms of professional recognition such as teacher awards (Digón-Regueiro & Sánchez-Blanco, 2022) . In these ways, work is redefined as a performative activity, its value deriving from external authority whether official evaluations or popular approval.

The laments of the teachers in this study express a sense of hysteresis, a sense of dislocation of the habitus which is shaped by a world that has now been profoundly restructured. Their discontents offer important starting points for thinking about the absence of political consciousness. If before, there was a taken-for-grantedness that the state was oppressive and that work needed to be done to fight the powers, this is no longer immediately apparent and the habitus which emerges in the nexus of neoliberalism is not compelled to action in the same ways. The teachers in this study emerged under conditions in which the absurd became normal (see Theme 1 & 2), and therefore a range of activist stances and practices which may now seem extraordinary, may also be understood as fitting the situation. For the teachers in this study, the clear and visible cause of oppression also produced a burden to cast off the chains of oppression. Today, it is only the absurdity of apartheid to which the young teacher now relates and not the weight or social gravity which it impressed on others in their position before. The distance of time has produced new subjectivities and the more nebulous cause of oppression does not immediately demand the same forms of resistance. Neoliberalism also creates its own *social gravity* and centripetal force, in which the sensible and self-preserving action is to play the game according to its rules.

Theme 10: “A kind of socialism”: Symbolic struggle and the cultivation of a critical capital through sports and cultural associations.

In the following section, I analyse extracts from the interviews with the teachers in this study where they have spoken about the role of sports and other cultural clubs and societies, in order to show how such engagements provided the opportunity both for the cultivation of organising skills. Such skills came to constitute a form of cultural capital, while these activities assisted in the cultivation of an alternative and collective imagination through the particular interpretations of the role of sport in these associations.

Clement

...so growing up in that area, our home was like a hub, the whole neighbourhood. You know we had a garage, my dad actually when they were forcefully removed from that area Greenpoint and Loader Street, they brought the club, the Stephanians Table Tennis Club to his home, so he built a double garage...he had a table tennis board there and obviously all the children in the area grew up playing table tennis there, so there was table tennis from the afternoon right through to the evening and also the football club, the Stephanians Football Club, my dad was involved in the juniors so he used to organise the junior players, so the whole neighbourhood we were all very...we concentrated in that by the house. So they brought us up like you know we organised ourselves as juniors. I can remember he taught us basic skills to run our own club like we had our own, we had meetings, religiously we had meetings every week, we had report backs and we learnt the skills like secretarial, chairing meetings and giving reports and all those things right through into our teens. - (Clement)

In the above quote, Clement describes his family home as a hub for the community. It is a meeting place, a place where people gather and a place of social exchange. Significantly, he offers a rich description of a set of “basic skills” which he acquired through his own participation within the Stephanians Table Tennis Club. These basic skills extend beyond the domain of sporting activities and include organisational and administrative skills such as meeting, reporting, chairing and secretarial work. These reflections from Clement show how, at a very young age, the foundational aspects of organising work are acquired, albeit in a more ‘generic’ sense. Building organisations, whether for sport or political reasons, requires bringing people together and the skill to hold a space for the activities of the group to proceed. It would be wrong to apply a dualistic

reasoning in which sports and politics are separated, since sports itself is inherently political and, within the context of apartheid, the state also applied overt political measures to structure the field of sports along racial divisions. Here, however I want to hone in on the issue of capital by suggesting that the capitals acquired in the sports club are capitals which Clement was able to mobilise within a different field (the field of power or the political field) in his youth and on his entry into the field of teaching.

Yousuf

Yousuf tells a similar story about an opportunity available to him in his youth, to be part of an organisation, this time one with an overtly political reason for existence, the student relief fund.

So, we were going to show the movie and invite all the schools in the area and all over Johannesburg to come watch the movie, pay for it and then take the proceeds to Billy Nannan. So, in this student relief fund, we had a debate. Some students said we must not show Animal Farm because it is ultimately a reactionary book because in the end, the pigs seize control of the farm again. So, some of us had seen the movie. The movie ends differently. In the movie, the pigs get overthrown in the end and I argued in the student relief fund meeting, that that is why it was a good movie to show. I will tell you in a little while why I am pointing out this detail, okay? We collected a lot of money and one day from school, the whole school took off. The principal pretended to be annoyed. He was not. And we marched through Lenz [Lenasia], what there was, to Billy Nannan's house to go and give him the money and to say farewell to him.

In the extract above, there are a few critical aspects to note. Firstly, that the organisers are students. Secondly, that they are engaged in serious activities such as holding meetings, debate, fundraising, and marching for important issues such as supporting teachers whose lives were interrupted by the state. This recollection, as in Clement's story, shows how in his youth, Yousuf acquired particular skills for bringing people together, deliberating on important issues and taking collective action. Of course, there are a multitude of contexts in which the acquisition of such capitals may occur and a number of different ways in which individuals later set these capitals into motion. However, I am not attempting to draw linear conclusions about the particular kinds of activities or the ends to which the capitals acquired are used. Rather, I am attempting to show how the cultivation of the heuristic skills specifically relating to organising provides the opportunity for the emergence of the heretic leader, the community organiser or the union leader. In Yousuf's

life, the skills are recognised and consecrated in particular moments when he rises to positions of leadership, but what I am showing, is that they have a genesis in earlier roles he held.

One example of how Yousuf mobilises this organising capacity in his adult life is within the context of sports organising under the banner of SACOS. In the extract below he praises the work of SACOS and SACOS-oriented teachers who organised the various sporting codes in which students participated:

The biggest thing that I found then was that there was the Senior School's Sports Association. I am not sure what year you were in school but the teachers at that time, and this was under SACOS. As far as I am concerned, one of the best organisations this country has ever had, is the Western Province Senior School Sports Association. I think the primary school one was the same. That association ran all the sports in the province, every code, football, cricket. In fact, do you know who Mr Ritchie is? Mr [Victor] Ritchie and I started the chess code in SACOS. So, I was very active in the Western Province Senior School Sports Union. That is the union that organised the sports days at Athlone Stadium and things like that, teachers giving their time absolutely free of charge, working day and night to make sure that the kids participated in sport. - (Yousuf)

While it is beyond the main focus of this study, the history and role of SACOS within the context of anti-apartheid struggle is an example of how sports organising and political organising come together. SACOS members were involved in organising sports at grassroots level, while simultaneously launching an assault on the legitimacy of international sports participation in the context of race and class division in South Africa. In a sense, the political critique of SACOS was all the more powerful because it was underwritten by the “everyday” organising of the leagues and games.

Marcus

Marcus also commented on his involvement in sport. In his interview, he offered an alternative interpretation (or an alternative history) of non-racial sports organising. In humour, he suggests that the reason for organising across racial divides was that people wanted to know who the best players were.

We played in Cities, so when I came I played for Cities Union; I played for Woodstock Rangers, mainly from District Six...in communities, there was an eagerness to play together. Do you know why? “Ashley is die beste fly-half in die Coloured Township, amongst three other clubs, dis Dicky Mac Master that happened to be my uncle and Ivan Nelson and so on, and in the African Township is [...]Mathews, who is the best fly-half? How do you know? Hulle moet saam speel of teen mekaar. Now how do you do that? It was for the simple reason like that it was not about non-racial, ons moet weet wie is die beste fly-half...So, it was that sort of thing, only non-racialism came a bit later, and it was built on that. - (Marcus)

In the extract above, Marcus appears to be making an interpretative move which is to say that the ordinary aspirations and desires of people can also prefigure direct political engagement. Sports organising comes up against the contradictions in a racialised society and precipitates the need for political action.

Marcus was also a sports enthusiast who, during his incarceration on Robben Island, was involved in organising soccer with other political prisoners, at first using rolled-up shirts to make a soccer ball (Mitchell, 2018). Part of this story is dramatized in the semi-documentary film “*More than Just a Game*”. In another source by Buthelezi (2010), Marcus says that:

... the Chinese was very much a dominant approach, you know we play because we want to create friends and it's not to win, it's to create a new human relationship, a new social order and sport must in that way contribute to that. So the whole range of activities, for example, we had the cultural associations. (p.82)

It is evident that, for Marcus, sport is in fact ‘political’, even to the extent that it contributes to cultivating the kinds of social relations required to establish a new social order. Sport is a symbolic struggle, but for Marcus, abstracting in his own way, the emphasis is placed first on the everyday, the prefigurative.

Brian

Brian commented on the impact of community sports and the impact it had on people. He described the relations cultivated through sport as “a kind of socialism”:

I think that one also has to look on the what are the good things that happened to one in our society and I must say for example from a sporting point of view during apartheid because these people made things very difficult for us in not giving us the necessary sports facilities we looked towards our community to give us that sport facility and I mean that to me was a kind of socialism that was taking place. - (Brian)

Brian represents these associations as relays for an alternative social imaginary. He elaborates also on the kinds of values which were communicated through sport and also through other arts and cultural activities within the community. Such “values” included a concern for others, anti-racism and anti-capitalism.

Your parent would say “there is a soccer club in the area, you go and join the soccer club”. The values that all these sports clubs were exposing in the apartheid era was: we want to fight evil, we want the best for our children, we don't want to charge money, we play in amateur sport, we will do anything to help people...that is not only in sport, that was extra mural activities, people belonging to drama groups, people belonging to cultural groups, they didn't have big sponsorships but they created this community spirit...” - (Brian)

In his account, he emphasises how players cultivated both sporting skills and a capacity for critical engagement in society.

Now in our family, we were very involved in tennis, and in soccer. In tennis we belonged to Lansdowne Tennis Club, and in our club, we had people who were good tennis players, but also fighting for non-racial sport. - (Brian)

Brian's story also shows how the politics of the sporting arena would be debated around the intimacy of the supper table, and how pride was taken in being part of non-racial sporting organisations.

So, I think we were sort of always at the supper table, discussing these issues. My father talking about the attitude of the so-called whites towards him as a builder. And we bring in our stories from the sporting world, and we are forming organisations now, that is promoting non-racial sport. And people are becoming more and more militant about not participating against so-called whites, and forming our own organisations, and being proud of the organisations to which we belong. So of course when seventy-three came, people became more anti-white sport, and promoted the non-racial sport. - (Brian)

Whereas Clement and Yousuf's account highlighted the role of sports and cultural organisations in cultivating the cultural capitals necessary for organising groups and activities, Marcus's story and Brian's story show how these same organisations cultivated alternative values and social relations and an alternative social imaginary, which Marcus identified as a "new social order" and Brian named as "a kind of socialism". Whereas sport is often viewed as an attempt to work on the body, within the various sporting and cultural associations, the individuals in this study also learn to embody and practice new ways of being in the world.

To return to the question of emergence, it is reasonable, as the accounts of the teachers in the study illustrate, to suggest that the organising of and participation in sporting and cultural associations such as SACOS did have an influence on the kind of people the teachers in this study were becoming. It is also reasonable to suggest that participation in associations and clubs where young people were afforded the opportunity to plan, lead and organise (such as the Stephanians for Clement and the student relief fund for Yousuf), where more egalitarian social imaginaries were in circulation and the capacity to read the world through a critical gaze was cultivated, did have a catalysing effect in times of crisis. SACOS was a product of its time, and though many mourn the loss of the organisation amid ongoing struggle for equality in sports (see Hendricks, 2021; Cleophas, 2023), the objective conditions of struggle have changed. The question worth confronting in our time concerns what spaces exist today where young people are able to develop critical capacity and organising capacity. It is not as simple as reviving

organisations of the past. We need to understand how new organisations may be established within conditions marked by even starker class differentiation than there was during the transition to democracy, increasing precarity of labour which touches even professional work, and in a situation where the taken-for-granted dominates how the future is imagined.

7. Discussion & Conclusion: Theorising the emergence of the activist habitus

In this section, I return to the original questions guiding this research, which posed the problem of why some individuals take up oppositional stances in the face of oppression when others do not, and ask: what are the enabling or disabling factors for organised resistance.

Methodologically, I chose to approach these questions by focusing on the broader socio-historical and political situations that shaped the lives of the teachers in this study, critical-incidents both at the personal level and at the broader social level, collective processes and organisations which the teachers in this study have shaped and been shaped by, and the shared imaginations or images of the future through which events are interpreted and which compelled these teachers to action. These foci emerged from the analysis as factors that were common across the experiences of the four teacher activists.

My approach was shaped, firstly, by my decision to adopt a Bourdieuean relational sociology which rejects privileging either subjective or objective explanations of social phenomena and rather seeks an integrative understanding which recognises the influence and limits of both. Secondly, I chose to focus this study on the lives of four teachers who came of age and entered into the field of teaching during apartheid. This broader period was significant because life under apartheid could also be understood as an *ideal time* not in the sense of being desirable or optimal, but in the sense of offering a set of conditions that was able to draw several ordinary people into activist stances. In exploring the formation of teacher activists during apartheid, I have analysed the relations *between* the individuals themselves and that historical moment, in order to better understand what it was about such times and individuals that could enable the emergence of individual and collective activism in the field of education.

The implication of the above two choices is that the design of the research calls for an “inter-textual” interpretation which places the stories of the individual lives back into relation with the field of power, locally and globally. For this reason, I move back and forth, deliberately, between the accounts of the teachers and other literature to contextualise their narratives.

My analysis of the data pertaining to the lives of the teachers has been organised in relation to ten themes which have been derived from the analysis and built upon the methodological approach of the study. They represent my attempt to retain a sense of the twists and turns in the interview process. For readers unfamiliar with Bourdieu’s universe of concepts, and how they fit together in

his relational sociology, the themes may have a centrifugal feel to them as they push away from a centre. Here, I will bring them back to bear on two problematics presented in this study, namely 'emergence' and 'absence' of activism within a particular field, the field of teaching, and demonstrate how studying the life trajectory of individual teachers can provide pertinent insights both into understanding emergence of teacher activism within a particular historical moment and also for theorising action or inaction in the present moment.

The ten themes were respectively titled: 1) "Apartheid was ever present in our lives", 2) "And my top was split in two", 3), "They were all political", 4) "Histories are made by people", 5) "The new person", 6) "Whatever the hell I was supposed to be", 7) "Catch us if you can", 8) Embodied politics, 9) "That's it! There's no politics" and 10) "A kind of socialism: Symbolic struggle and the cultivation of a critical capital through sports and cultural associations". Each of the themes speak to the original questions in a unique way but it is viewing them together and in relation to each other which allows for a systematisation of thinking in relation to the problem of activist habitus, or the emergence of prophets and heretics, in a particular historical moment.

Collectively, these themes illustrate how the emergence of activism in the lives of the teachers represented occurred within an objective situation of crisis, punctuated by critical incidents in which systemic violence becomes personal. Yet, the situation of crisis itself was not sufficient, by itself, to ensure the emergence of activism. The teachers needed to have particular species of capital to enable them to convert the crisis into an opportunity for activism. For this, the available discourses provide the necessary tools, and, in the lives of the teachers in this study, discourses of socialism or religion, or both, offered narratives which could link the personal to the political, and individual struggles to common struggles. For each of them, the experiences during their youth enabled the acquisition of capitals which they are able to mobilise later in life.

The discussion of themes one and two dealt with the overt and pervasive nature of oppression under apartheid which was articulated through forced removals, disrupting family activities, spatial and educational arrangements, and which was also expressed through repressive strategies such as arrest, incarceration and police violence. Together, these sections describe both the milieu under apartheid and how the position of intellectuals (teachers) was bound up with the masses. While teachers were professionals, their professional identities did not safeguard them from racial oppression and exclusion. Under apartheid, the racial classification of teachers was more salient than their objective position in the structure of the political field (their social class). Despite the professional identity of teachers, they could be subjected to the same violent confrontations,

exclusions and limits in terms of social mobility as everyone else. Differentiation along lines of race was embedded in the arrangements within schooling (departmental segmentation, funding, curriculum, infrastructure) and this also meant that individuals designated as 'coloured' could not occupy particular positions within the system.

The section relating to themes three and four describe resistance as it was enacted in the family and educational context of the teachers. Linkages were made between the everyday resistance enacted by caregivers, such as the parents of the teachers in this study, and the organised resistance of teacher-activists who engaged in intellectual critiques of domination in the schools the teachers attended in their youth. Together, these sections demonstrate the significance of critique as a weapon against domination, and the ready availability of such critique as a form of 'cultural capital' for the teachers in this study.

Themes five and six relate to the strivings and dispositions of the teachers in this study to be moral beings, Christian or socialist or – as offered by one of the teachers – to become a 'new person'. Theme six also engaged with the teachers' own struggles against imposed racial identities. Together, they showed the significance of an alternative imaginary, in this case religious or socialist, or a combination of both, which provided a sort of moral vision for society, for the individuals in this study.

The sections on themes 7 and 8 illustrate an aspect of youth and activism that is not always captured by typical notions of 'struggle': this is that there can often be vitality, joy and exhilaration in enacting resistance, as captured in Marcus's "catch us if you can", Brian's attempt to "call their bluff", Clement's "living something". Even where Yousuf did not express it in the same terms, standing up to the inspector or throwing the textbook out of the window are all at once symbolic, pedagogical and also 'play-full' in the most serious sense of the word. These themes together speak to the conditions of existence in which the four teachers both came of age and entered into the field of teaching. Though they were undesirable conditions, they also invoked the "playfulness" of the actors involved.

The analysis relating to theme 9 engages with the laments of the four teachers about current non-politicisation and the state of the union (SADTU), reconceptualising their laments through Bourdieu's notion of "social gravity" and "hysteresis". In this theme, I contrasted the past and the present, considering how neoliberal hegemony has re-structured political imaginations and the world of work.

The discussion of theme 10 paid cognisance to the role of sport in the lives of these teachers, and the ways in which sports organising, in particular, developed capitals that could be and were mobilised in other forms of activist organising.

The set of themes discussed above explored different dimensions of the main question for the study. Each theme focused on common insights which emerged from analysis of the data, . The aim of this analytic approach was to retain the richness and breadth of the data while generating novel insights concerning the emergence of activism in the lives of the four teachers in this study. In the section below, I return to the main question, looking across these themes and attempting to provide a more abstract and systematic response which draws together the insights from the full set of themes.

Understanding the emergence of teacher activist

The main question of this research was articulated in the following manner:

Why are some teachers compelled to action and resistance behaviours when others adopt compliant postures in the face of oppression?

I want to clarify here and respond to potential reservations which readers may have about what counts as 'resistance' and 'compliance', and whether resistance has been too narrowly defined. In constructing the question this way, I was not ignorant of the literature on resistance from Willis (1977/1981), Scott (1985), and Giroux (1983), among others, who recognise acts otherwise misrecognised as acquiescence, as acts of resistance. In fact, in my own prior research (Visagie, 2019), I have made similar assertions, suggesting that 'checking out' in the school classroom or 'dropping out' of school might also be considered acts of resistance in the face of an education system that is unable to deliver on the promises it makes in terms of advancing social mobility. One form of resistance is about rejection and may encompass a range of actions that do not necessarily aim to transform oppressive conditions, while the other, which is defined in my study as 'activism', implies a form of resistance that is animated by a social vision for the future and is directed toward changing oppressive conditions. In this study, however, I wanted to grasp the nettle by engaging more directly with the emergence of the latter form of organised activism. What this study has shown is that the disguised or hidden acts of resistance, i.e. the former type, prefigure the visible and public activism in the lives of the four teachers in this study, but that there is a process of 'translation', re-interpretation and re-articulation (a labour of critique and imagination) which facilitates this shift. As the original question suggests, the study is an

investigation into the enabling conditions (the ‘what’ and ‘why’) for the emergence of this kind of teacher activism.

I have approached this question from the vantage point of a Bourdieuan understanding of practice as the product of the habitus of an individual and available capitals, mobilised within a particular terrain or field which itself exerts a force on the individual. I have also made a conscious effort not to separate these three integral concepts of Bourdieu’s toolkits from less widely deployed concepts such as “heretical discourse” and “symbolic struggle” and his strong engagements with “critical moments” (notably the Paris ‘68 student revolts) and revolution, as seen in his work on symbolic revolutions in the artistic field, his writing about the work of prophets, and his political writings which are equally integral to his oeuvre and which help to dispel common caricatures of Bourdieuan analysis as being primarily concerned with social reproduction. The help Bourdieu offers is not a string of loosely connected concepts, but a method which recognises critique as a weapon against domination, by de-normalising categories and perceptions of thought; a method which is scientific and non-normative, by privileging the ontological first, above the political; and, one that is relational by collapsing traditional binaries in analysis and privileging relations between structure and agency (LSE, 2023).

From this Bourdieuan perspective, the focus of the study can be reframed as questions about what capitals, in particular, and what dispositions might come together within a moment of crisis, for the conversion of the crisis into a critical moment, in which we witness the emergence of the “heretic” and the movement? Within this framing, I want to elaborate on how an *alternative imagination* drawn from the available discourses in circulation, as well as the teachers’ moral commitments to fairness and justice, together with acquired *cultural capitals* such as the ability to engage in social critique and practical skills in organising, when they come together in a time of crisis, produces the possibilities for the emergence of the activist, the movement, and *transformation of the field of power*.

Crisis

“This break in the chain of anticipated identifications, which were rooted in the order of succession which they tended to reproduce, is of a kind to encourage a sort of secession of agents who, excluded from the race for future prospects which until then had been programmed into their position, are now led to call into question the race itself...the objective break in the circle of expectations and opportunities leads an important fraction of the less subordinate among the subordinate [...] to leave the race, that is to say, the competitive struggle implying acceptance of the rules of the game laid down and the goals proposed by the dominant class, and to take up a struggle which we may call revolutionary

in so far as it aims to establish alternative goals and more or less completely to redefine the game and the moves which permit one to win it.” (Bourdieu 1988/1984, p. 172)

One can draw parallels between the situation Bourdieu describes in the quotation, above, and the position of teachers in South Africa in the eighties. Bourdieu explains how shifts within the academic field in France, leading up to 1968, had generated a situation in which a fraction of the academic class, who suffered ‘mutilated careers’ and ‘difficult posts’ (ibid. p.172) occupied an objective position much closer to the position of their students than to ‘titular professors’. On one hand, students faced a devaluation of their qualifications, while on the other hand, the assistant lecturers faced the mutilation of their posts. This break in anticipated identifications, he argues, leads to a situation of interest convergence between the subordinated class of lecturers and the students, which leads them to join in the struggle to transform the field.

Turning back to the South African context, there existed, rather, an ongoing crisis in which Black intellectuals were limited by apartheid restraints so that they were unable to convert their cultural capitals and improve their chances of upward social mobility. From the genesis of apartheid, then, two things are apparent: firstly, that individuals who might have otherwise pursued a career in higher status fields enter into the field of teaching; secondly, that within the field of teaching, these teachers remain barred from occupying higher status positions within the field. In this way, there is an immediate convergence of interest for teachers who seek to change the rules within the field and the students they teach, seeking an education of equal value to other students. In this way, the structural conditions of apartheid always presupposed the possibility of rupture and were characterised by continuous struggle met with continuous repression.

The final stages of legal apartheid in South Africa were marked by ‘extraordinary’ moments, such as for example when in 1975 the Bantu Education Department announced the 50/50 language rule, attempting to introduce Afrikaans as a medium of instruction for maths, social studies and arithmetic. While this language policy might be identified as an immediate cause of the protests, the Soweto Uprising of 1976 was of course related to a much broader struggle against apartheid. The protests could spread through the country precisely because they spoke to already existing tensions in the field of schooling. Moments of acute crisis such as these open up possibilities for change. They are invitations to reflexivity, and they provoke the imagining of a different future.

The role of an alternative imagination

This research has demonstrated the pivotal role of an alternative imagination in the formation and emergence of the radical habitus. The teachers in this study all self-identify as “socialists”. Such

self-declarations about “socialist identity” were embedded within a register of activist discourse during a time in which socialist critique was in wide circulation and indeed where it even entered into the school classroom through the pedagogical work of teacher-intellectuals, such as those who were members of the TLSA. The teachers in this study came of age in a context where not only was a socialist discourse in wide circulation (openly or clandestinely) but there also existed a real and palpable possibility that change is possible within the global south. The gravity of their commitment to socialism went beyond just having different ideas about how society might be organised. In a sense, their commitment had more in common with a religious commitment since embedded within it was also a normative and utopian vision of society, and this is important because it motivates action. The alternative imagination from which they draw suggests that the existing social arrangements in which they grew up were neither “natural” nor “desirable”, and so they were compelled to the work of establishing an alternative order. This is true for all the teachers in this study.

Declarations about being a socialist (or other political identities) would appear somewhat out of place in most classrooms today because teachers have come of age in a world that has been profoundly changed by a neoliberal capitalist social imaginary. I am not disputing that teachers today might self-identify in different ways, liberal or otherwise. Rather I am suggesting that the situation (or the field of power) has changed objectively, in ways that such political dilemmas do not immediately confront actors in the same ways. There is no explicit or overt ideology: rather it is the taken-for-granted that carries power.

Placing activity back into a space of broader social-relations.

This account of the ways in which these activist teachers interacted with other activists and responded to contemporary texts in making sense of their context places the emergence of the radical imagination of the teachers back into relation with the broader field of power. Doing so enables us to relate the emergence of mass social movements in South Africa to a broader context of revolutions and wars of independence outside of South Africa: wars that provided counterexamples from which activists could learn and draw inspiration. From the 1950s-1970s there were several significant revolutions or wars of independence in Africa and Latin America, including in Mozambique, Angola, Cuba and Nicaragua, each of which could help to foment the idea that change was not only possible but also within reach. As Kundnani (2023) puts it: *“Fifty armed movements for national liberation in the Third World were recorded by the Pentagon in 1969”* (pg. 126)

In this view, Marcus and his colleagues reading about guerilla movements in the Yu Chi Chan Club is in keeping with the times. Their attempts to build a network of cells in the National Liberation Front happens in the 1960s, at a moment when other organisations both locally and globally are taking up arms in the liberation struggle. Some of their activities, such as starting a socialist creche among comrades and their commitment to a children's movement, are also better understood as being situated in the milieu of other global movements such as the Young Pioneers of Cuba (JMPO), which was established in 1961. On the international front, the period of the late 1960s also saw the upsurge of the politics of the New Left, including the Paris '68 protests which Bourdieu analyses. Similarly, the so-called 1970s "watershed moment" of youth politics in South Africa was mirrored globally in the emergence of Black Power in the US, with the cultural productions of the time also energising young activists locally.

Recognising capital as an enabler of activity

Building movements and organisations, at any scale, requires the mobilisation of particular kinds of capitals – including cultural capitals or competencies - for the most basic activities such as gathering together, moving people and things (organising skills), as well as for the formulation of a theory of change (critique as a weapon against domination).

Economic capital

It is no trivial matter that liberation struggles in Africa and Latin America also received support from funders abroad, and the work of the activists in this study benefitted from this, at times. The political situation in South Africa under apartheid also meant that global funding agencies and other foreign donors were prepared to invest in the work of non-governmental organisations such as SACHED, which Marcus joined in 1983, being a case in point. There were also convergences of interest from religious organisations such as SACC, Spro-cas and RAVAN Press founded in 1972 by Peter Randall, Danie Van Zyl and Beyers Naude. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the negotiated settlement to end apartheid therefore profoundly changed both the sources and the nature of funding (Trimbur 2009, p. 104).

In short, there existed enabling conditions for the formation of anti-apartheid organisations. Such conditions do not exist today in the same ways, following significant changes in the donor-landscape whether left-leaning or liberal. As Trimbur (2009) suggests:

For one thing, the negotiated settlement that instituted black majority rule and handed over the state apparatus of racial capitalism to the ANC led a number of foreign donors who

had supported important service organizations and grassroots movements in the 1980s to cease funding or enter directly into agreements with government (Trimbur, 2009, p. 104)

Capitals, however, extend beyond the economic form, and social and cultural capital also have a significant role to play in the work of organising and the forming of organisations. I have identified two species of cultural capital which significantly contributed to the ability of the teachers in this study to respond within a moment of crisis, namely the capacity to engage in critique, which is cultivated through critical education, and the capacity to organise, which is cultivated through participation in group decision-making processes and the opportunity to assume responsible roles within the context of social groups.

Critique as a weapon against domination

...the political action of subversion aims to liberate the potential capacity for refusal which is neutralized by misrecognition, by performing, aided by a crisis, a critical unveiling of the founding violence that is masked by the adjustment between the order of things and the order of bodies. The symbolic work needed in order to break out of the silent self-evidence of doxa and to state and denounce the arbitrariness that it conceals presupposes instruments of expression and criticism which, like the other forms of capital, are unequally distributed. (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 188)

The teachers interviewed in this research are examples of individuals endowed with particular cultural capitals. While they did not come from homes well-endowed with economic capital, all of them, either in childhood or as they were coming of age, had access to politicised individuals, whether teachers or parents, who were able to cultivate and nourish their capacity for critique as a weapon against domination. Yousuf's parents were involved in the Natal Indian Congress and his politicisation was enacted while he was still in primary school, as he fought against the closure of his school and the broader issue of forced removals which his community was facing. Brian and Clement attended South Peninsula and Livingstone High Schools respectively, and both schools were steeped in the politics of the Unity Movement. Marcus went to Trafalgar High at a time when it was run de facto by towering intellectuals of the Unity Movement and the New Era Fellowship, whose debates he attended in his youth. Crain Soudien (2019) discussing the work of the NEF, says the following of such individuals:

The story [of the New Era Fellowship] begins almost monumentally in the figures of a handful of young men and women – Goolam Gool, Jane Gool, Isaac Tabata, Ben Kies, Willem van Schoor – and thunders into the 1940s and early 1950s in the examples of Dora Taylor, Sonny Abdurahman, Minnie Gool, Edgar Maurice, Joyce Meissenheimer, Helen Kies, Dick Dudley, A C Jordan, Phyllis Ntantala, Tom Hanmer, Polly Slingers, Ernie

Steenveld, Cosmo Pieterse, Mda Mda, Victor Wessels, Gwen and Edna Wilcox, and Livie Mqotsi, to mention only a few. These men and women were responsible for producing, if not a golden age for Cape Town (the times were too oppressive), then certainly an age that was pregnant with possibility. (Soudien, 2019, p.14)

The intellectual labour and political pedagogies of teachers from this movement may be said to have cultivated 'capitals' to the extent that they involve a systematisation of critique that is different to the spontaneous reactions which may always be found in a situation of domination. Developing the capacity for reading and analysing the world, they offered young people a way of moving beyond mere rejection of their conditions and toward a vision of social transformation.

Organising skills as cultural capital

The capitals accumulated from participation in activist communities are not limited to critiques of domination. Rather, they extend also to the capacity for organising. Clement, for example, learned - within the context of Stephanians - meeting skills and protocols which were transferable into later organising activities in high school as an SRC member and also as an organiser of the history society. Yousuf could also hone such organising skills in his capacity as the treasurer of a student relief fund at high school, in which one of the projects involved raising funds for the banned Indian Congress member, Billy Nannan. Yousuf's memory of the story offers insight into how debate and differences of opinion could be managed within the context of the relief fund (see theme 10).

Theorising the relative absence of teacher social movements in contemporary South Africa

In this section, I want to demonstrate how the lessons I have learned through a critical analysis of the past may also provide a heuristic framework for thinking about the current absence of a large-scale, coordinated and social-justice-oriented movement of teachers in South Africa. In order to do so, I draw insights from the specific learnings about the emergence of teachers in this study and transpose them in a more general way, toward *an* understanding of absence in the current moment.

What come together in the stories of the four teachers in this study, are 1) a broader political, economic and social 'situation' or set of objective conditions that are immediately visible and confrontational, 2) an alternative imagination and critical capacity cultivated through the work of teacher-intellectuals, which systematises (or crystallises) the discontents already apparent in the prefigurative politics of ordinary working-class families and 3) crises or critical incidents, both specific (at the level of the individual) and general (across society), and 4) the cultivation of a

capacity for organising, in and through sporting and cultural clubs and associations, that is able to be mobilised in response to crisis and to convert moments of crises into critical moments.

In order to make the transpositions from past to present and from theoretical abstractions to concrete reality, a few contrasts are helpful. A first contrast concerns the visibility of confrontation vs the invisibility of economic and social policies and arrangements. When Yousuf says “Apartheid was ever present in our lives” and when Clement says “I had marks all over my body” (from where the sjambok struck him), they refer to visible marks of oppression. In contrast, in the present moment, violence has become less visible. Rather than operating via brute force, it operates through the seemingly innocuous mechanisms of policies and procedures that are not encoded in a racialised discourse but which allow structural racism to persist. Families are not chased away from ‘whites only’ beaches, for example, but spatial patterns of inequality persist because of spatial planning, transport infrastructure and economic inequality.

A second contrast concerns the structure of the field in which racial exclusions are no longer formalised by law but rather informally regulated by the economy. Positions are no longer racially reserved. Under apartheid, the objective position of the racialised subject was clearly a circumscribed one with boundaries and limits which the teachers in this study came up against in their coming of age. For example, Brian said “*We could not go to UCT because it [the course] was offered at UWC*” and Yousuf shared that “*I wanted to do a maths degree but I needed a permit to go to UCT to do it...But they would not give me a permit because I was a ‘Coloured’*”. Now, these limits do not appear in the same way. No one is barred from access, at least by law, because of their race. Today, access for youth from working-class and underemployed families is differentiated for economic reasons. These reasons extend beyond the direct financial exclusion of user-fees. Being born into a poor family and attending a school that is inadequately resourced often results in exclusion because of the failure of the school to transmit the capitals that are necessary for the ‘meritocratic’ selection processes of the university. In fact, treating every student equally when their life and schooling experiences have been profoundly shaped by their class position reproduces past race and class inequalities. Many students are excluded from university long before they even submit an application. The positions are apparently available to anybody, though they cannot be accessed by anybody, and so a much more nuanced analysis of race and economy is needed to unpick the problem.

Another contrast is that an alternative imagination such as that presented within a “socialist” discourse, does not circulate in the same ways. While not everybody was a socialist in the

eighties, there were schoolteachers who strongly identified as socialist and who were embedded in communities of like-minded teachers. In contemporary South Africa, the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism is imbibed as common sense, without it needing to be articulated or verbalised. It has become the “legitimate vision” of the social world. This is reflected, for example, in the politics of both the ruling party and its strongest opposition.

Lastly, the opportunities for the acquisition of both critique-as-capital and organising-capacity-as-capital, that are necessary for the conversion of crisis moments into moments of action, are no longer as readily accessible. The momentum of the movements of the past which are legible in Clement’s account of student campus politics, when he says “*it was just broader, everywhere you looked it was different organisations*”, no longer exists. The world in which the teachers in this study were formed has passed.

The end of a world and the new world.

And when trade union officials become converted into administrators, removed from the preoccupations of those whom they represent, they can be led by competition between or within trade union "machines" to defend their own interests rather than the interests of those whom they are supposed to be defending. This cannot but have contributed in part to distancing wage earners from the trade unions and to deterring trade union members themselves from active participation in the organization. (Bourdieu 2003/2001, p. 45)

The section entitled “That’s it! There’s no politics” refers to the conditions Bourdieu describes in “*Firing back: Against the Tyranny of the Market 2*” and also in “*The Weight of the World*” where collective organising had become difficult because the objective conditions of society had changed, and work and industry had been restructured. This parallels conditions in South Africa after 1994 when union leadership in South Africa took up positions within the state and corporate sectors, while the union itself became embedded within state power, and the globalisation of neoliberal politics, ushered into South Africa through the adoption of GEAR, had profound effects for the world of work in terms of increasing privatisation, casualisation of labour and precarity of work. In the field of teaching, more specifically, rationalisation of posts (Vally & Tleane, 2002) together with work intensification and the increasing tyranny of assessment and administrative workloads (Chisholm, 2005) limited the time available for critical reflection or organising. The teachers in this study lamented the loss of a broader social vision within teachers’ unions, as well as a sense of a broader depoliticization of teachers, and registered the profound changes which had taken place in the post-apartheid transition. Of course, there are significant differences between the French labour unions which Bourdieu writes about and the South African context. In post-1994 South Africa, the challenge to labour unions, and to teacher unions specifically, has

not been about reduced membership due to restructuring of the workforce but rather about a shift towards a less politicised and mobilised union constituency. This shift was due to an overall structural repositioning of COSATU (of which SADTU, the left-aligned teacher union forms part) from being in opposition to the apartheid state before 1994, to being a member of the tripartite alliance post-1994. In order to understand this depoliticization in the South African context, we need to understand how it took place within the dynamics of symbolic struggles, or broader struggles over vision, when neoliberalism was establishing itself as the dominant vision.

Extending the discussion above, which attempts to explain the relative absence of teacher activism in South Africa today, the section below considers how South Africa's transition to democracy occurred within a moment of symbolic revolution which established neoliberal hegemony, and a time of triumphant nation-making, both of which have rendered that much more difficult the task of organising teachers politically.

The symbolic revolution of neoliberalism: depoliticisation through the de-linking of identity/race and economy/capitalism

The political struggle may be described as a struggle to impose legitimate vision of space within which that struggle takes place. In other words, it is a struggle to impose the right vision of the divisions of the space within which people are divided, among other things, by their visions of the right divisions of the space. (Bourdieu, 2022, p. 110)

South Africa's political and economic trajectory has been influenced by two significant symbolic revolutions, which coincided during its critical period of negotiating the end of apartheid and the transition toward democracy. The first of these involved the collapse of the Soviet Union which also created fertile ground for the expansion of Thatcherism and the globalisation of neoliberal capitalism, while the second symbolic revolution involved the pedagogical work of the incoming ruling party in the construction of a new national identity, layered over the structural arrangements of the old order.

In order to be clear about why I classify these changes as 'symbolic revolutions', I also need to clarify why I do not treat any perceived 'victories' (in the normative sense) in South Africa's democratic transition as part of a symbolic revolution within a Bourdieuean framework. The important distinction to make is that, when talking about symbolic domination, Bourdieu is concerned with categories of perception and thought, and therefore a symbolic revolution implies changing these categories of thought.

When treating symbolic domination and revolution in this way, a few justifiable claims may be made. Firstly, in regard to the question of race, apartheid never did achieve such a level of symbolic domination among the oppressed, and it relied on brute force until such time it as became untenable to continue doing so. It suffered the constant criticism of those who felt its weight. The “struggle” over or against racial identities expressed by the teachers in this study, together with their alignments to non-racial sport, provided examples of this. Secondly, the transitions in the field of power, toward democracy in South Africa, also did not create the kind of ruptures in categories of perception that may justifiably be categorised as symbolic revolution. In relation to the pivotal question of race and class, the construction of the new state did not attend to the underpinnings of the system of apartheid, and so the fundamentally capitalist foundations of apartheid have become the building blocks for the new state. This is precisely the critique which left intellectuals who conceptualise ‘racial capitalism’ usefully point out, whether they be from a so-called “classical” Marxist viewpoint or a Black Marxism tradition. In the classical tradition, the diagnosis is a failure to recognise apartheid as a manifestation of a capitalist economy. In the Black radical tradition, the diagnosis is a failure to recognise the mutually constitutive and historical entanglements between race and class.

Now, returning to the fall of the Soviet Union and the rise of Thatcherism, this qualifies as a symbolic revolution, to such an extent that the victors in the struggle have been able to pronounce an “end of history”:

What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of postwar history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government. (Fukuyama, 1989)

The fall of the Soviet Union and its support of movements in the ‘two-thirds’ world has put socialism on a back foot, and the proliferation of neoliberal ideology, accompanied by structural adjustment plans and so-called “poverty reduction strategy papers” gave new life to capitalism. The nation-building project in the “new” South Africa was reflected in the discourse of the “Rainbow Nation” and post-1994 cultural referents such as the South African Broadcasting Commission TV jingle “Simunye! We are one!” which plastered over the cracks that were present in glaring inequalities, including the ongoing spatialisation of race and racialisation of space post-1994. This also qualifies as a symbolic revolution because the symbolic “end” of apartheid breathed new life into capitalism via the transition to a liberal democracy, and established a new

(neoliberal) doxa. Capitalist expansion could now proceed unencumbered by its entanglement with race politics.

The production of the new South African identity has achieved some degree of success for the ruling classes, in that it has partially achieved buy-in, particularly in terms of categories of thought and perception of the middle segments of society, which - when defined in the most crudely economic categories - teachers form part of. To state this is not to suggest that the position of teachers has improved objectively, but rather that the legal and visible barriers which produced a limited opportunity structure for racialised subjects in the old South Africa were transmuted or transmogrified in transition. South Africans remain acutely conscious of race, yet the fundamental nature of apartheid as a capitalist project is in a sense 'lost in transformation' (see Terreblanche, 2012; Bond, 2000) so that a commitment to fighting 'racism' can be retained without serious contestation of the structural arrangements and the underpinning assumptions which regulate economic plans and strategies of government. The perception that the old barriers no longer exist, along with the deracialisation and freedom of movement experienced by the middle class, have been sufficient to redefine the stakes in the game and the resulting strategies of individuals. Under apartheid, teachers coming from dominated groups saw their futures as being bound up with each other, and even with the future of the students whom they taught. In the new South Africa, the future of the individual does not appear to be bound up with the collective in the same ways. It is a question of what constitutes a 'class'. Even where a class may be objectively defined, it must be perceived first. It is my argument that, whereas the teachers in this study could identify themselves with the interests of the working class, notions of collective identity are subsumed by interests of the individual in the present.

What I am suggesting about a symbolic revolution of neoliberalism is that a) the transition to democracy has proven a greater symbolic victory for the ruling class than it has for the dominated classes of apartheid, b) the anti-apartheid struggle has been defused by delinking the race question from the class question and c) the social mobility afforded to a significant strata of society by deracialisation means that objective interests have shifted. The popular fixation on corruption and governance, to the neglect of a critique of the fundamental organising principles of society, are a case in point.

Overall, what we can learn from the teachers in this study is that activism emerged under the particular conditions of objective-limits (apartheid), within contexts of crises, both personal and political. But it also emerged because of the prevalence of an alternative imagination and

interpretive framework, in a context where particular species of cultural capital, namely the capacity for social analysis and critique and organising skills were cultivated in community organisations. These four conditions are present in the lives of the four teachers in this study, and this is why they are well positioned to become catalysts for change in their different ways and in different streams of political activism: Yousuf as a founding member of WECTU, Clement as an organiser in SADTU, Brian as chairperson of the WCPTSF and Marcus as founder member of the Children's Resource Centre.

When contrasting the past and the present in South Africa, there are changes across scale, globally, nationally, locally and subjectively that must be taken into account, and which help us to reinterpret both the past and the present. Such changes include a) the shift from visible violence under apartheid to the more nebulous violence of neoliberal capitalism, b) objective limits due to the racialised organisation of the field of power under apartheid, in contrast to the perception of freedom and the prevailing neoliberal discourse of meritocracy in the present, c) the failure of the state discourse under apartheid together with a strong alternative imagination, in contrast to the strength of neoliberal discourse today that is coupled with a failure of an alternative imagination that is able to interpellate people into a counter-story, d) the lack of collective spaces for young people to cultivate the capitals necessary to convert crises into critical moment.

The changes in South Africa, as the 'new' South Africa comes into being, occur within the context of a changing international situation: 1) The Fall of the Berlin Wall and collapse of the Soviet Union, 2) the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s as articulated by the politics of Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan and the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet in Chile, 3) The influence of the World Bank and the IMF through the provision of loans attached to structural adjustment programmes across majority world countries as they gain independence. These economic directions, severely constrain possibilities in terms of economic reform whether through compulsion or threat. In South Africa, such global forces of influence were compounded by pressure from local Capital and the outgoing apartheid rulers, who sought to shore up privilege and create conditions favourable for the advancement of private business both in South Africa and through international expansion which was hampered by sanctions and the stain of apartheid.

There are several other effects of transition which I have already discussed and do not wish to revisit. Rather, I want to assert a further point here, that the broad and multi-scalar changes also produce new subjectivities or changes at the level of the individual. It is this change which is probably the most profound and which renders difficult the task of organising and mobilising for

social change. There are never activists waiting in the wings. But in a context where race has been de-linked from economy and class analysis, where the hegemonic vision is one of meritocracy and individualism, where clear objective-limits are replaced by the illusion of freedom and democracy, where an alternative to the dominant story fails to capture the imagination of the subordinated masses, and where the public spaces and opportunities to cultivate a different imagination and develop necessary capitals are absent or sparse, it will be all the more difficult to build the kind of movements which only 30 years ago were celebrated by the majority of South Africans.

8. Postscript

During the time that this thesis was written, the world has changed. In 2020, when I began this study, the world faced the global health crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic. This was followed by Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which resulted in a surge in global food prices (and increasing hunger and starvation locally). The world now watches, in real-time on social media, footage of the Israeli Occupation Forces bombardment of the Gaza strip, as nations from the majority world test the ability of political instruments such as the International Court of Justice to hold global powers fuelling genocide to account. We live in a deep and ongoing crisis of capitalist and imperialist expansion, which is ever seeking new land, labour and raw materials to draw into cycles of production and, in this process, to convert non-capitalist space into new markets. In South Africa, for the first time since 1994, the African National Congress has failed to secure a majority vote in our national elections. They have issued a statement of intent to form a Government of National Unity, which includes the Democratic Alliance, whose prominent leaders have advocated the scrapping of minimum wages, and the Inkatha Freedom Party, which has a history of collaboration with the apartheid regime and defence forces. Right-wing politics in South Africa is on the rise with an increasing move toward various nationalisms (Zulu nationalism, Coloured nationalism, Afrikaner nationalism etc.) and anti-immigrant sentiment. In the Western Cape, where this study is located, the most recent election results illustrate quite powerfully how racist and anti-poor politics resonate with the electorate. The party with the largest growth in the province campaigns with the slogan "abahambe" (go home!), referring to migrant people whom they accuse of taking South African jobs. Further afield, the Argentinian president, who went on campaign with chainsaw in hand, consults with his cloned dogs for economic advice. In the US presidential elections, Biden and Trump are contesting each other about who has the better golf swing, and who has lent more support to Israel's invasion of Gaza. Germany has revised its requirements for naturalisation, requiring that those seeking to become citizens should affirm the State of Israel (Middle East Monitor, 2024). A motivating concern which has driven this study relates to the issues above which cut across scales (local, national and global) and wash from the field of politics into the field of education: Where are our teachers and what role might they play in this contemporary struggle against capitalist domination and right-wing nationalism?

Education is also in crisis. Decisions taken during South Africa's transition to democracy have rendered transformation efforts futile. A global reform agenda of neoliberal capitalism dominates within the field of education. Schools are under attack and face new threats in the form of the

introduction of collaboration schools, three-stream education, policing in school, and edupreneurship which seeks to normalise disembodied, remote and mass-based online classrooms in search of profit. These new threats are layered over prevailing injustices, inequalities and inadequacies in schools which serve the majority of South Africa, Black and poor. My attempt to understand the enabling conditions for the emergence of teacher activists, responds to this situation. I have written in a manner which has sought to maintain methodological rigour in engaging with this question, which is deeply personal. Being close to children and youth who are 'in the trenches' of racial-capitalism and who experience the violence of social reproduction first-hand, the search for what ignites teacher social movements carries personal and affective dimensions is a cry and a plea against the conditions which tools of criticism make explicit.

What this study has shown is that a crisis carries potential but that it requires translators who are capable of showing the linkages between the everyday suffering of people and broader struggles in the field of power. These translators are those who are able to mobilise particular species of capital. They gather people together. They read the word and the world. They imagine a world that is different, and ask both 'what is' and 'what if'. But they don't only imagine new social structures, institutional arrangements and social relations: their beliefs are embodied in the work they do. Imagination and activism is labour, it is affective labour, and while there is always risk involved, becoming an activist is un-alienating and life-giving.

References

- Althusser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays*. London: Monthly Review Press: Monthly Review Press (Original work published 1968).
- Amoako, S. (2014). Teacher unions in political transitions: The South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) and the dying days of apartheid, 1990–1993. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 49(2), 148–163. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909613479302>
- Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (Rev. ed.). London, New York: Verso: Verso.
- Ball, S. J. (2003). The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity. *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), 215–228. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0268093022000043065>
- Ball, S. J. (2017). *Foucault as educator*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-50302-8>
- Barrett, T. (2015). Storying Bourdieu. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 14(5), 160940691562139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406915621399>
- Baur, N. (2017). Process-oriented micro-macro-analysis: Methodological reflections on Elias and Bourdieu. *Historical Social Research*, 42(4), 43–74. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.42.2017.4.43-74>
- Behar, R. (1990). Rage and redemption: Reading the life story of a Mexican marketing woman. *Feminist Studies*, 16(2), 223–258.
- Bertram, C., & Mxenge, N. (2022). Performativity, managerial professionalism and the purpose of professional development: a South African case study. *Journal of Education Policy*, 1–18.
- Biesta, G. (2015). What is education for? On good education, teacher judgement, and educational professionalism. *European Journal of Education*, 50(1), 75–87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ejed.12109>
- Boal, A. (1979/2008). *Theatre of the oppressed*. Pluto Press.
- Boesak, A. (1984). *Black and reformed: Apartheid, liberation and the Calvinist tradition*. Skotaville Publishers
- Bond, P. (2000). *Elite transition*. Pluto Press

- Bourdieu, P. (1962). *The Algerians* (A. Ross, trans.). Beacon Press. (Original work published 1958)
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice. Cambridge studies in social anthropology: Vol. 16.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press..
- Bourdieu, P. (1979). Symbolic power. *Critique of Anthropology*, 4(13-14), 77–85.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0308275X7900401307>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986a). The biographical Illusion. In W. Hemecker and E.Saunders (Eds.), *Biography in theory: Key texts with commentaries* (pp. 210-216). De Gruyter
<https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110516678-036>
- Bourdieu, P. (1986b). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). Greenwood.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990a). *In other words: Essays towards a reflexive sociology* (Matthew Adamson, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990b). *The logic of practice* (Richard Nice, Trans.). Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1991a). Genesis and structure of the religious field. *Comparative Social Research*, 13, 1–44. (Original work published 1971)
- Bourdieu, P. (1991b). *Language and symbolic power* (J. Thompson, Ed.; G. Raymond & M. Adamson, Trans.). Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *Invitation to reflexive sociology*. Polity Press
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *The state nobility: Elite schools in the field of power*. Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). A reasoned utopia and economic fatalism. *New Left Review*, 125–130.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A., Balazs, G., & Beaud, S. (1999). *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2000). *Pascalian meditations*. California: Stanford University Press
- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Masculine domination*. California: Stanford University Press

- Bourdieu, P. (2002). The role of intellectuals today. *Theoria*, 49(99), 1–6.
- Bourdieu, P. (2008, 1988). *Homo academicus*. California: Stanford University Press
- Bourdieu, P. (2015). *On the State: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1989 - 1992*. Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2019). *Classification struggles: General sociology, volume 1 (1981-1982)*. Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2020). *Habitus and field: General sociology, volume 2 (1982-1983)*. Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (2022). *Principles of vision: General sociology, volume 4 (P. Collier, Trans.)*. Polity Press.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (2012). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. Chicago: Haymarket Books (Original work published 1976).
- Buhlungu, S. (2003). The state of trade unionism in post-apartheid South Africa. In J. Daniel, A. Habib, & R. Southall (Eds.), *State of the nation: South Africa, 2003-2004*. HSRC Press.
- Buhlungu, S. (2005). "Union-party alliances in the era of market regulation: The case of South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 31 (4): 701–717.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070500370464>. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25065042>.
- Bundy, C. (1987). Street sociology and pavement politics: aspects of youth and student resistance in Cape Town, 1985. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 13(3), 303–330.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057078708708148>
- Buthelezi, Vusi. *Soccer and the Creation of a Cohesive Society on Robben Island Maximum Security Prison 1967 – 1991*. Cape Town: UWC-RIM Mayibuye Archives, 2010.
- Chisholm, L. (1991). Education, politics and organisation: The educational traditions and legacies of the Non-European Unity Movement, 1943-1986*. *Transformation*, 15, 1–24.
- Chisholm, L. (1999). The democratization of schools and the politics of teachers' work in South Africa. *Compare*, 29(2), 111–126. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305792990290202>
- Chisholm, L., Hoadley, U., Kivilu, M., Brooks, H., Prinsloo, C., Kgobe, A., Mosia, D., Narsee, H. and Rule, S. (2005). *Educator workload in South Africa*. Report prepared for the Education Labour Relations Council. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.

- Christie, P. (2016). Educational change in post-conflict contexts: reflections on the South African experience 20 years later. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 14(3), 434–446.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2015.1121379>
- Christie, P., & Collins, C. (1982). Bantu Education: apartheid ideology or labour reproduction? *Comparative Education Review*, 18(1), 59–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0305006820180107>
- Cleophas, F. (2023, March 28). The South African Council on Sport at 50: the fight for sports development is still relevant today. *The Conversation*. <http://theconversation.com/the-south-african-council-on-sport-at-50-the-fight-for-sports-development-is-still-relevant-today-202402>
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed.). SAGE.
- Cross, M., Govender, L., & Ahmed Essop (Eds.). (2023). *SADTU and the struggle for Professional unionism*. University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.
- Davis, S., & Yi, J. (2022). Double tap, double trouble: Instagram, teachers, and profit. *E-Learning and Digital Media*, 19(3), 320–339.
- Delgado Bernal, D. (1997). *Chicana school resistance and grassroots leadership: Providing an alternative history of the 1968 East Los Angeles blowouts, unpublished doctoral dissertation* [Doctor of Philosophy in Education]. University of California, Los Angeles.
- Department of Education (1996). South African Schools Act, 1996 (No. 84 of 1996). Government Gazette 34620, Pretoria: Government Printing Works.
- Digón-Regueiro, P., & Sánchez-Blanco, C. (2022). Education as fiction: market ideology and best teacher awards. *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 30(4), 455–472.
- Dorn, C. (2013). ‘It was a sort of soft war that one waged’: Teacher education at the University of Cape Town, 1976-1994. *Southern African Review of Education*, 19(2), 48–71.
- Equal Education (2016). *Of “Loose Papers and Vague Allegations” A social audit report on the safety and sanitation crisis in Western Cape schools*. Retrieved from <https://equaleducation.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/Western-Cape-Schools-Safety-and-Sanitation-Social-Audit-Report-1.pdf>
- Ermakoff, I. (2013). Rational choice may take over. In P. Gorski (Ed.), *Bourdieu and Historical Analysis*. Duke University Press.

- Evans, B. (2022). *How should we educate children about violence?* jceps.com.
<http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/19-3-12.pdf>
- Fisher, M. (2009). *Capitalist realism: Is there no alternative?* John Hunt Publishing.
- Foucault, M. (2002). *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge: Routledge.
- Fowler, B. (2020). Pierre Bourdieu on social transformation, with particular reference to political and symbolic revolutions. *Theory and Society*, 49(3), 439–463.
- Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy. *Social Text*. (25/26), 56–80.
- Freire, P. (2014/1992). *Pedagogy of hope: Reliving pedagogy of the oppressed*. Bloomsbury Academic. (Original work published 1992)
- Freire, P. (2014/1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed: 30th anniversary edition*. Bloomsbury Publishing USA. (Original work published 1970)
- Fukuyama, F. (1989). The End of History? *The National Interest*, 16, 3–18.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/24027184>
- Greene, M. (1978). *Landscapes of learning*. Teachers College Press.
- Giroux, H. A. (1983). Theories of reproduction and resistance in the new sociology of education: A critical analysis. *Harvard Educational Review*, 53, 257–293.
- Giroux, H. A. (2010). Teachers as transformative intellectuals. In K. Ryan & J. M. Cooper (Eds.), *Kaleidoscope: Contemporary and classic readings in education* (12th ed., pp. 35–49). Belmont CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Giroux, H. A. (2014). *The violence of organized forgetting: Thinking beyond America's disimagination machine*. San Francisco: City Lights Books.
- Giroux, H. A. (2014). Neoliberalism's war against the radical imagination. *Tikkun*, 29(3), 9–14.
- Goodson, I. (1992). *Studying teacher's lives*. New York: Teachers College Press: Teachers College Press. Retrieved from
<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/alltitles/docDetail.action?docID=10060657>
- Gordon, R. (2019). “Why would I want to be anonymous?” Questioning ethical principles of anonymity in cross-cultural feminist research. *Gender & Development*, 27(3), 541–554.

- Gorski, P. S. (Ed.). (2013). *Bourdieu and historical analysis*. Duke University Press.
- Gould, D. B. (2010). *Moving politics: Emotion and ACT UP's fight against AIDS*. University of Chicago Press. <https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226305318.001.0001>
- Gramsci, A. (1987). *Selections from political writings 1910-20* (J. Matthews, Trans.). Lawrence Wishart.
- Grenfell, M. (2014). *Pierre Bourdieu* (2nd ed.). *Key concepts*. New York: Routledge. Retrieved from <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&scope=site&db=nlebk&db=nlabk&AN=850167>
- Hassen, F. (2017). *Student activist Fasiha Hassen speaks at Kathrada memorial*. eNCA. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BO6j9VKIfYc>
- Hatch, J.A., & Wisniewski, R. (Eds.). (1995). *Life History and Narrative* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203486344>
- Hendricks, P. (2021). Re-engaging non-racial sport: The Teachers' League of South Africa (TLSA) and the school sport movement in the Western Cape, 1956-1994. *Critical Reflections on Physical Culture at the Edges of Empire*, 113.
- Hilgers, M., & Mangez, É. (Eds.) (2015). *Routledge advances in sociology. Bourdieu's theory of social fields: Concepts and applications*. New York: Routledge.
- Hillier, J., & Rooksby, E. (2005). *Habitus: A sense of place* (2nd ed.). Aldershot Hants England, Burlington VT: Ashgate: Ashgate.
- Hung, C.-Y. (2018). Educators as transformative intellectuals: Taiwanese teacher activism during the national curriculum controversy. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 48(2), 167–183. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03626784.2018.1435973>
- Jacklin, H. (2001). Reading 3: Teachers, identities, spaces. In *Being a teacher*. Retrieved from https://www.oerafrica.org/sites/default/files/Being%20a%20Teacher%20readings_Section%20One_Reading%203.pdf* (Original work published 2001).
- Jansen, J. D. (2001). On the politics of performance in South African education: Autonomy, accountability and assessment. *Prospects*, 31(4), 553–564.
- Joly, M. (2018). *Pour Bourdieu*. CNRS éditions.

- Karlsson, J. (2002). The role of democratic governing bodies in South African Schools. *Comparative Education Review*, 38(3), 327–336.
- Kelley, R. D. G. (2002). *Freedom dreams: The black radical imagination*. Beacon Press.
- Kihn, P. (2002). Comrades and professionals: Teacher ideology and practice in the Western Cape, 1985 to 1990. In P. Kallaway (Ed.), *The history of education under apartheid 1948-1994: The doors of learning and culture shall be opened / edited by Peter Kallaway*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Kruger, H. (2015, May 29). [Brian Isaacs leads a picket in front of Central Primary School buildings]. In I. Fredericks, Pupils march to 'reclaim' school. Cape Argus. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/pupils-march-to-reclaim-school-1865039>
- Kundnani, A. (2023). *What is antiracism?: And Why It Means Anticapitalism*. Verso Books.
- Lachica Beunavista, T., Stovall, D., Curammeng, E., & Valdez, C. (2018). Ethnic studies educators as enemies of the state and the fugitive space of classrooms. In R. T. Cuauhtin, M. Zavala, C. Sleeter, & W. Au (Eds.), *Rethinking ethnic studies* (1st ed.). Milwaukee OR: Rethinking Schools.
- Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1999). Learning and pedagogy in communities of practice. *Learners and pedagogy*, 21-33.
- Levitas, R. (2013). *Utopia as method*. Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Lewin, K. (1935). *A Dynamic Theory of Personality : Selected papers*. McGraw-Hill.
- LSE. (2023, May 19). *Putting Bourdieu and Marx in dialogue | LSE Event*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkvckz_vupY
- Macleod, J. (2009). *Ain't no makin it: aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighbourhood*. Philadelphia: Westview Press. [Originally Published, 1987]
- Mathebula, T. (2018). From “boy-Government” and “student-government” to “learner-government”: The best of both worlds? *Africa Education Review*, 15(2), 1–15.
- Matusov, E., & Sullivan, P. (2020). Pedagogical Violence. *Integrative Psychological & Behavioral Science*, 54(2), 438–464. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12124-019-09512-4>

- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* / Joseph Maxwell (3rd ed.). *Applied social research methods series: Vol. 41*. SAGE.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2006). Literature reviews of, and for, educational research: A Commentary on Boote and Beile's "Scholars Before Researchers." *Educational Researcher* , 35(9), 28–31.
- Mfuku, N. (2006). *Privatisation and deregulation policies in South Africa* [University of the Western Cape].
https://etd.uwc.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11394/1809/Mfuku_MPA_2006.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y
- Middle East Monitor (2024, June 27). *Germany imposes Israel "loyalty" test with new citizenship law*. Retrieved from: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240627-germany-imposes-israel-loyalty-test-with-new-citizenship-law/>
- Miller, V., VeneKlasen, L., Reilly, M. & Clark, C. (2006). *Making change happen 3: power. Concepts for revisioning power for justice, equality and peace*. Washington DC: Just Associates.
- Mills, C., & Gale, T. (2007). Researching social inequalities in education: towards a Bourdieuan methodology. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 20(4), 433–447.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390601176523>
- Mills, C., Gale, T., Parker, S., Smith, C., & Cross, R. (2019). Activist dispositions for social justice in advantaged and disadvantaged contexts of schooling. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 40(5), 614–630.
- MirafTAB, F. (2004). Neoliberalism and casualization of public sector services: the case of waste collection services in Cape Town, South Africa. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 28(4), 874–892. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0309-1317.2004.00557.x>
- Mitchell, V. (2018). Political prisoner education through sport on Robben Island: 1960-1990 [Masters Thesis, University of the Western Cape].
<https://uwcscholar.uwc.ac.za:8443/server/api/core/bitstreams/824c827f-a720-4c90-b22a-4523a643213b/content>
- Montaño, T., López-Torres, L., DeLissovoy, N., Pacheco, M., & Stillman, J. (2002). Teachers as Activists: Teacher Development and Alternate Sites of Learning. *Equity & Excellence in Education*, 35(3), 265–275. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713845315>

- Narsiah, S. (2002). Neoliberalism and privatisation in South Africa. *GeoJournal*, 57(1/2), 29–38.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/41147695>
- Narsiah, S. (2008). Discourses of privatisation: the case of South Africa's water sector.
Development Southern Africa, 25(1), 21–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03768350701836152>
- Nasson, B. (1990). The Unity Movement: It's legacy in historical consciousness. *Radical History Review*, 46(7), 189–211.
- Nwadeyi, L. (2016). *"Courage, compassion and complexity..."*. Stellenbosch University: Stellenbosch University. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqaZVH7cUJo>
- Olin Wright, E. (2010). *Envisioning real utopias*. Verso.
- Omar, Y. (2015). *In my stride: A life-history of Alie Fataar, teacher* (PhD). UCT.
- Pampallis, J. (2002). *The Nature of Educational Decentralisation in South Africa*. The Decentralisation and Education Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa.
<https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=af78e315626dc65c3d91797cca31454fdb14beb>
- Paolucci, G. (2022). Putting Marx in the dock: Practice of logic and logic of the practice. In G. Paolucci (Ed.), *Bourdieu and Marx: Practices of critique* (pp. 71–102). Springer International Publishing.
- Pettit, J. (2019). Transforming power with embodied practice. In *Power, Empowerment and Social Change*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351272322-5>
- Phahle, R. (2019). *Reminiscences of the arrest of Fikile Bam & Marcus Solomon in 1963*.
<https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/reminiscences-arrest-fikile-bam-marcus-solomon-1963-roseinnes-phahle-august-2019>
- Pillay, D. (2013). *Between social movement and political Unionism: COSATU and democratic politics in South Africa*. 2(1), 10–27.
- Pinto, L., Fowler, B., & Guibé, E. (2001). A Militant Sociology: The Political Commitment of Pierre Bourdieu. *The Sociological Review*, 49(1_suppl), 88-104.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2001.tb03535.x>

- Price, M. (1988). The consequences of health service privatisation for equality and equity in health care in South Africa. *Social Science & Medicine*, 27(7), 703–716.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536\(87\)90330-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0277-9536(87)90330-3)
- Sahlberg, P. (2012). *How GERM is infecting schools around the world?* Retrieved from <http://sahlberg.com/text-test/>
- Sahlberg, P. (2023). Trends in global education reform since the 1990's: Looking for the right way. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 98, 102748.
- Sanger, M. (1990). The union has arrived...: ...the education arena will never be the same again! *Work in Progress*. (70/71), 35–40.
- Scott, J. (1985). *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*. Yale University Press
- Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. (1972). *Hidden injuries of class*. Vintage Books
- Schmeichel, M., Kerr, S., & Wurzburg, E. (2022). Postfeminism, progressive neoliberalism, and teacher influencers. In *Progressive Neoliberalism in Education* (pp. 105-120). Routledge.
- Schroeder, S., Shelton, C., & Curcio, R. (2023). Crafting the consumer teacher: education influencers and the figured world of K-12 teaching. *Learning, Media and Technology*, 1–14.
- Shacklock G., Thorp L. (2005). Life history and narrative approaches. In Somekh B., Lewin C. (Eds.), *Research methods in the social sciences* (pp. 156–163). Sage.
- Sisulu, Z. (1987). People's education for people's power. *A Journal of Opinion*. (15), 18–29.
- Smith, J. (2020). Community and contestation: a Gramscian case study of teacher resistance. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 52(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1587003>
- Smythe, W. E., & Murray, M. J. (2000). Owing the Story: Ethical considerations in narrative research. *Ethics & Behavior*, 10(4), 311–336. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327019EB1004_1
- Solorzano, D. G., & Bernal, D. D. (2001). Examining transformational resistance through a critical race and latcrit theory framework. *Urban Education*, 36(3), 308–342.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085901363002>
- Soudien, C. (2019). *The Cape Radicals: Intellectual and political thought of the New Era Fellowship, 1930s-1960s*. Wits University Press.

- South African History Archive. (n.d). *SABC Truth Commission Special Report*.
https://sabctrc.saha.org.za/victims/meyer_clement.htm?tab=report
- Spaull, N. (2013). *South Africa's education crisis: the quality of education in South Africa 1994-2011*. Centre for Development and Enterprise.
- Sulla, V., Zikhali, P., & Cuevas, P. F. (2022). *Inequality in Southern Africa: An assessment of the Southern African Customs Union*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099125303072236903/pdf/P1649270c02a1f06b0a3ae02e57eadd7a82.pdf>
- Tabata, I. B. 1959. *Education for Barbarism: Bantu (Apartheid) Education in South Africa*. Durban: Prometheus Publications for Unity Movement of South Africa.
- Terreblanche, S. (2012). *Lost in transformation*. KMM Review Publishing.
- Trimbur, J. (2009). Popular Literacy and the Resources of Print Culture: The South African Committee for Higher Education. *College Composition and Communication*, 61(1), 85–108.
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40593516>
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (1998). *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report: Volume 3*.
<https://sabctrc.saha.org.za/originals/finalreport/volume3/volume3.pdf>
- Vally, S., & Tleane, C. (2002). The rationalisation of teachers and the quest for social justice in education in an age of fiscal austerity. In Motala, E. & Pampallis, J. (2002), *The state, education and equity in post-apartheid South Africa*.
- Van Driel, N. (2011). *Our souls dwelt in the house of tomorrow: The student Committee of 81*. Retrieved from <https://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/our-souls-dwelt-house-tomorrow-student-committee-81-nicky-van-driel>
- Visagie, A. (2019). *Painting a picture of possibility: The transmission of symbolic violence in an urban township school [Masters Thesis, University of Cape Town]*.
- von Holdt, K. (2012). The margin of freedom. In *Conversations with Bourdieu: The Johannesburg moment* (pp. 198–209). Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

- von Schnitzler, A. (2008). Citizenship Prepaid: Water, Calculability, and Techno-Politics in South Africa*. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34(4), 899–917.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03057070802456821>
- Wacquant, L. J. D. (1998). Pierre Bourdieu. In R. Stones (Ed.), *Key sociological thinkers* (pp. 215–229). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Wacquant, L. (2001). Deadly symbiosis: When ghetto and prison meet and mesh. *Punishment & Society*, 3(1), 95–133.
- Wenger, E. (1999). *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- White, T. C. (2020). Teacher dissent in neoliberal times: Counter-publics and alternative-publics in teacher activism. *Educational Theory*, 70(3), 297–316. <https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12434>
- Whittle, G. 2007. “The Role of the South African Democratic Teachers Union in the Process of Teacher Rationalisation in the Western Cape Between 1990 and 2001.” Phd., University of Pretoria.
- Wieder, A. (2003). *Voices from Cape Town Classrooms: Oral Histories of Teachers who Fought Apartheid*. Peter Lang Incorporated, International Academic Publishers.
- Willis, P. E. (1981). *Learning to labor: How working class kids get working class jobs* (Morningside ed.). New York: Columbia University Press: Columbia University Press (Original work published 1977).
- Yang, Y. (2014). Bourdieu, Practice and Change: Beyond the criticism of determinism. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 46(14), 1522–1540.
- Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: Guilford Press: Guilford Press.