With Mixed Feelings:
Negotiating Coloured Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa

by

Janette Yarwood

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the
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Abstract

Mixed Feelings: Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa

by

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Mixed Feelings: Examining Coloured Identities in Post-Apartheid South Africa is a study of the historically "mixed-race" group that was officially classified as coloured under apartheid. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, the racial hierarchy that regulated social relations in white-ruled South Africa has broken down, undermining basic assumptions and practices at the foundation of this ethno-racial category. This dissertation explores the diverse ways that coloured people construct and reconstruct colouredness: appropriating and layering various aspects of the past and the present—race, class, ethnicity, place and popular culture—to fashion identities that invoke apartheid constructions of coloured identity while affording opportunities to forge new identities that respond to the new, post-apartheid moment.

The dissertation is based on two years of ethnographic research conducted in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg between 2005 and 2008. In *Mixed Feelings*, I approach the study of coloured identity on multiple levels. I am interested in how the coloured community identifies from within as well as how it is identified from without;

thus, in addition to extensive interviews, I analyze census data, published reports concerning the current economic profiles of different racial groups in South Africa, crime statistics, as well as data gathered from media sources such as local television, newspapers, and websites. This dissertation, focusing on race, ethnicity, class, globalization, and popular culture in South Africa, seeks to place these historical dynamics in a broader context through comparisons with both the United States and the Caribbean.

Based on this data, I address the particular techniques coloured people use to negotiate the coloured category within the new social, political and economic realities of contemporary South Africa. I am also concerned with understanding the strategies used by coloured activists and organizers and other South Africans to keep coloured people locked within the coloured category. By revealing the challenges coloured people face as they try to negotiate colouredness in contemporary South Africa, this dissertation contributes to theoretical discussions that ask how people negotiate their identity under conditions that limit their choices.

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Figure 1. Map of South Africa[1]

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Note on Terminology

The ethno-racial categories employed throughout this dissertation are social constructs that can be traced back to specific moments in South African history. My use of the terms “African,” “black,” and “coloured” is consistent with post-apartheid government usage of these racial categories. Throughout, I use the term “black” in its inclusive sense to refer to African, coloured and Indian people collectively. The term “African” is used to refer to the indigenous Bantu-speaking people of South Africa. The term “coloured” refers to a person of “mixed” racial ancestry. The use of the ethno-racial term “coloured” remains complicated and contentious, as this dissertation makes clear. I acknowledge the term’s problematic nature and do not intend to reinforce colouredness as a static, exclusionary social construct. I also recognize that these categories are socially constructed and do not have essential characteristics.

Chapter One – Introduction
Conceptualizing Race in Post-Apartheid South Africa

In July 2005 as I was preparing to leave New York City to begin my dissertation research in Cape Town, South Africa, the controversial issue of coloured identity was once again thrust into the national spotlight. The *Cape Times* reported that Roderick Blackman Ngoro, the then political advisor of the mayor of Cape Town, Nomaindia Mfeketo, had posted an editorial on his personal website titled, "Why Africans and Coloureds are on the throat of the other (sic) in the Western Cape and Cape Town" (Kassiem 2005a). In the editorial Mr. Ngoro addressed the continuing tensions between coloureds and Africans and asserted that Africans were "culturally superior to coloureds." He accused coloured people of acting as "cheerleaders" for "the white race" and stated, "The regime of representation used by the apartheid rulers is no longer in existence. One can see it is this that the coloureds are battling with. No longer can they hear on the radio, television or the newspapers (sic) that they are indeed number two after the whites." Mr. Ngoro also went on to write that if coloureds don't "undergo an ideological transformation," their "race" will not "prosper" and they will "die a drunken death," drawing on long-held stereotypes of coloureds as being prone to alcoholism.

The editorial and ensuing news reports led to an outpouring of responses from coloured people across the country. Mayor Mfeketo stated, "I want to strongly disassociate myself, my office, the City of Cape Town and the African National Congress (ANC)[2] from Mr. Ngoro's views. The views expressed (by him) on a private Internet website and reported in the press do not reflect my views or that of my office or my organization." She added, "Those who know me, know I have fought for non-racialism all my life and that I do not see people through a lens which puts them into different racial compartments. I am committed to building a nonracial city in which the dignity of all our citizens is respected" (Kassiem 2005b). Two weeks after the initial reports of these events, a group of coloured pastors claiming to represent thousands of worshippers in Cape Town and especially in the Cape Flats asked Mayor Mfeketo to "demonstrate her commitment to racial harmony" by firing media adviser, Blackman Ngoro, for his racist comments about coloured people. In an open letter to the mayor, Concerned Coloured Clergy argued that "Ngoro's position in her office has given 'credibility' to his statement that coloured people were drunkards and inferior to blacks." Although Mr. Nogoro was on leave, the 20 concerned clergy stated, "While we appreciate you distancing yourself from his comments, we feel that this is inadequate and are strongly disappointed that this has not been more strongly dealt with." They also cautioned that some of the clergy would use their pulpits to urge congregants not to vote for the ANC in the upcoming local government elections ("Fire Ngoro" 2005). Another article in the *Cape Argus* argued that "Ngoro's racist diatribe has alienated more coloureds from the ANC." Coloured

[2] The African National Congress (ANC) formed in 1912 and has been South Africa's governing political party since the establishment of non-racial democracy in April 1994. The ANC represented the main opposition to the government during apartheid, and they also played a major role in the peacemaking and nation-building processes during the transition from apartheid. A more detailed history is provided in Chapter Two.

people all over Cape Town and the rest of the country were angered by this incident and by what appeared to many to be a lack of response by the ANC. In interviews I conducted, numerous people said they felt there had been no national ANC intervention, evidenced by it taking up to three weeks for the Mayor to fire Mr. Ngoro. Teresa,[3] a 41-year-old woman from Athlone, speculated that “the ANC was waiting for this to just go away. They don’t want to talk about race when it’s about coloureds.” And Debra from Bonteheuwel noted, “They thought we would keep our mouth shut like always. They didn’t think we would say kak.”

According to Cheryl Hendricks (2005), head of the Southern African Human Security Programme at the Institute for Security in Pretoria,[4] “in most other contexts his editorial would have been dismissed as the ravings of a lunatic.” However, this editorial revealed the still-tenuous nature of coloured identity in the Western Cape specifically and in South Africa generally. The nature and form of coloured identity, what I refer to in this dissertation as “the coloured question,” was dramatically thrust into the national spotlight after the country’s first democratic elections in 1994. The surprising results from that election—in which 53 percent of the coloured population in the Western Cape voted for the pro-apartheid National Party (NP)[5]—led to debates about why coloured people (along with the majority of whites in the Western Cape) would attempt to keep the NP in power. Many assumed it boiled down to coloured racism and fear of black

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[3] I have changed the names and some of the identifying characteristics of many of my informants in this dissertation.

[4] Dr. Hendricks also completed a dissertation on coloured identity, in 2000 at the University of South Carolina.

[5] The National Party was the governing party of South Africa from 1948 until 1994, and was disbanded in 2005. Its policies included apartheid, the establishment of a republic, and the promotion of Afrikaner culture. Apartheid history will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

majority rule (Farred 2000). Others highlighted coloured advantages during apartheid and assumed that coloured people were afraid to lose their position of privilege, while some speculated that coloureds were afraid the majority black government would punish them for the slim advantages they had been granted under apartheid (Simone 1996; Erasmus 2001; Farred 2001). Trevor Oosterwyk, a political writer and historian who grew up in the Cape Flats and was active in the anti-apartheid struggle, stated, "We all thought that after 1994, the whole notion of coloured would just disappear. But it did not disappear; if anything it reasserted itself in the form of colored nationalism. And now coloured people are struggling to figure out precisely where they fit in" (Polgreen 2003). These views and the popular and academic articles published in the wake of the elections indicated that the divisions created by apartheid would not be addressed simply by changing race-based laws. Instead it became clear that a new social landscape had emerged in contemporary South Africa, one in which coloured people were asserting a collective identity and, in the eyes of many, emerging as a politically conservative, racist group (Jackson 1999).

This dissertation argues that the end of apartheid has ushered in new ways of conceptualizing coloured identity. My research suggests that rather than waning, coloured identity has resurged and has in fact become *more* entrenched since apartheid was dismantled. As a result, new formulations of coloured identity, I argue, must be understood in the context of: 1) apartheid categories; 2) post-apartheid conditions; and 3) diasporic scapes.

Many studies on coloured identity often take the official classification of this ethno-racial category under apartheid as the point of departure for interrogating

colouredness in South Africa. However, to reduce colouredness to how it was understood during apartheid fails to acknowledge the specific development of colouredness, as distinct from blackness or whiteness, that began in the colonial period. Avoiding this error, I examine the pre-apartheid period in order to explore how the group of people classified as coloured came to understand themselves as different from the black, white, and, later, the Indian[6] populations early in the South African colony. I then proceed to show that a particular social space between whiteness and Africanness emerged in South African society.

The country has made great political and human-rights advances since apartheid's demise. Unfortunately, a corresponding socioeconomic transformation has yet to take place and the legacies of colonialism and apartheid remain and continue to impact the social and economic well-being of large numbers of Africans and coloureds. For example, while the incomes of the richer groups (including the richest 25 percent of black people) has increased dramatically since the end of apartheid, the per capita income of the poorest two thirds of the population (mainly Africans and coloureds) has declined further (Terreblanche 2002, 20-35). Additionally, members of the poorest half of the population are still relatively uneducated, unskilled, and without formal jobs, and their basic needs remain largely unmet (Terreblanche 2002, 27-35). Some 51 percent of annual income goes to the richest 10 percent of households while less than four percent of annual income goes to the poorest 40 percent. The gap between rich and poor is

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[6] The South African Indian community is largely descended from Indians who arrived in South Africa from 1860 onwards. They were transported as indentured laborers to work on the sugarcane plantations of Natal Colony. In total, approximately one hundred fifty thousand Indians arrived as indentured laborers over a period of 5 decades. Formerly indentured servants were later employed as coal miners and railway construction workers. Some of the early Indian populations paid for their own travel and migrated to South Africa as traders shortly after the indentured laborers.

narrowing, but at a snail's pace. Further, seventeen years after apartheid, people are still waiting for their living situation to improve: 34 percent of the population lives on less than 2 dollars a day; unemployment officially stands at 4.5 million, or 25.5 percent (over 40 percent if the informal sector is taken into account); and inequality rates are on the rise (SSA 2008). At the same time, a narrow elite has become wealthy partly because of affirmative action programs such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) and Broad Base Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) initiatives. These unequal circumstances have left people feeling frustrated, and given that South Africa was once a country where race was the determining factor in access to resources and services, this frustration can potentially produce an ethnicized political economy in which microeconomic friction is displaced into hate-filled nationalism (Manzi and Bond 2008).

In this dissertation I argue that among some segments of the population, the assertion of colouredness is a reaction to coloured people's socioeconomic circumstances. In contemporary South Africa it is common to hear coloured people say, "We weren't white enough under apartheid, and now we're not black enough." This statement, though it has become a cliché, highlights the perception among some sectors of the coloured population that coloureds are as marginalized in the new democratic dispensation as they were during apartheid. Mohammed Khan expressed this sentiment in a 2003 *New York Times* article in which he was quoted as saying, "In the old system we weren't white enough, now we aren't black enough. It is still coloured people who are stuck in the middle, and no one cares about us. I am not a racist, and I fought in the struggle against apartheid. But we have to admit that under white rule, we had a better life—less crime, more welfare, better schools and doctors." Khan added that in the new

South Africa, “black people have jobs because of affirmative action. White people had everything anyway. But we lost the little bit that we had. It isn't fair.” Those who express this position of marginality often cite the virtually unchanged living conditions of poor and working-class coloured people, especially in former coloured-only areas like the Cape Flats. In these areas poverty and unemployment, among other factors, push young men into violent street gangs, and life seems to have gotten more difficult since apartheid's end. Many people feel there is no place for them in the new South Africa. Others cite the lack of national dialogue or programs that speak specifically to the needs of coloured communities. In an effort to get the needs of their communities met, some have attempted to organize around colouredness. Consequently, I argue that coloured identity is currently being shaped by the country’s contemporary political economy. Among some sectors of the middle class, working class and poor, colouredness has taken on new meanings in the context of the new socioeconomic conditions, which are marked by continued disparities in education, housing, healthcare, rising unemployment, low wages, soaring crime, and gangsterism. These social inequalities, which originated in the past, and the resulting struggle for survival influence how coloureds relate to colouredness.

This dissertation also argues that apartheid’s demise has ushered in new ways of conceptualizing coloured identities, ways unique to those who came of age after the laws segregating all aspects of life had been abolished. This post-apartheid generation calls for an acknowledgement of colouredness and the social issues specific to coloured communities across South Africa. My research also indicates that this generation is being

influenced by notions of race and class from the global black diaspora, especially American hip-hop and popular culture.

On the whole, this chapter serves as an introduction to the primary aims and issues that will be explored in this dissertation. As for the remainder of this chapter, it provides a brief history of colouredness and an overview of the theoretical approach used in this dissertation. It also begins to grapple with the ways race and identity have shifted since apartheid. Finally, it discusses South Africa's social, political, and economic environment, an environment that impacts the way colouredness is articulated.

The Coloured Population of South Africa

In Southern Africa, the term "coloured" has a specialized meaning. While in other parts of the world the term denotes a person who is black, in Southern Africa it denotes a person of mixed-racial ancestry (Adhikari 2009). In this study, coloured identity is understood as a historically and geographically located identity that has origins in South Africa's history of colonialism, segregation and apartheid. From very early in the colonization of the Cape, there existed a complex racial hierarchy because "the process of social amalgamation that was to give rise to coloured identity dates back to the period of Dutch colonialism in the 16th century" (Adhikari 2009). The population later designated as coloured is descended from the indigenous people of the Cape, the Khoi-Khoi, and the San; the "Bantu" people; European settlers; and Madagascan, East African, Ceylonese, Bengali, and Malayo-Indonesian slaves. However, it was in the decades after the emancipation of the indigenous Khoisan indentured servants in 1828 and the slaves in 1834 that various components of the heterogeneous, non-European laboring class at the Cape developed a collective identity based on a common socioeconomic status and a shared

culture derived from their incorporation into the lower ranks of Cape colonial society (Adhikari 2009, xi). This emergent community of assimilated, colonial non-Europeans consisted overwhelmingly of a laboring class referred to as half-castes, bastards, Cape Boys, off-whites, or coloureds until coloured became the standard term from the 1880s onwards (Adhikari 2009). In the late 19th century, the Mineral Revolution precipitated rapid industrialization and the incorporation of significant numbers of Africans into the capitalist economy. It also served as a catalyst for assimilated, colonial non-Europeans to assert a separate identity and organize politically under the banner of colouredness, the aim being to seize a privileged position, relative to Africans, based on the claim that they were partly "civilized" and descended from European colonialists (Adhikari 2005; Bickford-Smith 1994).

Racial segregation in South Africa began during colonialism, but apartheid as an official policy was introduced in 1948. The minority National Party (NP) government imposed apartheid on political, social and economic life for almost 50 years. Under the auspices of the Population Registration Act, group identities based on race—African, coloured, Indian/Asian, white—were forced on people. The Group Areas Act of 1950 segregated residential areas, often through forced removals. Other laws—the Population Registration Act (1950), the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Immorality Act (1950), and the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953)—all reinforced the apartheid system. From 1958 on, African people were deprived national citizenship, legally becoming citizens of one of ten tribally based self-governing homelands called *Bantustans*. At the same time, coloured people were removed forcibly from ethnically diverse neighborhoods and relocated to areas midway between the white suburbs and African homelands. An important consequence of the social engineering of apartheid was that people developed strong racial and ethnic consciousness, partly because of their physical

separation from other groups. During apartheid coloured people had significant motives for distancing themselves from Africanness. Africans were subjected to pass laws and curfews, and could not buy things such as liquor or own firearms (Adhikari 2009). In contrast, coloureds had a degree of political representation, had access to better housing and services, and generally earned higher salaries. Ultimately, the emergence of a distinct coloured identity cannot be separated from the divisive tactics employed during colonialism and apartheid: coloured people were granted privileges in exchange for remaining loyal to whites instead of allying with Africans (Magubane 1979, 10-11).

In South Africa, where skin color determined social position and life opportunities, where whites and blacks had clearly defined positions, coloureds came to occupy an intermediate position between the two. However, as I will discuss throughout this dissertation, the coloured population did not lodge neatly into a middle-class position. The ambiguous place occupied by those once classified as coloured is the result of the country's complex racial history. The physical, social, economic, and political processes by which the colonial and apartheid governments divided people had a lasting impact on all segments of the population and left a gulf between coloured and African populations. Since the early days of settlement on the Cape, the white population viewed coloureds as not-quite-white enough. On the other hand, blacks distrusted them because of their comparatively privileged position during colonialism and apartheid . The "in-between" status of coloured people was further reinforced and complicated by their collective political commitments, frequently oscillating between resistance to apartheid and pursuit of coloured interests like maintaining the group's relative privileges.

In contemporary South Africa, some coloured people choose to identify as Bruin, brown, coloured, mixed-raced, bi-racial, Khoisan, or multicultural. Others vow never

again to acknowledge or be labeled with a term that was imposed on them, choosing instead to identify as black or South African. Regardless of how they identify, it is clear that coloured identity is a contested ethno-racial formation undergoing a process of renegotiation as those who have been labeled as coloured attempt to realign themselves socially, economically, and politically in the post-apartheid present.

Theoretical Perspective: Constructing Identities

The history of South Africa demonstrates that colouredness is not the automatic result of miscegenation and that the laws and conditions produced during colonialism, segregation, and apartheid shaped and crystallized a coloured ethno-racial consciousness. The efforts to form a coloured consciousness in post-apartheid South Africa have meaningful implications for understanding processes of identity formation. This study attempts to grapple with questions about how and under what conditions groups attempt to assert identities, and I specifically trace the various social, political, and economic forces prompting a rethinking and reassertion of coloured identity. Because this particular case of identity politics involves a response to recent changes and events—the end of apartheid and transition to black majority rule—it illustrates that identity formation involves negotiation, debate, and struggle among the participants themselves.

This research draws on the theoretical approach that asserts that identities are constructed, imagined, or invented in relational settings and are affected by social, economic, political, and administrative factors. Fredrik Barth (1967) was among the first to argue that identities are social constructs with boundaries determined by external

factors. For Barth, what was important was not the cultural characteristics of ethnic groups, but rather the social processes that produce and reproduce boundaries of identification and differentiation between ethnic collectivities. The work of Benedict Anderson (1983), Ernest Gellner (1983), and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983), broadly labeled as "social constructionism," also emphasizes that collective identities are imagined or invented communities with shifting boundaries that may be determined by particular historical, political, and economic conditions. Additionally, John and Jean Comaroff (1992) contend that identities are formed and meaning produced everyday on symbolic grounds affected by rituals, practices, institutions, politics, and the nation. John Comaroff (1996) adds that the conditions that give rise to a social identity are not necessarily those that sustain it.

Ultimately, these authors agree that identities are not static but in flux, influenced by and responding to changing social environments, processes, and interactions. Constructivism assumes that identities vary across space and time because of specific societal conditions, and change the circumstances groups encounter. Additionally, this theoretical perspective acknowledges a group's own active involvement in the construction and reconstruction of identities, negotiating boundaries, asserting meanings, interpreting its own past, resisting the impositions of the present, and claiming the future. Constructivism emphasizes group actions and how these groups interpret their environment. The force of ethnicity lies in the significance we attach to our own identities and to the identities of others (Barth 1969). From the evolution of the nation, based on notions of kinship and religion, nationalism has maintained its compelling power to derive emotional legitimacy and simultaneously transform to merge with

political and ideological formations in a variety of social terrains. The term “imagined” expresses the link of each member, who will never know most other members, yet is related to them through a shared culture, history, and kinship; the belief of these members creates a community (Anderson 1991).

In the South African situation it is important to note that “race is a form of social identification that distinguishes different social or cultural groupings on the basis of phonotypical and other biological characteristics” (Cornelissen and Horstemier 2009). Because of apartheid, race as a social category is still widely accepted as an absolute attribute. This dissertation takes the position that values attached to “racial” difference are constructs and further that race, like ethnicity and nation, is socially constructed based on a variety of criteria. The social-constructivist position proposes that race is a pseudo-biological concept that has been used to justify and rationalize the unequal treatment of groups of people by others (Harrison 1995; Omi and Winant 2002; Mullings 2005). The constructivist view also suggests that social relationships are important in explaining the content of concepts of race and that perspectives on race vary across cultures. In South Africa the ethno-racial constructs of African, coloured, Asian, and white can be traced to colonial and apartheid laws that focused on creating then separating racial groups. Race and ethnicity were used as a divide-and-rule policy. The apartheid regime attempted to retribalize groups and encouraged the development of ethnic consciousness.

Theorizing about ethnicity, nation, and race has been dominated by constructivist approaches that emphasize that these identities are constructed, multiple, unstable, fragmented, negotiated, contingent, and contested (Brubaker et al. 2006). Brubaker contends that this concept is too readily taken for granted and the argument must be

pushed further by asking how in detail these categories are constructed. This focus on the specific context allows for moving past the tendency to reify groups generally and "the coloured" in particular so as to illustrate that different people identified by self or others as coloured identify as such based on a variety of factors, including place, class, and generation. In this dissertation, by taking into account everyday talk and actions, I illuminate the factors that affect coloured identity. I also show how various social entrepreneurs attempt to form group cohesion among coloured people based on historical aspects related to colouredness. By focusing on the everyday context in which people articulate colouredness, I move away from the broad theoretical notion of the constructedness of identity to show how ethno-racial categories take on meaning and are negotiated in everyday life.

It is now commonly understood that popular culture plays a major role in identity-formation processes. In recent years, a number of studies have examined how local black-identity formation has occurred through the adoption and indigenization of popular-culture forms such as hip-hop (Mullings 2004). Anthropologist Peter Wade (2002) studies how young black men in Cali, Colombia use hip-hop to search beyond the Colombian context for ways to express a black identity in their country. Joseph Jorden also describes a process of re-imagining Blackness, African consciousness, and Afro-Colombian ethnicity that provides a means for extra-national citizenship connecting Afro-Colombians to other communities of African descent throughout the Americas (cited in Mullings 2004). Similarly, social scientist Margot Olavarria (2002) describes how Afro-Cuban youth are building a movement around hip-hop by using rap as a

vehicle to speak out about racism, prostitution, police harassment, growing class differences, the difficulty of daily survival, and other problems in Cuba.

In South Africa, a number of recent studies have examined the role of popular culture on identity formation and the use of hip-hop to address social issues (Dolby 2000, Haupt 2001; Battersby 2003; Yarwood 2005). In her article, "Sometimes It Feels Like I'm Not Black Enough: Recast(e)ing Coloured Through South African Hip-Hop as a Post Colonial Text," Jane Battersby argues that "South African hip-hop as a genre is a form of social text and as such offers opportunities for new identities for the South African coloured community." (Battersby 2003, 109) Similarly South African cultural critic Adam Haupt (2001) examines the ways the rap groups Prophets of da City (POC) and Brasse Vannie Kaap[7] (BVK) employ *Gamtaal* (a Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans), which has stereotypically been associated with the coloured working class, to problematize hegemonic representations of black subjects. Haupt states, "It appears that the group's use of an African-American art form, rap music, conforms with black artists' reliance on African-American or Caribbean material in their attempt to construct Black Nationalist narratives that rely on the notion of a global black experience of oppression and resistance (Haupt 2001, 176)." Finally, Nadine Dolby, who conducted a one-year ethnographic study at a high school in Durban, South Africa, concludes that global popular culture has become a key site for identity formation because of globalization's effects and popular culture's expanding influence. Dolby argues, "The global commodity, explained and policed through a discourse of taste, becomes the fulcrum for constructing one's own racial identity, connecting self to others who are of a similar race

[7] Translates to "Friends from the Cape" or "Boys from the Cape."

(Dolby 2002, 11). In Chapter Six I explore the specific ways that coloured post-apartheid generationers mix, blend, and layer hip-hop symbols and global images of blackness with their local cultural images to create generationally specific articulations of colouredness.

Colouredness in Post-Apartheid South Africa

In her often-cited, seminal introductory essay to the edited volume *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place*, sociologist Zimitri Erasmus writes:

> Racial discourses in South Africa have made it impossible to see colouredness as an identity that could be understood and respected on its own terms…It has always been understood as a residual, in-between, or lesser identity – characterized as "lacking," supplementary, excessive, inferior or simply nonexistent. Discomfort among some coloured people with the idea of being coloured has resulted, on the one hand, in attempts to reconstruct a sense of purity based on claims of ethnicity and indigenous roots, or on the other, a complete denial of this identity (Erasmus 2001, 15-16).

Additionally, Erasmus (2001) argues that two dominant discourses of national identity limit the possibility of including coloured identities positively in post apartheid South Africa. The first is the depoliticizing discourse of rainbow nationalism. Counterposed to this is the second, what Erasmus calls an emergent discourse of African essentialism.

The "Rainbow Nation" is a term coined by the Nobel Prize—winning Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu. The term was intended to encapsulate the unity of multiculturalism and the coming-together of people of many races in a country once marked by strict division between the "races." The Rainbow Nation holds no group as being higher than the others, no group as having greater rights or access to means by which to exercise these rights. The adoption of the Rainbow Nation notion was without a

doubt a powerful nation-building strategy, but perhaps the very factors that made it so easy to digest were also what hindered its ability to be a truly unifying force, a force that could help formerly disadvantaged people find common ground with other groups and struggle alongside them to address the inequality between groups in contemporary South Africa. Rainbow nationalism attempts an erasure of racial difference by a cover of rainbow peace while ignoring the reality of heightened ethno-racial consciousness, which is sometimes fueled by very real domestic issues that stemmed from apartheid, issues such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, and high crime rates. This idealistic notion was therefore criticized for being blind to the reality of early post-apartheid South Africa and for being a major impediment to change. In claiming that all South Africans—African, coloured, Asian, and white—have equal rights and equally valid stories, rainbow nationalism fails to recognize the power differentials between these population groups, which were constructed during the country's colonial and apartheid periods.

Similarly, non-racialism, encapsulating the new democratic government's official position on race, fails to allow for ways to address the racial baggage from the past. Non-racialism, the idea that the "races" are equal, is implicitly defined by the 1996 constitution as a democratic state where the rights of every citizen are equally protected by law (Everret 2009). Despite ANC commitment to non-racialism, despite the abolition of apartheid-era racial legislation and the adoption of a widely lauded constitution, race remains ever-present in the new South Africa. To a large extent this is due to a deep-rooted, enduring consciousness of race, which is understandable given the very recent end of apartheid. Racial consciousness is also reinforced regularly by post-apartheid

political elites, who use the racial classification system inherited from apartheid, and political parties, who use the race card to exploit anxieties and pursue factional agendas.[8] Further, some argue that the new policies of affirmative action, used in the workplace with the stated objective of redressing the disadvantages non-white South Africans endured under apartheid, also serve to reinforce racial categories (Alexander 2005; Seekings 2008; Gillespie 2009).

The end of apartheid meant the collapse of legislated identities, and the core concepts of nation-building, non-racialism, and reconciliation were to replace racial and ethnic antagonisms (Moodley and Heribert 2000, 51). The ANC (and the "struggle" generation) has favored non-racialism and vigilantly disapproved of organized expressions of racial or ethnic differences; however, many argue that this has resulted in a subtle dismissal or refusal to address "the coloured question." Further, the government has yet to create a space for open discussion about coloured people's need for recognition. Instead, the ANC and those of the struggle generation continue to subscribe to non-racialism or an anti-racist consciousness. They refer to all formerly oppressed South Africans as black, refusing to officially acknowledge coloured identity. However, a renewed emphasis on African values and African consciousness has emerged, most notably through former President Thabo Mbeki's African Renaissance. Although Mbeki's movement is technically an elaboration of inclusive non-racialism, it has left minority population groups (whites, Indians, and coloureds) apprehensive about whether the African Renaissance and the political definition of African includes them, what with popular depictions emphasizing African cultural traditions. If, as Erasmus argues, a discourse of African essentialism has emerged in which blackness is understood in terms

[8] This will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

of Africanness, and black or African identity is associated with authenticity, resistance, and subversion while whiteness is associated with Europe, in-authenticity, domination, and collusion, then what social space is available to coloureds? Erasmus and others also contend that this discourse has shaped the ANC's ongoing inability to successfully articulate a broader black identity that includes and mobilizes coloured people from the Western Cape (Erasmus 2001; Alexander 2003). Along these lines, the term African has increasing been used to describe black South Africans. Speaking to this, Hendricks states,

> But who are the Africans in this city [Cape Town]? Part of the problem is the exclusion (both self and by others) of coloureds as African. Being African has in the past and, continues to be, defined in terms of hue. This despite a rhetorical insistence that Africanness denotes a full range of identities culturally rooted in the continent (or, others add, those with allegiance to the continent). Coloureds, for reasons rooted in apartheid logic, in the past have eschewed the African identity and now remain largely excluded by the gatekeepers of the identity. (*Cape Times,* May 27, 2005)

In Chapter Five I argue that one response by coloured people has been to reach back to history in an effort to articulate broader African identities. The December First Movement was one of the early attempts to renegotiate coloured identity after apartheid was dismantled. In late 1996, several former [coloured] liberation movement activists, along with a number of academics, officially launched the December First Movement, whose name alludes to December 1, 1834, the day the slaves were emancipated in the Cape colony. The movement aimed to be a broad-based "social and cultural" organization: by helping coloured people to acknowledge a heritage not entirely defined by apartheid, the movement hoped to motivate them to participate more fully in the new South Africa. Similarly, Khoisan Revivalism is an attempt to show that coloured people

are in fact African, that they are actually more African than other groups because of their indigenous roots. The end of apartheid, together with anxiety about the future, created the space for some sectors of the coloured population (primarily in the Western Cape) to re-evaluate their ancestry and to (re)affirm an indigenous heritage.[9] Connecting with such a heritage may in fact lead to a rethinking of what it means to be indigenous and African in post-apartheid South Africa. Like involvement in the December First Movement, embracing a Khoisan identity enables coloureds to claim an identity that is indigenous to South Africa and Africa in general; it enables them to articulate "true" Africanness.

Coloured post-apartheid generationers have responded to the ANC's inability to develop a meaningful dialogue on race by asserting colouredness because they find the language of non-racialism alienating. Many feel the government refuses to acknowledge the very specific social and economic issues facing coloured communities across the country. Coloured post-apartheid generationers have responded by attempting to put forth positive images of colouredness – showcasing either coloured role models or the ways coloureds can unite to get their respective communities' needs met. However, as they attempt to carve out a new coloured space, they have to find ways to articulate their community struggles and deal with the realities of the South African social landscape, which suffers from the lingering effects of apartheid, including continuing inequalities and a lack of language to deal with race.

According to Seekings (2008), the end of apartheid has brought a resurgence of research into the country's racial identities, attitudes, and behavior. The legacy of systematic racial ordering and discrimination under apartheid is that the country remains

[9] There are a small number of white South Africans who are also claiming Khoisan identity.

deeply racialized, in cultural and social terms, as well as deeply unequal, in terms of the distribution of income and opportunities. South Africans continue to see themselves in terms of the racial categories of the apartheid era, in part because these categories have become the basis for post-apartheid "redress" and in part because they retain cultural meaning in everyday life. South Africans continue to inhabit social worlds that are largely defined by race, and many express negative views of other racial groups (Seekings 2008). Frustration with the unequal conditions in the country has not surfaced only in the interactions between Africans and coloureds. In May 2008, in Cape Town there was an outbreak of violence against foreign Africans living in the country, and graphic images of knife-and-stick-wielding aggressors, wounded victims, burning houses, and, in the most horrific photographs, a burning man were seen around the world. Poor (still largely African) South African nationals see the foreign African community as competition when it comes to jobs, housing, and other services and resources to which they themselves feel entitled. Ultimately, these scenes indicate that the destiny of social relations and social identities in the country is tied to whether the government can address socioeconomic conditions and if so, how it will do so.

The way colouredness is currently conceptualized in post-apartheid South Africa—whether as part of the broader black majority with no acknowledgement of the specificity of coloured experience; as a set of cultural stereotypes (asserted, for example, by Blackman Ngoro); as a racist group longing for the apartheid past; or as a group whose existence is simply denied—has left little room for coloured post-apartheid generationers to see themselves represented in positive, progressive ways in the new

South Africa. What options are now available for colouredness? What conditions are producing post-apartheid assertions of coloured identity?

Defining the Post-Apartheid Generation

In this dissertation I propose that age plays a significant role in the way people relate to colouredness in contemporary South Africa. That is, I argue that people's experiences or lack of direct experiences with apartheid impact their views about coloured identity. I also argue that the very specific conditions of post-apartheid South Africa shape the experiences and perspectives of post-apartheid generationers. Since I contend that the way individuals situate themselves in reference to coloured identity is very tied to generation, it is essential that I clearly locate the coloured youth and young adults who appear in my study.

In "Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa," Deborah Durham (2000) notes that the youth category acts as a "social shifter," contributing to generational debates and challenging our thinking about agency. She argues that to pay attention to youth is to pay close attention to the topology of the social landscape. Citing Jean and John Comaroff, Durham posits that in South Africa, "the dominant line of cleavage has become generation and [that] youth in particular are the focus of rapid shifts in postcolonial and global economy and society" (Durhan 2000, 2). Following Durham's analysis, before embarking on my argument that the post-apartheid generation's conception of coloured identity differs from that of other generations, I begin by asking who are these post-

apartheid generationers. How are they demarcated and/or who claims the space of post-apartheid generationers? How do they differ from other generations in the country? What are the conditions that generate this age-conscious cohort? Although I speak of post-apartheid generationers, I do not mean to imply that the category of youth and/or post-apartheid generation is a homogenous category. Rather, I will argue below and throughout this dissertation that class and geographic location cause people to relate to coloured identity differently. According to Colin Bundy:

> One of the most influential theoretical explanations of radicalism in "youth politics" is the notion of a "social generation" or "generational unit." Its members do not merely co-exist in time and space: they become a social generation when they participate in the common destiny of the historical and social unit. By grappling with a distinct set of social and historical problems they develop an awareness and common identity – a generational consciousness, analogous to class consciousness and national consciousness. The speed and intensity with which such consciousness is created can vary greatly. The more complex, ambiguous and diversified are the "possibilities of adulthood," the more rapidly and forcefully are "new social generations forged out of the entry of youth into adult life." Societal turbulence lends an edge to generational consciousness: "structural differentiation makes for faster history." In particular, historical experience of crisis is singularly important for the configuration of society as a whole new social generation (Bundy 1989, 207).

The notion of a self-conscious generational unit is very fitting for those who have come of age in post-apartheid South Africa. In "Stylizing the Self: The Y Generation in Rosebank, Johannesburg," Sarah Nuttall explores youth culture among post-apartheid generationers at "The Zone," a section in the upmarket Rosebank Mall in Johannesburg. Labeling this particular generation "Generation Y," she states, "The generation I discuss includes those who have attended racially mixed (model C) schools[10] in the city as well as many who attended exclusively black township schools." According to Nuttall, Y has

[10] Model C schools are former white-only schools.

a hybrid culture that appeals to young people across the intercultural borders of class, education, and taste. More specifically, it is constituted through a "re-mixing" of the township and the city, of the township in the city (Nuttall 2004)." She argues that the racial identities that emerge from Y are new in relation to apartheid's classification of people as white, black, Indian, or coloured. She states that young people now occupy these identities in changing ways, living as they do in a "post-racist" society. Nuttall highlights several defining characteristics of the post-apartheid generation—many attended formerly whites-only schools, they are too young to have participated in the liberation struggle, and they may occupy different class positions. However, her study—because it focuses on the way youth are "stylizing the self"—does not touch upon the specific social, political, and economic forces that shape this particular generation. For example, township youth with very limited incomes cannot participate in "stylizing" through consumption at the hip upmarket Rosebank Mall, and not all members of this generation have attended model C schools.

Analyzing the African electorate in the country, Herzenburg (2007) identifies four age cohorts to loosely capture four different political generations currently voting : the pre-Soweto generation, which witnessed the rise and incarceration of Nelson Mandela; the 1976 youth uprising generation; the 1980s generation, which came of age as the liberation struggle intensified; and finally, the post-apartheid generation who have little, direct early-adult experience of apartheid. For the purposes of this study, like Hertzenburg, I identify the post-apartheid generation as those who were under the age of 18 during the 1994 democratic transition. The youngest of this generation, who had virtually no contact with apartheid, are also called the "Born-Free generation." However,

rather than sub-divide post-apartheid generationers further, I simply acknowledge that there are distinct subgroups. The younger members of this age group have a vastly different interpretation of apartheid than those who are older. For the youngest, "it is a history subject in school." For others, who witnessed the 1976 youth uprisings but were too young to take part, apartheid is *more* real because they had clear experiences with it and remember it.

The Post-Apartheid Generation: Coming of Age in the New South Africa

Although the social, political, and economic legacy of apartheid will be felt in South Africa for generations to come, the post-apartheid generation has inherited a country distinctly different from that of their parents, who have a worldview in which the liberation movement is central. Like any other generation, this generations' group consciousness has been shaped by the social, political, and economic forces of their formative years. They share a specific set of experiences and attitudes about racial identity, race relations, and politics that is radically different from the experiences and attitudes of all previous generations: they have grown up in a country free of legal segregation and imposed racial classifications. As explained by Colin Bundy above, they have become a social unit because of the specific social and historical forces they have experienced. The major reference points for them are not the apartheid past, but the transition 16 years ago and the post-apartheid present.

Despite recent advances in health, education, housing, civil rights, and other areas, South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. On the eve of

the transition to democracy, the new government, through a fundamental transformation of the country's social structures, confronted the task of ensuring the meaningful participation of those who had been oppressed. It was against this backdrop that the new government embarked upon a process of much-needed economic reform. The aim was to develop a stronger economy through contained fiscal spending, sustained or lowered taxes, reduction of government debt, and trade liberalization, all while striving to achieve social equity and income distribution through social-service provisions and infrastructural projects.

The new government undertook economic reform within the framework of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which sought to implement social programs to address the inequities inherited from the apartheid regime. However, two years later, it was obvious the program's proponents had been too optimistic, and in 1996 a program called Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), which emphasized growth generation, replaced the RDP. GEAR strove to fully reintegrate the country's economy into the world economy by taking advantage of the lifting of sanctions. This led to the removal of trade restrictions in the form of tariffs, relaxation of foreign exchange regulations, reduced corporate taxes, restructured state assets (or privatization), and the adoption of an industrial policy focused on the economy's labor-intensive sectors. According to the ANC, this would create a favorable environment for market-led economic growth. The economic growth expected under GEAR was not achieved. In fact, as discussed briefly above, most indicators show that under the ANC, economic instability, inequality, and social insecurity have either remained high or have risen, though it must be noted that this trend was already underway in the late 1980s and early

1990s. The lifting of trade tariffs had a direct impact on the already declining traditional manufacturing sectors that revolved around clothing and textiles (CMC 1999). This negatively affected coloured people, who tended to work in these sectors because of the Coloured Labour Preference Policy in force from 1954 until 1986 (Saff 1998).

While it was predicted that GEAR would create nearly 1.35 million new jobs by 2000, the unemployment rate increased steadily and rose from 23 percent in 1995 to 31 percent in 2002; and the expanded definition of unemployment that includes discouraged job-seekers put the 2002 figure at 41 percent (Khan 2000; UNDP 2003). In 2007 the official rate of unemployment was 23 percent, down from 31 percent in 2003. By 2009, however, the official unemployment rate had increased to 23.6 percent and was projected to rise further because of the recession. GEAR's successor, the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (AsgiSA), aims to stimulate economic growth and reduce unemployment and poverty by 50 percent by 2014. AsgiSA planned to operate in two primary phases. In the first phase, implemented from 2005 to 2009, the objective was to achieve, on average, an economic growth rate of 4.5 percent or higher annually. This was on track until the 2008 global economic downturn. However, the deeper problem facing South Africa is widespread poverty and vulnerability; a number of those who are employed are still poor (CMC 1999). In 2002 more than 18 percent of the population was classified as falling below the poverty line. The income inequality created during apartheid has increased since the first democratic elections, making a large percentage of the population extremely vulnerable to sudden shocks that can result from internal or external factors, such as illness in the household, job loss, or interest-rate increases. The country’s widespread poverty is rooted in the persistent and dramatic inequality, where

whites' average income is ten times higher than Africans'. Land ownership is another factor. Apartheid's discriminatory employment and housing practices also play a role. After apartheid ended in 1994, the white minority owned about 87 percent of commercial farmland while blacks owned only 13 percent. Rectifying the extremely uneven distribution of land is a highly complex and politically explosive challenge for the government. To a significant extent, this problem stemmed from decades of discriminatory government intervention in favor of white farmers. The ANC government has begun to address the popular insistence upon redistribution of land while promoting productive use of farmland.

Affirmative action programs have stimulated the growth of a relatively small but growing black middle class. Meanwhile the white poor have reemerged. The decline in income for the poorest 40 percent of white households was already underway during apartheid's final years and resulted from the already-declining economy: once economic conditions deteriorated, the apartheid government could not maintain its high level of white favoritism (Terreblanche 2002). It is, however, important to note that of the 28 million households in South Africa living in poverty in 1996, fewer than 500,000 were white. Further, according to Nattrass and Seekings (2001), the working class has re-segmented. Increased labor-market flexibility and international competition have created a growing marginal working class unrepresented by trade unions as well as a population of long-term unemployed with no skills and very poor prospects for rising out of poverty. Therefore, while the systems that produced and reproduced inequality are no longer in place, South Africa continues to be as economically and socially divided as it was under apartheid. In every socioeconomic index, whites are better off than coloureds and

coloureds are marginally better off than Africans. For example, in 2002, 56 percent of Africans lived below the poverty line, compared to 36 percent of coloureds and only 6.9 percent of whites (Seekings and Nuttras 2005). While on average coloured people are better off than Africans, they are much less so than whites are, as stated above and as will be elaborated upon in Chapter Three. The conditions of many working-class coloureds have worsened since the transition from apartheid although as I will argue in Chapter Four, during apartheid a large portion of the coloured population was already exceptionally poor because the Coloured Labour Preference Policy never protected most coloured people. As will be illustrated throughout this dissertation, deteriorating living conditions for coloureds since apartheid's demise and the emergence of a black middle class have led many working-class and poor coloureds to conclude that they are being discriminated against. The growth in the black middle class has been attributed to better education and affirmative action. Coloured people see black empowerment as politically driven and assume that the beneficiaries are those who have close connections to the ANC. Although "black" in post-apartheid South Africa is supposed to encompass all who were formerly disadvantaged (Africans, coloureds and Indians), it is assumed that Africans now receive preference in job placement.

Since the end of apartheid, the country has experienced rapid social transformation in part because of many of the companies that divested from South Africa during the final days of apartheid re-entered the market Additionally, since the mid 1990s there have been many new media and technological advances, which have brought the Internet and access to international television programs to the country. These changes have significantly influenced post-apartheid generationers. One of the major influences

is popular culture and the light it shines on youth. Today, more and more young people are incorporating music, music videos, popular films, and television programs into their identity construction. Most television programs are racially diverse. For the first time in South Africa, a generation of young people has grown up seeing themselves as well as other races reflected on television. Further, one can find the faces of racially diverse people in many advertisements, and township chic fashions are now sold in stores.

However, this generation encounters increased crime levels in the townships.[11] This is also the first generation to deal with the effects of the global AIDS pandemic, and the country has one of the highest rates of HIV infections and AIDS cases. HIV and AIDS are clearly at the forefront of the challenges youth face. Although the end of apartheid has brought with it many changes, South Africa is one of the most unequal societies in the world. The most recent census indicates that more than 28 million people live in poverty and the gap between the wealthiest and poorest citizens has widened since the end of apartheid.

Post-apartheid generationers have also had to deal with the critique that they lack interest in politics. My research suggests that in families and communities there is little intergenerational dialogue about the apartheid past. A new generation is dealing with the legacies of apartheid without fully understanding their origin and without hearing their parents' accounts. Some parents purposefully shield their children from knowledge about apartheid, preferring that the racial baggage that burdens their generation not burden their children. One day while visiting the Hector Pieterson Museum in Johannesburg, I joined a workshop for teachers on how to include the history of apartheid in the classroom.

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[11] It must be noted that there was certainly a great deal of violence in apartheid South Africa; however, the current violence is of a different nature in that it is primarily black-on-black and gang-related.

Teachers expressed frustration at how little students know about South African history. One teacher said, “All they care about is American culture.”

The oldest of the post-apartheid generation are politically conscious because they came of age during the struggles of the 1980s. They were exposed to the politics of the time by their teachers or by their siblings, parents, or peers on a daily basis. Some were educated by teachers who were members of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) or by Teachers League of South Africa (TLSA) supporters, who held discussion groups in libraries, community centers, and universities. The TLSA and NEUM adopted non-racialism, rejecting coloured separatism, which they believed played into the hands of the ruling classes. Many post-apartheid youth were exposed to political activities in educational institutions, community centers, or the literature of various organizations. The library acted as an educational zone of liberation as many young people became aware of political and economic ideas not so much through reading but through hearing about them in discussions and arguments inside and outside the library (Dick 2007). In fact, the Lentegeur Library on the Cape Flats often provided safe haven for anti-apartheid activists during times of extreme township violence (Dick 2007, 706). Alternative education also took the form of debates, discussions, speeches by invited guests, plays, poetry readings, films, and songs. Additionally, prescribed textbooks were critically dissected and the daily press was read “politically” (Bundy 1989). These informal educational activities played an important part in forming and sharpening the consciousness of post-apartheid youth. Children as young as eight or ten years old were present in these “zones of liberation.” These children are now 30 years old.

Chapter Outline

This chapter provided a brief overview of the social, political, and economic environment of South Africa, both past and present. Chapter Two provides historical background on the coloured population—key information if one is to grasp the complexities of the coloured question and why colouredness remains contentious. Chapter Three discusses and justifies the methodologies used to gather data for this research project; explains why I selected Cape Town and Johannesburg as my primary and secondary field sites, respectively; and provides social and economic information essential for understanding issues prevalent in post-apartheid South Africa. The second part of Chapter Three deals with the challenges involved in conducting research on race and considers questions surrounding the identity of the researcher. The chapter concludes with a specific discussion about my experiences as a black researcher *of a certain type,* conducting fieldwork in South Africa.

A number of organized efforts have tried to rearticulate coloured identity in the country now that apartheid has ended; however, many coloured people, particularly within the working class, continue to adhere to a racialized conception of colouredness. Through ethnographic analysis, Chapter Four examines the way coloured identity is negotiated by everyday people. Through this analysis, the chapter explores the notion that present-day coloured identities should not simply be equated with old 'Cape Coloured' formations. Additionally, I argue that redefinitions of coloured identity are being forged in the specific context of the post-apartheid environment which includes: ongoing disparities in education, housing, and healthcare; rising unemployment; low wages; soaring crime and gangsterism; and the rise of a black bourgeoisie through black

empowerment programs. Finally, the chapter examines the specific ways post-apartheid generationers assert colouredness.

Contemporary South Africa has witnessed a resurgence of colouredness, with many who rejected the identity during the 1980s embracing it now. Fear of black majority rule, the perception that coloureds are being marginalized, a desire to counter pervasive negative stereotypes of coloured people, and attempts at capitalizing on the newly democratic environment in pursuit of political agendas have all played a role in fueling coloured assertiveness. Chapter Five examines collective expressions of coloured identity that have emerged since apartheid's demise. These organized expressions show the different ways that various segments of the coloured population are attempting to rework the coloured category. These attempts involve a reworking of history but continue to rely on colonial and apartheid constructions of colouredness. The first part of the chapter examines the December First Movement, which sought to mobilize coloureds through identification with a slave past, and the Khoisan Revivalism, which tries to reinvent a Khoisan ethnicity by looking back to history and attempting to reclaim indigenous Khoisan roots. The chapter concludes with a discussion and analysis of ethnographic data from interviews and participant observation, research tools that captured post-apartheid generationers' attempts to claim coloured identity. I place particular emphasis on the bruin-ou.com website and movement, which has tried to move from online discussions of identity to action.

In Chapter Six, I explore how post-apartheid generationers are using hip-hop and black popular culture to remake coloured identity, which was historically structured. In this chapter I argue that coloured youth are striving to break free of apartheid

constructions of colouredness and forge new constructions by looking outside South Africa for different understandings of race.

Chapter Seven, the concluding chapter, draws together theoretical and empirical work to make conclusions regarding the dissertation's original objectives. The key conclusions of this chapter relate to how the politics of identity are played out "on the ground" in post-apartheid South Africa and how these experiences impact the processes of identity construction.

Chapter Two
Making Coloured Identities

In this chapter I will examine the construction of coloured identity against the background of the broader history of South Africa. I begin this history in pre-colonial times because this period was crucial to the shaping of South African society. It is a history that has become increasingly important to coloured people as they struggle to find a place in the post-apartheid present—a theme that will be addressed again in Chapter Five. This chapter does not attempt to be all-encompassing but rather highlights specific histories that are essential to the contemporary story of coloured people. As stated in the Introduction, this dissertation does not reduce colouredness to its conceptions during apartheid but rather argues that coloured identities have been shaped by the country's colonial history and the specific history of slavery and segregation that developed in the South African colony. I argue that political, economic, and social processes in South Africa from colonialism onwards gave rise to contemporary understandings of colouredness.

A Significant Pre-Colonial History

The post-apartheid space has opened up the possibility for groups to draw on aspects of their identity in ways not possible during apartheid South Africa. Increasingly history—both personal family histories and national history—have become increasingly important as groups rethink their place in the social landscape. Questions about who is indigenous, African, or South African have become important in the new democratic dispensation. The purpose of this chapter is to provide an explanation for how people came to think of themselves as coloured in the contemporary period. This explanation cannot be attempted without reference to the social history of South Africa over the last three and a half centuries.

The pre-colonial history of Southern Africa is significant in its own right. It is important to the history of contemporary coloured identity and to the history of contemporary South Africa because sectors of the coloured population have begun to draw on this early history in their efforts to make identity claims, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five. According to historians, the intense movement and interaction of people, the creation of social structure, and the emergence of identities marked early South Africa as people came to be bound together through shared practices and perceptions of the wider world (Crais 1992 and Elphick 1979). Migration and competition for land was a significant factor in country's history. The successive arrivals, first of pastoralists and later of pastoralist-cultivators, precipitated processes of conflict, mostly over land and authority (Crais 1992, 12).

Early archeological evidence suggests that the San, also called the Bushmen, were the earliest modern inhabitants of Southern Africa, appearing possibly between 40,000 and 25,000 years ago.[12] Archeological remains found throughout South Africa indicate that the San widely inhabited the country; and according to historians, they led a primarily nomadic life, surviving mainly by hunting and gathering broadly (cf. Were 1974; Elphick 1979; Crais 1992; Shell 1994). The Khoikhoi were also among the early inhabitants of Southern Africa, with their remains appearing in South Africa around 500 BC according to archeological evidence. The Khoikhoi lived throughout the Western Cape and throughout South West Africa, known today as Namibia. Inevitably, the Khoikhoi and San competed for land—as grazing herds increased, especially on the more marginal lands, the pastoralist Khoikhoi took the upper hand, having a more consistent food source, a centralized and stable community, and a larger population. Khoikhoi society occasionally absorbed bands of San. The word "Khoisan" emerged to refer to both groups, who ultimately shared many characteristics. Over time, the Khoikhoi established themselves along the coast while small groups of "Bushmen" continued to inhabit the interior (cf. Elphick 1979, Crais 1992, Shell 1994).

At some point during the fifteenth century, the hunter-gatherers came into contact with Bantu-speaking pastoralist-cultivators. This contact between hunters, herders, and cultivators took place as different groups moved in search of land, water, status, and refuge, and gave social and political shape to the wider region. The Eastern Cape became a "border area" or "frontier zone," a site of ethnic ambiguity and intensive social construction (Crais 1992, 14). New identities were assembled and older ones were

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[12] The San's early occupation of the country is proved by numerous relics of their stone tools, rock paintings and sculptures (Were 1974).

refashioned. Centuries earlier, Bantu-speaking pastoralist-cultivators from the north and northeast had arrived, reshaping the social landscape of the region. The exact date of their arrival is uncertain, but historians agree it was over a thousand years ago. At any rate, by the tenth century the Bantu were living in northern parts of the country. By the mid-1600s, as a result of centuries of migration, settlement, and expansion, they had settled in Natal (which today consists of KwaZulu-Natal) and parts of the Cape Province (Elphick 1985, Crais 1992).

Much of this early prehistory, claiming a linear history from the Khoi and the San to the Bantu has been challenged by Edwin Wilmsen's *Land Filled with Flies: A Political Economy of the Kalahar*i, which traces the prehistory and history of the !Kung in the Kalahari and concludes that there was a long tradition of interaction, including trading, among early pastoralist-cultivators in Southern Africa (Wilmsen 1989). Archeological evidence shows that as early as the sixth and seventh centuries, an early-Iron-Age agrarian people started to settle in the area. Wilmsen's excavations suggest that these hunter-gatherers also took part in a trading network extending as far east as the Indian Ocean. Wilmsen also uncovered written accounts by European explorers and traders indicating that the San used manufactured goods and owned large herds of cattle. In *The Bushman Myth: The Making of a Namibian Underclass*, Robert Gordon (1992) similarly concludes that the San had a long history of interaction with their neighbors. The isolation of hunter-gatherers ended long before the nineteenth century (Wilmsen 1989).

Colonial Encounters and the Emergence of the Racial Order

Figure 2. Map of colonial South Africa[13]

In 1652, ships from the Dutch East India Company (DEIC) arrived and took permanent possession of the Cape peninsula and in so doing closed one arc of population movement that had begun in Africa nearly one hundred millennia before (Shell 1994). Under the command of Jan Van Reinbeck, the DEIC had the goal of creating a refreshment station to supply its ships en route to and from the East (Du Pre 1994). Although it did not favor the establishment of settlements in the Cape, the company allowed some of its employees to set up as independent farmers so that the needs of the refreshment station would be met. The granting of farms to private citizens encouraged the immigration of European women, though for decades after the

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creation of the settlement, the proportion of European men to women remained very high. In 1689 the DEIC brought an additional 180 Huguenot[14] refugees who had fled France and settled them mainly in the Stellenbosch district, near what became Franschoek. The Huguenots might have developed into a distinct community, but they were placed among earlier Dutch settlers and were encouraged to learn, worship, and communicate in Dutch (Davenport and Sunders 2000, 21).

During the colonial encounter, the Khoikhoi were portrayed as "noble savages" or as barbarians. Their function, from the DEIC's point of view, was to supply its ships with meat. Although the Khoikhoi initially traded willingly with the Dutch, the needs of the colonialists grew and the Khoikhoi tried to conserve their limited cattle stock—their primary form of wealth—by offering sheep (Du Pre 1994). As the refreshment station grew, so did the demand for land for cultivation and pastoralism. The DEIC responded by sending expeditions inland for land and livestock. Once the settlers had land and livestock to maintain, they needed labor. In 1659 the first of two Dutch-Khoi wars erupted in response to the confiscation of land and the rising threat to the Khoikhoi's pastoral way of life. From 1673 to 1677 the DEIC launched a military campaign against the Khoikhoi. Eventually, their loss of cattle wealth and land forced the Khoikhoi to become laborers in the colony, entering that society at the lower echelons. Later, their numbers would be drastically reduced by a sequence of smallpox epidemics during the eighteenth century (Shell 1984).

The abundance of free land and the scarcity of suitable labor in the Cape led to the importation of enslaved people via the Dutch Indian Ocean slave trade. The Dutch maintained slavery through a system of laws that enforced a free-wage labor system,

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[14] Huguenots were a community of French Protestants who left the Netherlands and arrived at the Cape in 1687. They had fled to the Netherlands from France to escape religious persecution.

denied rights to purchased slaves, and ensured that the status of enslaved women would pass on to their children. The Dutch Indian Ocean slave system drew captive labor from three interlocking and overlapping circuits of subregions: the westernmost, African circuit of East Africa, Madagascar, and the Mascarene Islands (Mauritius and Reunion); the middle, South Asian circuit of the Indian subcontinent (Malabar, Coromandel, and the Bengal/Arakan coast); and the easternmost, Southeast Asian circuit of Malaysia, Indonesia, New Guinea (Irian Jaya), and the southern Philippines (Vink 2003, 139). The earliest slaves arrived in the Cape in 1658; they came from Dahomey and Angola.[15] The largest number of slaves arrived between 1724 and 1732 from India, Indonesia, Bengal, and the DEIC's eastern possessions (Elphick and Gilomee 1979). After the eighteenth century slaves were brought mainly from Madagascar and East Africa. The company used slaves on its cattle and defense posts and on public works in Cape Town. Most slaves worked for settlers on the grain and wine farms of the southwestern Cape. After the British took control of the Cape in 1806,[16] slavery there was enforced under the same laws that imposed slavery in all of the British colonies. The decades following Britain's occupation of the Cape saw a series of ameliorative measures with respect to the status and treatment of slaves, culminating in the end of the slave trade in 1807. However, slaves already in the Cape remained in bondage until 1834 when all slaves in the British Empire were freed. The Slavery Abolition Bill of 1833 was passed by the British House of Commons and by the House of Lords in August 1833 and was enforced in the Cape colony on August 1,1834. On that date slavery was abolished throughout the vast British

[15] There are records indicating the arrival of an individual enslaved people at the Cape as early as 1653 (Shell 1994).
[16] In 1795 the colony was annexed by Britain following the Napoleonic Wars before the Treaty of Amiens saw possession revert to the Dutch in 1803.

Empire, with a few exceptions, one being the Cape colony, where emancipation was delayed for four months until December 1 (Davenport and Sunders 2000; Shell 1994).

Within the first two decades of colonial rule, the Cape colony was a highly stratified, multicultural society with a racial hierarchy already in place. The complexity of early Cape culture was due in part to the ethnic diversity of the European settlers and in part to the constantly changing oceanic slave trade reaching the Cape. The colonial population consisted of the indigenous Khoikhoi, a community of white settlers from the Netherlands and other parts of continental Europe who later identified themselves as Afrikaners,[17] and enslaved people from various parts of Africa and the East. Within a few decades the European community was dominant, and all other communities were relegated to positions of legal and political inferiority. A class and color hierarchy developed that continues to influence South Africa to this day.

Throughout the eighteenth century, violence, raids, and commando expeditions characterized the relationship between settlers and the Khoi (Marks 1972, 68). The Khoisan resisted the Europeans formidably for nearly one hundred years; but by the end of the eighteenth century, the Khoikhoi had become landless and were forced to rely on wage labor (Goldin 1987, 9).

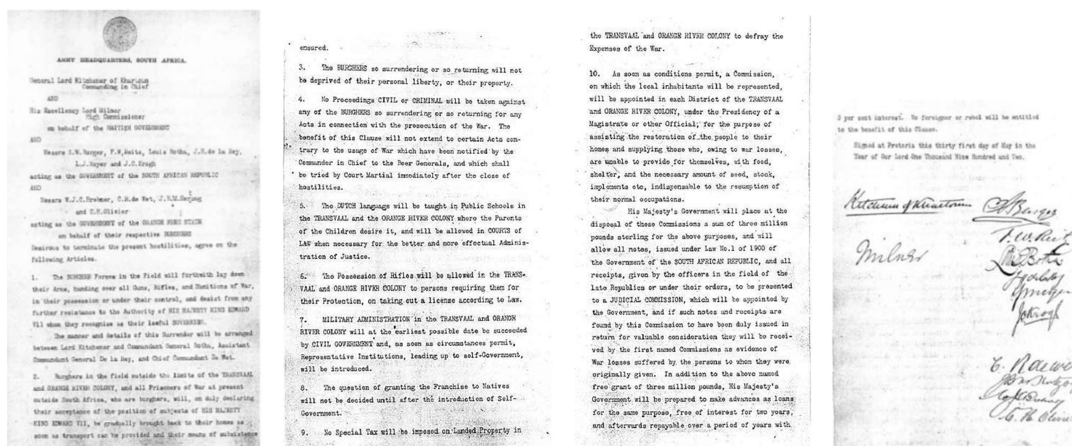
The abolition of slavery led to the emergence of a newly proletarianized people in the 1830s. At the time of emancipation, the Khoikhoi and the former slaves were—through their common experiences of servitude, poverty, and exposure to Western culture via colonial missions and labor in colonial households—merged together as a distinguishable class of intermediate social status (Goldin 1987). This class included the core of individuals who in the twentieth century came to be defined as coloured (Goldin 1987; Lewis 1987; Bickford-Smith 1995). Further, early in the Cape colony there was no

[17] Afrikaner history and nationalism will be discussed later in the chapter.

clear distinction regarding the non-white population as indicated by the 1875 and 1892 census, which referred to all "non-European" people as coloured. However, by 1904 the census clearly defined race groups in the colony as "White," "Bantu," and "coloured" (Goldin 1987, 13). Goldin adds, "It was no accident that the period which saw the evolution of a distinct coloured identity also saw a dramatic transformation of labor as people migrated to the towns of the Cape colony in search of employment" (Goldin 1987, 14). A distinction in the labor force emerged by the 1890s as employees in the Cape Town docks, mines, and farms were divided into "Natives" and "cape boys." "Natives" were preferred for unskilled and heavy manual jobs while "cape boys" were hired as carpenters, bricklayers, plasters, joiners, and stonemasons. Eventually, Bantu-speaking men from outside the region were relegated to the lowest-paying, most arduous occupations.

Though a group of proletarianized individuals came to occupy an intermediate social position in colonial Cape society, I do not argue that the population that came to be known as coloured clearly emerged during the 1820s and 1830s or as the result of emancipation. Rather, I suggest that contemporary coloured identity was forged through the long, evolving social, economic, and political processes that have been occurring in South Africa since the colonial encounter. In the remaining sections of this chapter, I illustrate that coloured identity was influenced by a host of societal changes caused by Afrikaner and British attempts to gain political and economic control over the emerging nation.

Unifying the White Nation



ARMY HEADQUARTERS, SOUTH AFRICA.

General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum
Commanding in Chief

AND

His Excellency Lord Milner
High Commissioner

on behalf of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT

AND

Messrs S.W. Burger, F.W. Reitz, Louis Botha, J.H. de la Rey,
L.J. Meyer and J.C. Krogh

acting as the GOVERNMENT of the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC

AND

Messrs W.J.C. Brebner, C.R. de Wet, J.B.M. Hertzog
and C.H. Olivier

acting as the GOVERNMENT of the ORANGE FREE STATE
on behalf of their respective BURGHERS

Desirous to terminate the present hostilities, agree on the following Articles.

1. The BURGHER Forces in the Field will forthwith lay down their Arms, handing over all Guns, Rifles, and Munitions of War, in their possession or under their control, and desist from any further resistance to the Authority of HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII whom they recognise as their lawful SOVEREIGN.

The manner and details of this Surrender will be arranged between Lord Kitchener and Commandant General Botha, Assistant Commandant General De la Rey, and Chief Commandant De Wet.

2. Burghers in the field outside the limits of the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY, and all Prisoners of War at present outside South Africa, who are burghers, will, on duly declaring their acceptance of the position of subjects of HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII, be gradually brought back to their homes as soon as transport can be provided and their means of subsistence ensured.

3. The BURGHERS so surrendering or so returning will not be deprived of their personal liberty, or their property.

4. No Proceedings CIVIL or CRIMINAL will be taken against any of the BURGHERS so surrendering or so returning for any Acts in connection with the prosecution of the War. The benefit of this Clause will not extend to certain Acts contrary to the usage of War which have been notified by the Commander in Chief to the Boer Generals, and which shall be tried by Court Martial immediately after the close of hostilities.

5. The DUTCH language will be taught in Public Schools in the TRANSVAAL and the ORANGE RIVER COLONY where the Parents of the Children desire it, and will be allowed in COURTS of LAW when necessary for the better and more effectual Administration of Justice.

6. The Possession of Rifles will be allowed in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY to persons requiring them for their Protection, on taking out a license according to Law.

7. MILITARY ADMINISTRATION in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY will at the earliest possible date be succeeded by CIVIL GOVERNMENT and, as soon as circumstances permit, Representative Institutions, leading up to self-Government, will be introduced.

8. The question of granting the Franchise to Natives will not be decided until after the introduction of Self-Government.

9. No Special Tax will be imposed on Landed Property in the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY to defray the Expenses of the War.

10. As soon as conditions permit, a Commission, on which the local inhabitants will be represented, will be appointed in each District of the TRANSVAAL and ORANGE RIVER COLONY, under the Presidency of a Magistrate or other Official, for the purpose of assisting the restoration of the people to their homes and supplying those who, owing to war losses, are unable to provide for themselves, with food, shelter, and the necessary amount of seed, stock, implements etc, indispensable to the resumption of their normal occupations.

His Majesty's Government will place at the disposal of these Commissions a sum of three million pounds sterling for the above purposes, and will allow all notes, issued under Law No.1 of 1900 of the Government of the SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC, and all receipts, given by the officers in the field of the late Republics or under their orders, to be presented to a JUDICIAL COMMISSION, which will be appointed by the Government, and if such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued in return for valuable consideration they will be received by the first named Commissions as evidence of War losses suffered by the persons to whom they were originally given. In addition to the above named free grant of three million pounds, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to make advances as loans for the same purpose, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with 3 per cent interest. No foreigner or rebel will be entitled to the benefit of this Clause.

Signed at Pretoria this thirty first day of May in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and Two.

Figure 3. Peace Treaty of Vereeniging, signed on May 31, 1902 at Melrose House, Pretoria.[18]

Britain acquired the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa from the Dutch in 1815 during the Napoleonic Wars, after which the British government introduced a series of substantial reforms designed to bring the Cape in line with British colonial practice elsewhere (Meredith 2008).[19] There was a push for the indigenous Khoikhoi to be granted civil rights, specifically decent treatment and religious education by British missionaries. Many Dutch colonists found the idea of placing Khoikhoi and slaves on an equal footing with white Christians repugnant and "contrary to the laws of God and the natural distinction of race and religion" (Meredith 2008). After slavery was abolished in the Cape in 1834, former slaves were required to remain in bondage four more years as "apprentices" (Meredith 2008). The British also installed a new court system in which

[18] This image is in the public domain because its copyright has expired in the United States and those countries with a copyright term of no more than the life of the author plus 100 years.

[19] The Napoleonic Wars were a series of conflicts declared against Napoleon's French Empire, changing sets of European allies by opposing coalitions that ran from 1803 to 1815. The United Kingdom invaded and occupied the Cape Colony in 1795 but relinquished control of the territory in 1803. However, British forces returned on January 19, 1806, and reoccupied the Cape. The territory was ceded to the British in the Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1814 and was henceforth administered as the Cape Colony. It remained a British colony until incorporated into the independent Union of South Africa in 1910.

English rather than Dutch was the official language. These changes caused deep resentment among the colonists, especially the Dutch-speaking settlers in frontier districts. Certain groups of Dutch-speaking farmers, referred to as *Boers,*[20] were discontent with the new government because of the British's liberal laws on slavery and later their abolition of slavery (Beck 2000, 64). In a "Manifesto" sent to the *Graham's Town Journal*, Piet Retief, an emigrant leader, cited grievances, including "severe losses" resulting from emancipation (Meredith, 2008, 5). Dutch-speaking settlers also felt that the anglicization policies demeaned their language and culture and left them without a political voice in the Cape. In order to escape British rule, these Dutch settlers migrated to the interior of the country, toward Natal, hoping to develop their own states in what came to be known as the Great Trek. Other factors also spurred the Great Trek, such as the abolition of slavery, although this significantly affected only the wealthiest men. Afrikaner farmers despised the Black Circuit courts and Ordinance 50 for stripping them of the almost complete control they had once had over Khoikhoi workers. British promotion of land reform and intensive farming upset Afrikaner land ownership and use, especially because the British settlers' arrival and introduction of merino sheep caused land prices to spike (Beck 2000, 64). These Afrikaner farmers set up the Orange Free State and the Transvaal republics. As trekker communities sought to establish their own states, they fought repeatedly with African adversaries—the Basotho, the Griqua, the Tswana, the Ndebele, and Zulus—already living in those lands (Meredith 2008, 6). As the Trekboers[21] continued east, conflicts escalated and African people resisted fiercely. These battles often caused great loss of life and livestock. Zulu parties also captured

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[20] Dutch word for "farmer."

[21] *Trekboers* means "moving farmers" in Afrikaans.

many livestock and horses. In 1838 during the Battle of Blood River, three thousand Zulu fighters were defeated. The Kaffir Wars, a series of wars between the Xhosa and European settlers in the Eastern Cape between 1729 and 1879, were the main cause for the Xhosa's loss of land and their absorption into the colonial labor market.

Ultimately, the Trekboers served as pioneers, opening up the interior for those who followed, and the British gradually extended their control from the Cape and along the coast to the east, eventually annexing Natal in 1845. At a convention at Sand River in 1852, the British recognized the Transvaal Republic's independence, and at the Bloemfontein Convention in 1854, they recognized the Orange Free State's independence as well (Meredith 2008, 8). Then in 1867, prospectors exploring a remote area in Griqualand, just outside the Cape's borders, discovered the world's richest deposits of diamonds; in 1886 gold was discovered in the Witwatersrand (Meredith 2008). What followed was a struggle by the British to gain control over southern Africa and by the Boers to preserve the independence of their republics. This struggle culminated in the costliest, bloodiest, most humiliating war Britain had waged in nearly a century (Meredith 2008, 9). In 1899 the Anglo-Boer war, fought between the British and Dutch-speaking inhabitants of the two independent Boer republics, ended with the annexation of the region under the British Empire. However, after the war Afrikaner leaders like J.B.M. Hertzog, J.C. Smuts, and Louis Botha mobilized political parties and in 1907 returned to power in the Transvaal and Orange Free State (Meredith 2008, 12). Hertzog formed the National Party (NP) in 1914 after disagreements with English speakers in the South African Party.

During the war, most Africans and coloureds supported the British; however, their loyalty was not, as they had hoped, rewarded with improved living conditions (Beck 2000, 94). After a hundred years of wars and clashes with both the British and the Boers, African chiefdoms in South Africa had succumbed to white rule and lost most of their lands through conquest and settlement. Africans were excluded from the negotiations that lead to the founding of the Union of South Africa and would be denied political rights under its proposed constitution. The Africans and coloureds who had supported the British were shocked that under the terms of the Treaty of Vereeniging, Britain had agreed to postpone consideration of black political rights until all terms of self-rule in the republics had been given. The Transvaal Native Congress complained to the House of Commons in London that while Afrikaners who had been “enemies of the King and British principles” had been favorably treated, Africans who had shown their loyalty had their interests ignored (Beck 2000, 100). After the signing of the Treaty, Cape Africans and coloureds were appalled that a color bar affecting their employment prospects had been legislated. One result was the barring of coloured people from skilled positions and apprenticeships in the rapidly growing jewelry, optical, electrical, metallurgical, and engineering crafts, which became reserved mainly for white youth. The Treaty of Vereeniging also left the franchise question of the broader non-white population open although coloureds were allowed to vote if they met certain educational and wealth standards. This development was a huge blow for the coloured population as a whole because the British had made coloured rights a feature of their propaganda during the war, promising to bring equality and liberty to all in the republics. Coloureds had been

led to believe that by disassociating themselves from Afrikaners and the Bantu-speaking population, they would be spared the loss of the franchise and other rights.

The Union of South Africa launched in May 1910, and outwardly it seemed that the British and Afrikaners had fully merged as a single body politic. However, many Afrikaners never accepted being part of the British Empire and mourned the loss of their own republics (Beck 2000). Reminders of British control continually pricked them. The national flag was a British Red Ensign with the Union Coat of Arms in a lower corner, most civil-service work was conducted in English, and English was the primary language in schools, with Dutch limited to just a few hours a week. Further, the British dominated industry, commerce, and the mines and controlled the banks and finance houses. They also held a near monopoly on industrial skills and training (96).

Fearing they would lose their place in the country, a group of Afrikaner leaders began openly to reject the policies of reconciliation Botha and Smuts supported. Eventually, Afrikaner nationalists' determination to redress the socioeconomic status of Afrikaners increased as great numbers of their population migrated to the cities in search of employment. Afrikaners found the cities alien and often hostile. The language of industry, commerce, and civil service was overwhelmingly English, and their own language was treated with contempt, referred to as a "kitchen language" (101). Lacking skills, education, and capital, many of these former farmers were often forced to compete for jobs with cheap black labor and to live in slums on the edges of towns. The "poor white problem," as it was called, was frequently blamed on the evil designs of "British imperialism" and "Anglo-Jewish capitalism." Afrikaner leaders responded by establishing their own social organizations in an attempt to hold the "volk" together and

preserve their traditions. One such organization, launched in 1918, was the Afrikaner Broederbond (Afrikaner Brotherhood). The Broederbond was a secret, exclusively male, white Protestant organization dedicated to the advancement of Afrikaner interests. It began as a small, select society interested principally in the promotion of Afrikaner culture and language but grew into one of the most formidable organizations in South African history: every state president from 1948 to 1994 belonged to this group.

The black population, on the other hand, was subjected to a barrage of legislation designed to relegate it to a strictly subordinate role and to exploit its labor potential. In 1911, the Mines and Works Act barred blacks from skilled industrial jobs. In 1913 the Natives' Land Act laid down the principle of territorial segregation, and Africans were prohibited from purchasing or leasing land in white areas. The only areas where they could lawfully acquire land henceforth were in Native reserves, which then amounted to about 8 percent of the country's land. Bundy (1972, 384) writes that the main function of the Natives Land Act was to reduce squatters and sharecroppers to labor tenants. Africans in the Cape were excluded from the legislation since African land rights there affected voting rights. Allowing Africans the franchise would also set a bad precedent for Britain's other colonies in Africa and Asia. Africans were the war's primary losers.

The Mineral Revolution, the rapid industrialization and economic changes that occurred in South Africa from the 1870s onwards, had a significant and increasingly negative impact on race relations in the country as Africans from the British territories and rural coloureds and Indians entered the Cape in search of employment. The economic changes created a demand for cheap, unskilled, non-white labor for the mines and industry. Charles Van Onselen notes, "The African labor market has been dominated

by three major sectors of employment; mining, agriculture and domestic service" (Lewis 1987, 12; Van Onselen 1982, 1). The mining and agricultural sectors competed for black labor, and the state and mining magnates collaborated on policies that would ensure an available supply of cheap black labor (Van Onselen 1982, 7). In urban areas competition for jobs between coloureds and Africans ensued, and the rapidly increasing population caused extremely poor living conditions. Urban space and "racial" mixing became fraught issues, especially in the poorer districts where working-class people of diverse backgrounds resided (Beinart 1994, 73). In response to this economic and demographic change, which threatened white hegemony, Cape Town's dominant class adopted a series of segregationist laws. This capitalist industrial development in the mid to late 19th century fuelled urbanization, and a separate, politicized "coloured" identity began to emerge (Adhikari 2001; Beinart 2001, 38; Pickel 1997, 24).

Ultimately, the 1910 Act of Union created a single nation with a population of 1,275,000 Whites, 150,000 Indians, 500,000 coloureds, and 4 million Africans (Beck 2000, 101). Only White South Africans, however, were truly citizens. Over the next forty years successive white governments passed laws creating a segregated society in order to placate white laborers— who constantly demanded greater job security, higher wages, and privileged positions— and avoid alienating white mine and land owners, who did not want their access to cheap black labor threatened. These laws prepared the way for the harsher apartheid system that followed. Marks and Trapido argue that in 1910 the Union of South Africa created a coherent colonial state, expediting the restructuring of capitalist development, which could maximize the financial benefits of the mining industry.

The Emergence of Coloured Political Organization

The emergence of an increased coloured self-awareness expressed through separate, organized political organizations began late in the nineteenth century. It was marked by rapid economic change through industrialization, migration, urbanization, and a shift in colonial racial discourse (Pickel 1997). The Mineral Revolution drew an increased number of African workers into the Cape, and this led to increased competition for jobs among poor coloured and white unskilled workers. In response, influx controls were introduced, marking the concrete beginning of a three-tiered racial hierarchy in the Western Cape that included white, Bantu and coloured (Pickel 1997, 25). While the state began its policy of racial segregation, the coloured elite, aware of its deteriorated status, began to organize for coloured rights, founding the African Political Organization (APO) in 1902.

Among the coloured, the elite differentiated itself from the masses in economic and intellectual terms. Based on family networks and education provided by Christian and Muslim schools, these coloureds were able to encourage and sustain entrepreneurship among traders and craftsmen. Those who were Muslims took pride in calling themselves "Malay" because it made them something more than coloured, which was associated with many stereotypes such as poverty and drunkenness, and gave them a sense of historical tradition and a respectable community (Ridd 1993). By this decade, Islam, a distinctive attire, education in Arabic, and culinary and medical practices had become part of Malay ethnicity and were used to distinguish Malays from poor or working-class coloureds. Occupational ties as artisans underpinned Malay ethnicity, as did membership in what

amounted to an inner-city Muslim community concentrated in District One in Cape Town, an area that became known as the Malay Quarter. It is probable that the vast majority of Cape Town's Malays in the 1870s were ex-slaves or their descendants because Islam formed the mainstay of East Indian slave identity and was adopted by many other enslaved people, who found Islamic teachings free of European participation, providing a philosophy that was therefore free of Christianity's oppressor/oppressed power relations (Lewis 1949, 588). Conversion to Islam also provided material support for the poor and social status for the wealthier which was often denied to them in the white social world.

Coloureds, especially the upwardly mobile, strove to assert a common identity for themselves distinct from that of Africans because it allowed them to claim a position of relative privilege on the basis of their deeper assimilation into Western culture and their blood ties to the settler community. Eventually, this groups attempted to crystallize the emergent coloured identity by reducing the salience of distinctions between subcategories (Khoisan, Malay, Griqua) within the population and emphasizing their differences with Africans. By the end of the 1880s, the concept of colouredness, the racial identity upon which the APO was to mobilize support, became entrenched in Cape society.

While coloured identity was defined from below by somewhat assimilated colonial non-whites anxious to secure relative privilege for themselves, it was also partly delineated from above by the dominant white population determined to entrench their supremacy and unwilling to accept the assimilationist aspirations of colonial non-whites. For instance, after executive authority was vested in the Cape Parliament in 1872, the liberal policies of the British administration were subverted and local prejudice found

more direct political expression. An example of this shift was the 1877 Parliamentary Registration Act and the Franchise and Ballot Act of 1892, which raised the franchise qualifications sufficiently to strike thousands of non-whites from the voters' rolls. Although these measures were aimed largely at Africans, there was considerable antipathy towards the coloured voter, even among liberal politicians.

The few whites, like Izak David du Plessis, an influential Afrikaans-speaking intellectual who took an interest in the culture of coloured people, played a major role in reinforcing the idea that coloured people were a separate ethnic group distinctly different from the African population. He worked relentlessly to prove that Muslim coloureds known as Malays were different from the Africans by studying Malay history, language, and folk songs. This alleged difference allowed I.D. du Pless to attach coloureds to the Afrikaner population because “Malay” had been constructed as a distinctive Afrikaans-speaking community. He said the community had much in common with whites although it was in a subordinate position. Coloureds were considered subordinate because most still had to comply with the so-called established norms of European civilization, such as owning property, having a certain level of education, and possessing a certain amount of etiquette—criteria that favored whites (Jeppie 2001).

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries, coloureds, though discriminated against and ostracized by whites, enjoyed a measure of civil rights denied Africans. They could vote, be elected into political office, and form political organizations, which were inevitably led by the economic and intellectual elite. These organizations’ primary goal was to improve the living conditions of the coloured

masses, most of whom were poor, through education. Members of these organizations believed education and improved living conditions would lead to coloureds' being recognized as civilized and their being allowed to enter white society (Lewis 1987).

As suggested above, it is no accident that the evolution of a distinct coloured identity and the development of separate coloured political organizations took place during a period in which the colonial authorities were increasing their discriminatory practices. For coloureds, political organizing provided the arena for collectivizing individual experiences into an ethnic situation and constructing a group image based on a common origin and a common future (Lewis 1987, 9). The Coloured Peoples Association (CPA) was the first attempt at a national coloured organization (Lewis 1987, 9). The CPA was founded in 1892 in Kimberly and emerged out of opposition to the Franchise and Ballot Act of that year. This act raised the franchise qualifications in order to exclude large numbers of Africans in the Transkeian Territories. The CPA held protest meetings but was unsuccessful in preventing the bill's passage. Despite this defeat, the organization established a national branch network and held annual conferences, declaring that its aim was "to unite the coloured people of this colony and uplift them socially and morally" (Lewis 1987, 9).

By 1902 coloured identity expressed itself in the establishment of the African Peoples Organization (APO), which devoted itself to advancing coloureds' rights but not Africans' rights. Constructing an explicit and well-articulated movement on any particular ethnic situation compels fashioners of such a construction to pick effective symbols and emotive issues in order to build a coherent and legitimate case. The APO was founded with five main aims in mind: "To promote unity between the coloured races, to obtain better and higher education for our children, to defend the coloured peoples' social, political and civil rights, to get the names of all coloured

men who have the qualification to be registered as parliamentary voters on the voters' list, and the general advancement of coloured people in South Africa (Goldin 1987, 34)." The organization outlined two broad strategies for the attainment of these aims. The first proposed mobilizing coloured voters behind parliamentary candidates favorable to their interests. The second involved the socioeconomic upliftment of the entire coloured community to a "civilized" status. The APO rapidly gathered support, and mobilizing coloured voters was one of its primary achievements. Although fewer in number than registered white voters, registered coloured voters were concentrated in certain constituencies. For this reason, white political parties had to take them into account.

The history of the APO was intimately linked to the politics of Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, who served as its president from 1904 until his death in 1940. Born in Wellington, South Africa, Dr. Abdurahman was the son of relatively affluent Muslim Cape Malays, and his grandparents were former slaves who had bought their freedom. After receiving a British education in Wellington and Cape Town, he went to Glasgow to study medicine in 1888 and qualified as a doctor in 1893. Under his tenure, the APO shed its image as a regional organization and was recognized as a national political movement. Membership in the APO continued to increase, and the number of branches multiplied after the publication of the draft constitution in 1909 (Goldin 1987, 34). At the APO's peak, scarcely a town in the country was without an organized group of its members.

Most coloured people during this period were employed as unskilled and industrial laborers and servants. However, coloureds began entering the ranks of artisans and the semi-skilled. Unfortunately, they found little job security or upward mobility in these sectors because the unions were controlled by whites, who organized against competition. This heterogeneous

group of workers began to rally around the coloured ethno-racial category in order to survive economically. Initially, the main goal of coloured political organizations was advancement through improved educational facilities and extension of the Cape non-racial franchise to colonies to the north. However, as British and Afrikaner nationalists strove to consolidate the nation, coloured people could barely manage to protect the rights they already had, let alone attain more (Lewis 1987).

As mentioned above, the Industrial Revolution was a time of great social and economic change. Because of rapid growth, the demand for cheap labor grew in all industries in South Africa. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the African population was still heavily rural except for small communities living in Cape Town and Natal (Gerhart 1978). The white administration responded to the growing need for labor by passing laws that, through taxation and limiting land rights, pushed Africans off the land and into the employment of whites. The Native Land Act of 1913 nullified the rights of Africans to buy land outside Native reserves, stripped many Africans outside the reserves of the right to own livestock, and abolished the various systems of sharecropping so as to diminish farming competition from Africans. The result over time was the large-scale movement of Africans off the land and into urban areas or into the migrant labor system, with repeated shifts between rural reserves and contract employment in urban areas, which left Africans competing with unskilled white and non-white workers. In order to protect whites' status, pass and permit laws were enacted to ensure that Africans were temporary migrant residents in the city and to make it difficult for them to change jobs in pursuit of higher wages. Under the Pass laws system, Africans were required to carry pass books with them when outside areas designated for Africans. Failure to

produce a pass often resulted in arrest. Africans who did manage to live in urban areas were forced to live in shantytowns.

The South Africa Act of 1909 established the Union of South Africa; however, the act confirmed many of the APO's worst fears. It enfranchised all white males but granted franchise for only "civilized" blacks who fulfilled certain educational and property-rights criteria (Lewis 1987, 47). With the increasing denial of rights, the APO recognized that cooperation among the different non-white groups was needed to advance political rights for all. The APO supported the South African Indian campaigns, led by Gandhi, against discriminatory laws affecting Indians (Lewis 1987, 78). The APO also welcomed the establishment, in 1912, of the African National Congress (originally known as the South African Native National Congress). The ANC was an inter-ethnic association of educated leaders and chiefs who pledged to defend the rights and represent the interests of Africans as a whole in the Union government (Gerhart 1978). The APO and the ANC worked together as an "organized pressure group" in the fight for equal rights for all groups. Although the APO supported the ANC's opposition to the 1913 Natives Land Act and sent a resolution to the Governor-General and British colony Secretary protesting the act, a formal alliance between the APO and ANC did not develop (Lewis 1987).

From 1919 onward, prominent white nationalists launched a concerted effort to win the coloured vote in the Cape (Lewis 1987). Lewis argues that this coincided with the party's strategy of enlarging its Afrikaner support base by tapping into the growing industrial and political strength of organized white workers. In the same year, the ANC led a campaign against the pass laws, and in the 1920s it mobilized coloured and African

workers in the Western Cape on the basis of shared concerns over wages and working conditions (Lewis 1987, 106). However, on the eve of the 1924 general elections, the white Labour and National Parties combined forces in the so-called "Pact" alliance against the South African Party (Lewis 1987). The Pact entailed entrenching white supremacy in South Africa. Lewis explains that the Pact promised to protect white workers from non-white competition through a civilized labor policy and involved preferential living practices for whites. The Labour-Nationalist Party coalition defeated the South African Party and the slogan of the government was "civilized labor," signaling that they intended to maintain the color bar in employment sectors. For coloureds, the Pact offered a "New Deal." In return for supporting the Pact's policies, coloureds would share in the privileges legislated for white workers and be exempted from the restrictions applied to Africans (Lewis 1987, 119).

A period of economic and political instability followed the First World War and marked the end of the APO because Dr. Abdurahman transitioned to working with a non-European conference comprised of coloured and African organizations. During the 1920s and 1930s coloured people witnessed the decay of their political and economic rights, and Africans became completely marginalized. The New Deal for coloureds included preferential employment and franchise rights while the Natives Representation Bill removed the franchise rights for Africans in the Cape. The period between 1919 and 1938 was a high point in the organization of unskilled workers in the Western Cape. The Industrial Workers Union (ICU) organized workers and staged protests, and the African National Congress (ANC) achieved mass organization in the Western Cape. Founded in Cape Town in 1919, the ICU began as a trade union that drew support from coloured and

African unskilled workers on Cape Town docks (Lewis 1987, 95). The ICU eventually developed into a broader organization, with its membership including skilled and unskilled workers from industry and agriculture. Unlike the ANC, however, the ICU did not officially petition the authorities but instead adopted a more active approach through striking, its intention being the attainment of better working conditions and higher wages for members. As a result, ICU membership support grew, expanding beyond the Cape, into Natal and the Transvaal; but by 1926 coloured support began to decline as Pact policies of preferential treatment for coloured workers created tensions within the organization. Eventually, the ICU shifted its focus to rural areas, addressing peasant and farm-worker grievances in Natal and the Transvaal. Meanwhile, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), founded in 1921, began organizing around the concerns of white workers in the mining industry when companies considered liberalizing the rigid employment color bar. The CPSA supported white workers in their efforts to preserve wages and the racialized labor system. Eventually, the CPSA reoriented itself more generally around trade-union rights and started fighting for the rights of African workers. By 1926 membership was primarily African, and by 1928 the party called for majority rule.[22]

In 1927 the Native Administration Act extended state support for chieftaincy and prepared the way for the recognition of chiefs' courts throughout the reserved areas. This was an important step in the segregationist policies used by the colonial government to "retribalize" African society by imposing primordial ethnic identities. According to Bernard Magubane (1979), the reserve system was meant to effectively arrest the

[22] The CPSA played an important role in the anti-apartheid struggles and will be discussed later in the chapter.

Africans' development while simultaneously allowing white industry to use Africans for cheap labor. As industry grew and the country experienced urbanization and change, Africans were encouraged to align along "tribal" lines rather than as Africans or workers. The apartheid government built on the African reserve system by introducing a series of laws designed to retribalize individuals as "tribal" subjects. These homelands, or Bantustans as they were called under apartheid, were territories set aside for Africans. Ten Bantustans were established, and Africans lost their South African citizenship and became citizens of these homelands, which were said to represent their "original homes." Similar to Magubane, Archie Mafeje (1971) argues that the word "tribe" did not exist in any of the indigenous South African languages. He further noted that even if tribal categories were valid once, they were no longer useful because the colonial encounter ended the traditional and political isolation of groups; and other identities, including occupational or class identities, became more pronounced. Additionally, Magubane (1971) took anthropologists to task for focusing on tribalism rather than highlighting colonial regulation of Africans' social life and ability to organize against European dominance. Ultimately, it is argued that "the creation of tribalism" was an attempt to diffuse national political organization by promoting tribal identities, and Shula Marks notes that Zulu ethnic associations and cultural nationalism diffused classed-based organizations and fractured national movements (Magubane 1971; Mafeje 1971; Marks 1986; Vail 1991). One effect of the creation of tribalism, which depicted Bantu-speaking people negatively and elevated European ways of living to the highest standard, was that coloured people aspired to a white-settler standard of living. Magubane asserts:

> British hegemony as it evolved in South Africa, was to be more than physical subjugation. It was to saturate the society with its values to the extent that it would be common sense for the people under its sway. It was to constitute a whole body of practice and expectation. It was to be enshrined in a set of meanings and values and would be confirmed by practice… Missionaries, whether they were aware of it or not, were used by colonialists to justify their own position and to psychologically enslave colonized peoples. They condemned African institutions and customs, and taught the social norms of a capitalist civilization as if they comprised a universal moral code (Magubane 1979, 55).

In a 1953 study titled, "Colour and Culture in South Africa: A Study of the Status of the Cape Coloured People within the Social Structure of the Union of South Africa," Sheila Patterson states that the first school founded in the Cape was not for the Hottentot (Khoikhoi) or European but for younger slaves of the DEIC in 1658. The school's purpose was to teach slaves Dutch and provide them with religious instruction (Patterson 1953, 92). Additionally, the original Christian missions in South Africa were established in Khoikhoi communities and people of Khoi descent received a Christian education and their children received education (Magubane 1979, 56). It has also been commonly asserted that coloureds and Europeans in South Africa have similar cultures. In a speech in 1925, J.B.M. Hertzog, Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa from 1924-1939, stated:

> He arose and he exists in our midst; he knows no other civilization than that of the white man; whatever his shortcomings may be in respect of, his 'lewenbeskouing' (life view) is fundamentally that of the European and not that of the Native, and he uses the language of the white man as his mother tongue. In his case there can thus be no question of segregation…Economically, industrially and politically the coloured man must be incorporated with us (quoted in Patterson 1953, 14).

Segregation and Apartheid

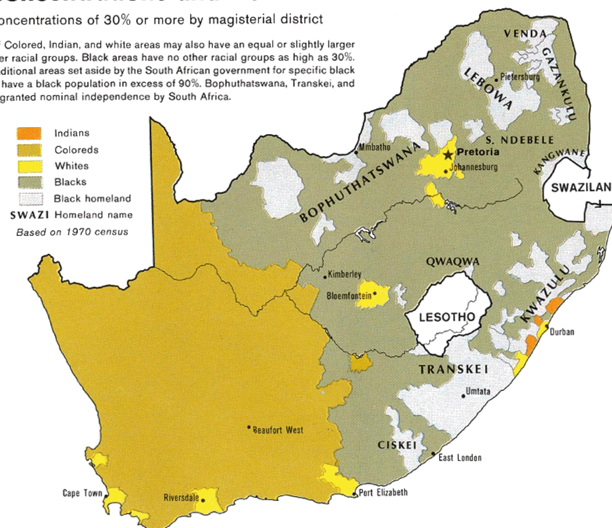

Figure 4. Racial-demographic map of South Africa published by CIA in 1979 with data from the 1970 South African census.

By the end of the 1930s, it was clear that major changes in the national political arena had occurred when a coalition between the primarily Afrikaner National Party and the primarily British South African Party was announced. Both parties sought to protect whites in the labor market and improve poor whites' living standards, which had been greatly impacted by the Great Depression and the thousands of Afrikaner settlers driven to the cities in search of work. This entailed a nationalist strategy aimed to separate poor urban whites and non-whites and to encouraged white workers to throw in their lot with a system constructed around class alliance based on race (Marais 1999). The segregationist thinking materialized in the preservation of jobs for whites and wage differentials and in the Native Trust Act and the Native Representation Act.

This legislation promised land and development funds for the reserves. The 1920s and 1930s were the highpoints of segregation as formal ideologies and policies were enacted (Beinart 1994). During this time, coloured people struggled to maintain their second-class citizenship rights as the NP called for the total segregation of coloureds and Africans from whites. The Second World War catalyzed South Africa's manufacturing industry (Nuttrass 2001, 43). The increased demand for African labor resulted in a massive influx of African workers to urban areas, and they were viewed as posing a major threat to the privileged position of largely Afrikaans-speaking unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The exodus of work-seekers from rural to urban areas exacerbated the labor problems of the mining and agricultural industries because even though wages were low, they were usually far better than those earned on farms or mines. It was under these circumstances that the policy of apartheid was developed. Fears that newly urbanized Afrikaners were being threatened by a vastly increased African presence heightened greatly when wartime expansion ended. Ultimately, the "poor white problem" gained attention (Dubow 1992). It was around this pressing social and political issue that the growing nationalist movement coalesced. While there was genuine concern about the poor, there was an overriding anxiety about the sociopolitical implications of white poverty and a fear that white poverty was a drain on white power that could result in the destruction of minority rule. Afrikaner nationalism can be seen in general terms as a broad social and political response to the uneven development of capitalism in South Africa. Certain groups, including a substantial number of Afrikaners, were left behind. Afrikaners were not only of rural origin and poorest among whites; they were also perceived as culturally backward and lacking in sophistication (Giliomee 1995, 196). Afrikaner nationalism

gained ground within a context not only of increasing urbanization and secondary industrialization during the period between the two world wars, but also of continuing British imperial influence in South Africa. Important ideological building blocks in this process included an Afrikaans language movement that sought to make Afrikaans more than a spoken language, to make it a written one as well (Giliomee 1995, 192). The goal was to develop a language specific to the Afrikaner community that could serve as a vehicle for transmitting culture, history, and national ideals (Giliomee 1995, 192). Thus, Afrikaans is largely a construct of the early 20th century, the end result of a process of cultivation carefully designed to suit the sociopolitical needs of the Afrikaner nationalism project unfolding at the time (Hofmeyr 1987, Marks & Trapido, 1987). At that point, Afrikaans was a creolized language closely associated with poorness and colouredness and included aspects of various languages spoken by slaves from Malaysia, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia as well as fragments from Indo-Portuguese, which was spoken by Indonesian slaves (Besten 2000, Beukes, 2007). At the time, Afrikaans was denounced as a *hotnotstaal,*[23] *griekwataal,*[24] *kombuistaal,*[25] and *plattaal;*[26] upper-class Cape Dutch disdained the "kitchen language" spoken largely by rural Afrikaners and the so-called *Kleurlinge*[27] (Marks and Trapido 1987, 12; Hofmeyr 1987, 97). The language was infused with a great deal of Dutch, and the intelligentsia started to promote written Afrikaans. As their identity consolidated, Afrikaners distanced themselves from coloureds.

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[23] Hottentot language.
[24] Griqua language.
[25] Kitchen language.
[26] Vulgar language.
[27] Coloureds.

The Afrikaner middle class was prominent in the construction and direction of Afrikaner nationalism. This class included ministers of religion, teachers, academics, journalists, farmers, and civil servants. Many leading middle-class Afrikaners in the1930s and 1940s belonged to a secret organization called the *Afrikaner Broederbond*, which worked ceaselessly to promote the exclusive interests of "true" Afrikaners. To unite rural residents and urban residents, the rich and the poor, political idealists and pragmatists under the banner of Afrikaner nationalism called for long-term political promotion on several levels over a number of years. The NP rode to power on the back of a nationalist class alliance that, as discussed above, had been established years earlier in reaction to British colonialism. It included agricultural capitalists, white workers (including newly proletarianized Afrikaners), a growing layer of Afrikaner petit bourgeoisie, and fledgling mining capitalists (Marais 1999, 17). The party pledged to advance the interests of these sectors by restructuring the economy in their favor. Bonner, Delius, and Posel (1993, 1) argue that "the central dynamic of apartheid was a struggle over the distribution and control of labor." State controls were implemented to channel the African workforce between rural and urban economic sectors (Posel 1991). Wolpe notes that in the economic sphere apartheid modernized the system of cheap migrant labor. Apartheid therefore was an attempt by certain capitalists to meet the expanding demand for cheap African labor in the era of industrial manufacturing capital. At the same time, it was the realization of white workers' demand for protection from increased competition from African and coloured workers (Wolpe 1972).

Statutory segregation of all aspects of South African society began when the National Party (NP) came to power in 1948. Apartheid was the platform of the NP's election campaign.

The literal meaning of the Afrikaans term *apartheid* is "apartness," or the condition of being separate (O'Mera 1996, 64). During its campaign, the NP acknowledged that apartheid was not yet a detailed policy; the slogan performed the ideological function of giving expression to a very broad sentiment among most Afrikaners, regardless of class, that the rapid urbanization of Africans during the 1930s and 1940s threatened their precarious place in the social and economic sphere and their specific interests, and denied Afrikaner farmers cheap African labor (O'Meara 1996, 65). In an attempt to establish separate nations for whites, coloureds, and Africans, the NP government tried to construct a new, distinct coloured identity. In 1950 under the Population Registration Act, the new government categorized the entire population by racial categories. The Act stated:

> A White person is one who is in appearance obviously white – and not generally accepted as Coloured – or who is generally accepted as White – and is not obviously Non-White, provided that a person shall not be classified as a White person if one of his natural parents has been classified as a Coloured person or a Bantu...
>
> A Bantu is a person who is, or is generally accepted as, a member of any aboriginal race or tribe of Africa...
>
> A Coloured is a person who is not a White person or a Bantu... [28]

And yet apartheid was not a "grand design" implemented immediately after the party came to power. Instead apartheid planners consistently adjusted strategies while executing policies (Posel 1991). Their policies accelerated segregation in all spheres of South African society. Intermarriage or extra-marital intercourse between whites and non-whites was prohibited immediately under the Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act of 1949 and the Immorality Amendment Act of 1950. The Group Areas Act, also passed in 1950, further solidified

[28] Population Registration Act (no. 30 of 1950).

segregation, with the government creating residential zones for each racial group (Van der Ross 1994). The Group Areas Board was established to plan these zones throughout the country (Western 1996). The aim was to achieve total homogeneity in each zone. The Native Abolition of Passes Act of 1952 tightened existing pass laws, which ensured Africans did not reside in urban areas and forced all Africans over the age of 16 to carry passbooks of identification to be produced on demand. Failure to produce them would result in arrest and imprisonment. In 1953 unequal allocation of resources, such as general infrastructure, education, and jobs was formalized into law. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act stipulated that each racial group should have separate amenities, such as toilets, parks, and beaches, and that these facilities should not be of the same quality for the different groups. The Bantu Education Act established a separate educational system, run by the Department of the Native Affairs, that would teach blacks skills they could use to serve their own people in the homelands or to work as laborers for whites. The Nationalist Party continued to strip away the rights of coloured people by removing them from the common voters roll under the Separate Representation of Voters Act. To prevent the different oppressed groups from uniting, the government in 1955 institutionalized the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which was designed to co-opt coloureds into the apartheid system and further alienate them from Africans. Oppressed non-whites were further divided by the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, which established separate tertiary institutions for blacks, Indians, coloureds, and whites. These institutions were separate along not only racial but also ethnic lines. The University of Fort Hare was opened for Xhosa-speaking students only while the University of the North in Turfloop was for Sotho and Tswana students. The University of the Western Cape was designated for coloured students while Indians and Zulus had universities in Ngoye (KZN) and Durban-Westville, respectively. By the end of the

1950s the long existing racial segregation of South African society had been radically extended. The movement and employment of African labor had been brought under strict state control, and all skilled and supervisory jobs were reserved for whites (O'Meara 1996, 71).

From the 1960s on, the apartheid government further isolated coloured people throughout the country. The government hoped that wider powers for so-called self-management led by a newly established middle class would create widespread enthusiasm for so-called parallel development however segregation served to further isolate coloured communities. Socially, segregation was enforced to the degree that coloured people remained almost entirely among themselves in their residential areas, schools, universities, and recreational facilities. The Group Areas Act destroyed families and communities as over 600, 000 coloured people were removed by force and relocated to coloured townships.

The government also initiated a number of development programs aimed at raising the standard of living for coloured people. For example, with the introduction of the Coloured Affairs Department, the state became one of the major employers of coloured people, and more coloured teachers and nurses were hired. Overall, compared to Africans, coloured people received better education, housing, and health facilities. And yet, even with these improvements, almost one third of all coloureds lived in poverty, as indicated by the Wilcocks Commission Report of 1937 and the Theron Commission Report of 1976.[29] These reports note that the employment prospects for the lowest 20 to 30 percent of the coloured population was unfavorable because of cheap African labor (Golden 1987).

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[29] These reports will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Four.

In 1952, the ANC launched its Program of Action in conjunction with the South African Indian Congress and the Coloured Peoples Congress. This campaign involved deliberately breaking apartheid laws such as those on passbooks as well as the Group Areas Act, the Suppression of Communism Act, the Separate Representation of Voters Act, and the Bantu Authorities Act. These actions resulted in over 8,577 arrests during 1952 and 1953 (Kunnie 2000). The Defiance Campaign drew the attention of the international community, and the United Nations established a formal commission of inquiry into apartheid (Kunnie 2000). In its resistance to apartheid, in 1955 the ANC attempted a united front, joining forces with the South African Coloured People's Congress, the South African Indian Congress, and the Congress of White Democrats. The result was the adoption of the Freedom Charter at Kliptown, Johannesburg. The Freedom Charter was developed by the ANC and its allies during the anti-apartheid struggle; it is notable for its demand for and commitment to a non-racial South Africa. Several people who helped organize the Kliptown meeting were arrested a few months later, and 156 of them were tried in what came to be known as the "Treason Trial" (Kunnie 2000, 20). The late 1950s was a difficult period for the ANC due to banning and imprisonment. In 1959 frustrated, radical-minded members of the ANC Youth League formed the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), whose "Africa for Africans" movement was often thought to be contrary to the nonracial policies of the ANC. In 1960 the PAC organized an anti-pass campaign in Sharpeville. The protest ended with 69 people killed and 188 injured, with most shot in the back. The massacre prompted an international response as well as a series of mass protests organized by the ANC and PAC. Both organizations were banned under the Unlawful Organizations Act of 1960, but mass

action was not abandoned when they went underground and representatives went abroad. The ANC, PAC, and other organizations initially tried to work underground within the country, but many prominent ANC leaders like Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, Raymond Mhlaba, Ahmed Kathrada, and Nelson Mandela were imprisoned during the early 1960s. These arrests and the banning of organizations prompted armed struggle, namely through the ANC's armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe,[30] and the PACs military wing, POQO. The 1960s was a difficult time. The struggle against apartheid continued to contend with bannings, arrests, and police infiltration (Beinart 1994, 212).

Resisting Apartheid: Black Consciousness, UDF Opposition and Mass Mobilization

In the 1960s and 1970s the Black Consciousness Movement and the trade union movement became more active. The idea of uniting non-white people within a single organization was introduced into coloured protest politics by the National Liberation League (NLL), the first radical political organization to gain significant support within the coloured community. The NLL was founded in 1935.[31] After its incubation in the NLL, which had become defunct by 1940, the view that only political unity among the non-white population could defeat white supremacy was taken up by the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The NEUM, an organization for national liberation, was founded in Bloomfontein in December 1943 by activists within the Trotskyist tradition of the South African left. The organization was known for being "fiercely non-racial" or having an "abiding commitment to non-racialism" (Adhikari 2005).

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[30] Umkhonto we Siizwe (or MK) means "Spear of the Nation."
[31] The organization was primarily supported by radical activists and intellectuals.

Starting around 1957, in their written materials the NEUM placed terms such as coloured, African, race, racial groups, Bantu and *kleurling*[32] in quotation marks to distance themselves from the racist implications of these terms and to counter potential accusations of racial thinking (Adhikari 2005). More and more, activists, when uttering the word "coloured," preceded it with the phrase "so-called" or raised their hands in the air to indicate quotation marks. By the 1960s colouredness was viewed as a concept that had been legislatively and socially created to divide and rule the masses. It was also becoming clear among activists that any acceptance of colouredness marked them with a "badge of inferiority." The unequivocal rejection of coloured identity by the Unity Movement in the early 1960s marks the start of coloured rejectionism as a recognizable movement. This movement and the Black Consciousness Movement must be viewed against the backdrop of growing international intolerance to apartheid, the increasing influence of the American Civil Rights Movement, and the move toward African independence occurring across the continent (Adhikari 2005).

The 1960s through the 1980s called for united resistance to the apartheid state, and assertions of ethnic or racial particularities were seen as a distraction from the ultimate goal. Black consciousness flourished during the 1960s and 1970s under the aegis of the South African Students Organization (SASO) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), whose most notable activist and intellectual was Stephen Biko (Howarth 1997). Black consciousness was an intellectual orientation rather than a political group and was represented by several organizations. The central tenet of the BCM was that all non-whites in South Africa were blacks and that all had to liberate themselves psychologically and shed the slave mentality brought both by institutional

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[32] Afrikaans word for "coloured."

racism and white liberalism (Davies et al. 1984, 302; Howarth 1997). Biko specifically addressed the coloured community in several of his articles. In "Fragmentation of the Black Resistance," from the SASO Newsletter of June 1971, Biko takes the Coloured People's Representative Council (CPRC) and the Coloured Labour Party, among others, to task for "talking sectional politics and allowing the black world to be completely fragmented thereby accepting that the rest of South Africa is for whites" (Howarth 1997, 5).

The BCM was opposed to the "working with the system" strategy and centered on the immediate political dangers of being differentially incorporated into the institutions of domination, something that divided black resistance and forced it to engage in "sectional politics." It also focused on the longer-term problem of creating a non-racial society as Biko states, "Further operation within the system may only lead to political castration and a creation of an 'I-am-a-coloured' attitude which will prove a setback to the black man's program of emancipation and will create major obstacles to the establishment of a non-racial society once our problems are settled" (Biko cited in Howarth 1997, 5). Therefore, from the 1960s, blackness came to represent resistance to apartheid and the opposite of white racism. Blackness, however, was not synonymous with the entire non-white community; rather, Biko and other BCM activists distinguished between blacks and non-whites, using the term "black" for the broad spectrum of African, coloured, and Indian people and the term "non-white" for sell-outs, collaborators, or lackeys (Howarth 1997, 7). Being black, Biko argued, "is not a matter of pigmentation, but a reflection of a mental attitude and merely by describing yourself as black you have started on a road towards emancipation, you have committed yourself to fight against all forces that seek to

use your blackness as a stamp that marks you as a subservient being (Biko cited in Howarth 1997, 7).

In the mid 1970s and 1980s a new wave of protests, boycotts, and strikes swept across the country that were precipitated by black consciousness, which united workers and students. In 1976 the Soweto school revolt forced a reconsideration of urban black conditions. The historic student movement in which over 1000 African students were killed in demonstrations against the use of Afrikaans as the primary language of instruction in Black schools transformed into a revolutionary upsurge against apartheid (Kunnie 1999, 34). Black workers regained their momentum, and strikes occurred across the country, with textile workers, railway employees, furniture workers, gold miners, and industrial workers in other sectors walking off the job in support of students, demanding justice at the workplace and liberation. In the same year, there was growing frustration over the forced removal of masses of coloured people from District Six in Cape Town. These protests, built on alliances between community organizations and unions, addressed a wide range of issues, including health conditions, unfair dismissal from jobs, rent boycotts, and school boycotts.

In 1983 the United Democratic Front (UDF)—an umbrella body with which more than 600 political and community organizations were affiliated, including church, student, worker, and civic organizations—emerged as a major opponent of apartheid (Adhikari 2005). From its inception, the UDF associated itself with the inclusive, non-racial stance of the ANC (Adhikari 2005). The UDF initially formed to challenge apartheid's Tricameral Parliament, an attempt to share power between whites, coloureds and Indians. The proposed parliament excluded the African majority altogether though

Africans were to be granted greater representation in segregated, local government institutions (Seekings 2000, 2). Reformist National Party leaders recognized in the mid-1970s that the support of coloureds and Indians would be crucial to any successful counter-revolutionary measure. The government therefore tried to stimulate nascent embourgeoisement of the coloured and Indian working class by investing in housing, infrastructural development, health facilities, and schooling, and promising a degree of inclusion in the country's representative democracy (Seekings 2000, 14). As a result, in the 1980s working-class and middle-class coloureds and Indians were not consistent supporters of the UDF and the anti-apartheid movement in general (Seekings 2000, 14). The sections of the coloured and Indian population that provided important support for the UDF were secondary and university students, university graduates, and young professionals. Their support was important because many could raise funds for their organizations from the coloured and Indian professional and business classes. Some could and did travel extensively within South Africa and abroad to meet with exiled ANC officials (Seekings 2000, 15). It was against this social and political backdrop that the UDF led its campaign against the Tricameral Parliament, convincing coloureds and Indians to boycott elections. On Election Day, 624,000 coloured students at more than 70 schools and universities stayed home in protest. When the results were tallied, only about 18 percent of the coloured population (roughly 270,000) had voted while only 16 percent of the Indian population had (Kunnie 1999, 37). The UDF noted that many coloureds felt such contempt for the election that they had declined even to register. After the campaign against the Tricameral Parliament, the UDF drew support from youth, well-educated middle class communities and organized local campaigns addressing

issues such as housing, rent, and services (Adhikari 2005; Du Pre 1994). The UDF was able to gain a great deal of support from coloured communities in the Western Cape. However, according to Adhikari, although the working-class coloureds were aggrieved at being victims of apartheid, they did not necessarily subscribe to the radical politics of the UDF, nor did they embrace the democratic movement's non-racial egalitarianism. Ultimately, from its launch until its disbanding in August 1991, the UDF played a central role in transforming South African politics. It mobilized and inspired people across the country to resist the state's institutions and policies; it helped build an unprecedented organizational structure from the local to the national level; it coordinated diverse protests and campaigns; it promoted the profile and underground structures of the ANC; and it emphasized a political culture that emphasized non-racial democratic rights (Seekings 2000, 3).

By the 1980s, "the longest and most widespread period of sustained black protest against white rule in South Africa had begun" (Lodge 1991). Townships became ungovernable because of organized resistance to local problems such as rent boycotts or squatter struggles. Communities also resisted local leaders, who were seen as assisting the government. Black townships became the focus of the battle between anti-apartheid organizations and the government. The armed struggle was fierce, and violent conflict became the norm. Thousands were arrested and detained, but the mass democratic movement escalated and international pressures became effective. During the 1980s worker mobilization increased and union organizing reactivated (Beinart 1994, 244).

In July 1985, the government declared a national state of emergency in response to the escalating black revolt (Marais 2000). This move gave the President, the police,

and the military the authority to execute a number of repressive measures. The police were granted wide powers to arrest and detain and could, at any time, implement curfews controlling the movement of people. Detention without trial became common, and thousands of activists were interrogated, tortured, or placed under house arrest; many disappeared without a trace (Kunnie 1999, 38). The government also exercised control over the media. An increasing number of organizations were banned or listed (restricted in some way). The state of emergency did not stop the resistance. Students boycotted classes, and it was common to hear the slogan, "Liberation before education" (Kunnie 1999, 38). Consumers boycotted white stores and the stores of blacks collaborating with the state. For some, these consumer boycotts were one of the last available options for nonviolent protest against state repression. The accompanying demands included an end to the state of emergency and the withdrawal of the South African Defense Force from the townships (Seekings 2000, 151).

In November 1985 the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) was established following unity talks between competing unions and federations. At its launch it represented about half a million workers; but COSATU saw rapid growth in its early years, and by 1995 membership had risen to between 2.6 and 3.1 million workers (Marais 1998, 222). The formation of COSATU greatly strengthened opposition politics and brought the mainstream of the union movement firmly into the organized, united movement. The liberation movement persisted; and ultimately the protests, boycotts, and strikes led by students and workers in the 1960s and 1970s succeeded. By the 1980s, unrest within South Africa, along with international pressure, had caused the country to buckle: blacks were politically ungovernable, whites suffered economic instability, and

the white commercial and industrial establishment recognized that apartheid was becoming counterproductive. The unrest in the country also worried many foreign investors, many of whom were being pressured in their home countries to divest. In 1986 the United States passed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act. Written and proposed by U.S. Representative Ron Dellums, a veteran anti-apartheid activist and member of the Congressional Black Caucus, the legislation imposed sanctions on South Africa. The preconditions for lifting the sanctions included the establishment of a timetable for apartheid's elimination and the release of Nelson Mandela. The legislation banned all new U.S. trade and investment in the country, catalyzed similar sanctions from Europe and Japan, and required various U.S. departments and agencies to suppress funds and assistance for the South African government. Direct air links, including flights from the country to the U.S., were also banned. The withdrawal of operations by major corporations and the global banking community's loss of confidence in South Africa drove the country into a deep recession.

Negotiating the New South Africa

By 1989 the National Party was led by F.W. de Klerk, who represented sections of the party that wanted reform rather than erratic repression (Beinart 1994, 244). This shift was partly motivated by events occurring on the global stage. African historian Ali Mazuri (1996) argues that there was a direct link between the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the end of apartheid. He states that after the collapse of the wall and the Soviet bloc, the apartheid state could no longer retain allies with the claim that its regime served as a bulwark against communism. These global changes also constrained the ANC's options:

the organization no longer had the support of the Soviet Union, and implementing a socialist agenda was now impossible. In 1990 de Klerk unbanned the ANC, PAC, SACP, and other organizations and released Nelson Mandela from prison. These measures started the transition that would take South Africa from apartheid to a non-racial, multi-party democracy. In 1990 the government as well as the ANC and other anti-apartheid political formations launched the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) to negotiate the terms for a peaceful transition of power. Although negotiations were taking place, the country continued to experience a great deal of violence especially among the ANC, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), right-wing groups and police and military forces. Hundreds were killed or injured in township violence, and Chris Hani, General Secretary of the South African Communist Party and leader of the Umkhonto we Sizwe, was assassinated. Ongoing violence and disagreements over the shape and form of the transition government drove the ANC to break off negotiations. However, negotiations eventually resumed under the name of CODESA II. In 1993 three years of deliberation led to an agreement that elections would be held in 1994. The ANC agreed to a government of National Unity, a tripartite government composed of the National Party, the ANC, and the latter's allies, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

When elections were held on April 27, 1994, 20,000,000 South Africans cast their votes. The ANC won 62.65 percent of the vote, and Nelson Mandela was elected president of the newly democratic South Africa. The elections decided the provincial governments as well, with the ANC winning in seven of the nine provinces, the National

Party winning in the Western Cape, and the Inkatha Freedom Party winning in KwaZulu-Natal.

Better the Devil You know

Coloured identities in South Africa have been inscribed with a great deal of conflict because, as I demonstrated above, colouredness is intrinsically linked with the country's historical and political development. The origins of the coloured community can be traced back to the colonial era while the institutionalization of the coloured category resulted from the apartheid government's subsequent policies of racialization. The surprising 1994 elections—in which over 50 percent of the coloured population in the Western Cape voted for the National Party (the party of the former apartheid government)—indicated that the divisions created by apartheid would not be erased simply by changing the laws. Outside observers, as well as coloured academics, activists, and intellectuals (Rasool 1996; Farred 2000; Erasmus 2001) sought to understand what happened to the historic alliances that linked coloureds to Africans, Indians, and progressive whites during the anti-apartheid movement.

When the second democratic elections were held, in 1999, the coloured vote was split between the African National Congress (ANC), the party of the current South African government, and the New National Party (Farred 2000; Reynolds 1994, 1999). The ANC won approximately 42 percent of the coloured vote; the NNP, 38 percent, with many of the ANC votes coming from the coloured middle class. These results have been attributed to the ANC's intense campaign to capture more of the coloured vote: the ANC included coloured candidates in primarily coloured districts and relied on high-profile residents such as the mayors of Paarl and Worcester to get its message out.

Simultaneously, the New National Party vowed to keep the ANC out of the Western Cape and used the language of race to address the material concerns of the coloured working class (Reynolds 1999). The New National Party argued that affirmative action negatively affected lower-income groups, who, the party claimed, were easily replaced when companies strove to rectify their demographic profile as mandated by the majority ANC government.

The politics of the Western Cape is more complex than that of most South African provinces because the African National Congress (ANC) does not dominate the political landscape there. The Democratic Alliance (DA) is the opposition party and current governing political party in the Western Cape. The party traces its roots to the anti-apartheid movement of the 1970s and 1980s, when it was known as the Progressive Party, the Progressive Reform Party, and the Progressive Federal Party. During that time the party featured prominent anti-apartheid activists like Helen Suzman, Colin Eglin, Harry Schwarz, and Frederik van Zyl Slabbert. During the 1990s the party had a brief alliance with the right-wing New National Party (NNP) and with a smaller party in 2000, and adopted its current name. Presently, the Democratic Alliance's present leader is former Cape Town mayor and premier of the Western Cape Helen Zille. The DA's historical roots are liberal democratic, and more recently it has attempted to reposition itself as a mainstream alternative to the ANC. However, it continues to struggle to shed its image as a white party. More recently, the DA entered a merger with the Independent Democrats (ID), a South African political party formed by former Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) member Patricia de Lille in 2003. De Lille has gained massive support through her forthright stand against corruption. Her party supports ANC policies on the

economy, health, and employment. In the 2004 parliamentary elections the ID gained seven seats and the ID won seats in the Western Cape, Northern Cape, and Gauteng legislatures as well. In a 2004 survey De Lille, who happens to be coloured, was deemed the most trusted politician by coloured voters and the second-most trusted by the white and Indian communities.

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the ANC has struggled to gain control of the Cape, but this has been difficult to achieve without forming coalitions with other parties. In the election of 2004, no party achieved an absolute majority in the province. The ANC won 45 percent of the votes; the DA, 27 percent; and the NNP, 11 percent. Ultimately, the ANC-NNP formed a coalition government, making the DA the official opposition party in the Western Cape. Similarly, the 2006 local elections produced no clear majority; and ultimately, the DA won nearly 43 percent of the vote and claimed the mayoral seat in Cape Town only after forming a coalition with several smaller parties. In the 2009 elections the DA won 51.46 percent of the vote. This election marks the first time since the end of apartheid that a party has scored an overall majority in the province.

Since the 1994 elections, attempts by all political parties to win the coloured vote by claiming to address issues relevant to coloureds highlighted a new moment in the struggle for (re)constructing and (re)presenting coloured identities. Expressing uncertainty about their place within post-apartheid South Africa, coloureds at the individual, collective, and organizational level began to renegotiate their identity in a number of ways. In subsequent chapters, I explore these different ways.

Chapter Three
Methodology, Methodological Reflection and Researcher Positionality

This dissertation explores the diverse ways those classified as coloured under apartheid now construct and re-construct colouredness—appropriating and layering various aspects of the past and present (race, class, ethnicity, place, and popular culture), and fashioning identities that not only invoke apartheid constructions of coloured identity but respond to the current, post-apartheid moment. The data in this dissertation is based on over two years of research conducted in Cape Town and Johannesburg (with a one-month stay in Durban and a three-month stay in Pretoria) from August 2005 through August 2008. This chapter is primarily a description and justification of the methodology used in this study and a discussion of Cape Town and Johannesburg, my primary and secondary field sites, respectively. Since Cape Town was the primary field site, this dissertation is mainly a regional study, and many of the conclusions reflect this fact. Additionally, in this chapter I address how my own racial background affected this research project on coloured identity in contemporary South Africa.

Cape Town: Research in the Mother City

Figure 5, Map of the Western Cape province, South Africa, with metropolitan, district and local municipalities. [33]

The Western Cape is one of the nine provinces that make up the Republic of South Africa. It is located in the southwestern part of the country and is the southernmost part of the African continent. The province is divided into a single metropolitan area (the City of Cape Town) and five district municipalities (West Coast, Central Karoo, Overberg, Eden, and Cape Winelands). Cape Town, the largest city in the Western Cape and the parliamentary capital of the country, is known for its amazing beauty,

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international appeal, racial diversity, and extreme inequality. I chose Cape Town and its surrounding areas as the primary field site because coloured identity there is very much linked to the colonial, apartheid, and contemporary history of the city. Cape Town is inhabited by almost 2.8 million people and reflects a demographic profile totally different from any other province in South Africa (see Figure 4).

According to the 2001 census,[34] in Cape Town, coloured people make up close to 50 percent of the population, with Africans comprising nearly 32 percent, whites nearly 19 percent and Indians one percent of the population. This is anomalous to the national trend in which coloureds and whites each comprise only 9 percent of the population while Africans constitute 77 percent. Therefore, in terms of racial composition, there is a striking difference between the Western Cape and South Africa as a whole. Coloured people are a minority group in the country but a regional majority in the Western Cape and the greater Cape Town area.

[34] South Africa conducts a census every 10 years and is scheduled to conduct another one in 2011. I have chosen to use data from the 2001 census rather than mid-year population reports conducted since the 2001 census.

Year Black African	South Africa percent	Western Cape percent	Cape Town percent
2001	79.0	26.7	31.7
2007	79.0	30.1	
Coloured			
2001	8.9	54.2	48.1
2007	9.0	50.2	
White			
2001	9.6	18.4	18.8
2007	9.5	18.4	
Indian/Asian			
2001	2.5	1.0	1.4
2007	2.6	1.3	

Figure 6. 2001 and 2007 Population by Ethno-racial Categories for South Africa, Western Cape and Cape Town. Source: StatsSA (2007d)

These demographics are a consequence of Cape Town's colonial history and apartheid policies, as discussed in the previous chapter. During apartheid, laws such as the Group Areas Act and the Coloured Labour Preference Policy created coloured zones between white urban spaces and African group area homelands. The Western Cape was a Coloured Labour Preference Area; the movement of Africans was strongly controlled by influx control measures and those who tried to settle in the area were forcibly removed (Groenewald 2008). The city's idiosyncratic racial history had a profound impact and has left its mark socially and politically on present-day Cape Town. Evidence of this can be seen in the voting patterns of the coloured working class, which has consistently voted for white parties, including those in favor of the apartheid system. On the surface it seems that nothing has changed in Cape Town as it is one of the least integrated cities in South Africa and apartheid-era racial categories and stereotypes are still drawn on shamelessly, particularly during election campaigns. For example, during the 1994 and

1999 elections, the NP played on the fears of working-class and poor coloureds, primarily in the Western Cape, by portraying ANC policies on language rights and affirmative action as a threat to the material and cultural well-being of coloured communities (Anderson 2003, 30). In contemporary South Africa, although the ANC is the governing party at the national level, it has continued to lose local elections and is not the majority political party in the Western Cape provincial government, as noted in Chapter Two. One day while visiting the Slave Lodge in Cape Town, a museum dedicated to the history of slavery in South Africa, I chatted with several museum staff members about the upcoming local elections. Brenda, a 28-year-old admissions attendant, said, "Cape Town cannot be run like the rest of the country. The ANC cannot just govern here like that."

Figure 7. Election posters displayed during local elections in 2006.

Because of the Group Areas Act most coloured people in Cape Town continue to reside in the Cape Flats. The Group Areas Act, as described in the previous chapter, was the apartheid law that aimed to achieve total racial homogeneity in residential zones. In the 1950s "the Flats" became home to people the apartheid government designated as non-white. Race-based legislation such as the Group Areas Act and pass laws either forced non-white people out of more central urban areas designated for white people and into government-built townships in the Flats, or made living in the central urban areas illegal, forcing many people designated as black into informal settlements elsewhere in the Flats. Since then the Flats has been home to much of greater Cape Town's population.

Although the Western Cape was a Coloured Labour Preference Area, and coloured people were granted a form of second-class citizenship during apartheid, statistics on the living conditions of this group indicate a much more complex reality. Low levels of education among coloured people was a contributing factor for why coloured people did not benefit as greatly from the legislation as expected. The result was that coloured people could not take advantage of labor preference laws because many were simply not qualified for positions due to the lack of education and skills. Poverty, health issues, unemployment, and crime rates in coloured communities throughout South Africa generally and the Western Cape in particular expose the simplicity of viewing coloureds as a homogeneous middle class planted firmly between wealthy whites and abjectly poor Africans (Anderson 2003, 30). Further, in contemporary South Africa coloured communities continue to endure difficult day-to-day living conditions such as gangsterism, drug abuse, teen pregnancy, and high school

dropout rates highlighting that the effects of apartheid continues to unequally impact the lives of this population . While some of these problems are not unique to coloured people, they are more intense in this population. This is borne out by the 2001 census: the breakdown for those with less than a high school diploma in Cape Town was 73.2 percent for coloured people, 73.9 percent for Africans, 43 percent for Indians, and 23 percent for whites (see figure 6). These statistics indicate that coloured people in Cape Town still have low levels of education, compared to whites and Indians, and that coloureds fare only marginally better than Africans with regard to education.

This is the legacy of apartheid, which did not invest equally in the education of the different racial groups. In the twentieth century, the educational system assumed economic importance as it prepared young Africans for low-wage labor and protected the privileged white minority from competition in the job market. In a 1953 statement, H.F. Verwoerd said, "Education must train and teach people according to their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live" (Nkomo 1990, 294). From the 1950s to the mid-1990s, no other social institution reflected the government's racial philosophy of apartheid more clearly than the educational system. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 widened the gaps in educational opportunities for the different races. Official attitudes toward African instruction were paternalistic, based on trusteeship and segregation. The number of schools for blacks increased during the 1960s, but their curriculum was designed to prepare children for menial jobs. In the 1970s the government spent ten times more on educating whites than it did on educating Africans. School was compulsory for all racial groups but at different ages, and the law was enforced differently. Whites were required to attend school between the ages of seven and sixteen.

African children were required to attend school from age seven until the equivalent of seventh grade or the age of sixteen, but this law was not enforced. For Asians and coloured children, school was compulsory between the ages of seven and fifteen, but here, too, the law was rarely enforced. In 1987 the per-capita expenditure was as follows: R2508 for whites, R1904 for Indians, R1021 for coloureds, and R477 for Africans. University-level education also suffered under apartheid. The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959 prohibited established universities from accepting black students except with the special permission of a cabinet minister. The government opened several new universities and colleges for African, coloured, and Indian students which was consistent with education at the primary and secondary levels. These students were allowed to attend a "white" university only if their "own" institutions were overcrowded. Overall, the 1959 legislation reduced opportunities for university-level education for blacks, and by 1978 only 20 percent of all university students in South Africa were black. During the 1980s several university administrations, anticipating the dismal impact of the long-term racial biases in education, began admitting students from all racial groups. Reorganizing education of the populace was one of the most daunting tasks the government faced as apartheid laws were being lifted in the 1990s. In contemporary South Africa, members of the poorest population groups are still relatively uneducated, a condition that hinders their ability to obtain gainful employment and take advantage of opportunities opening up through affirmative-action programs, programs aimed at addressing the racist legacies of apartheid.

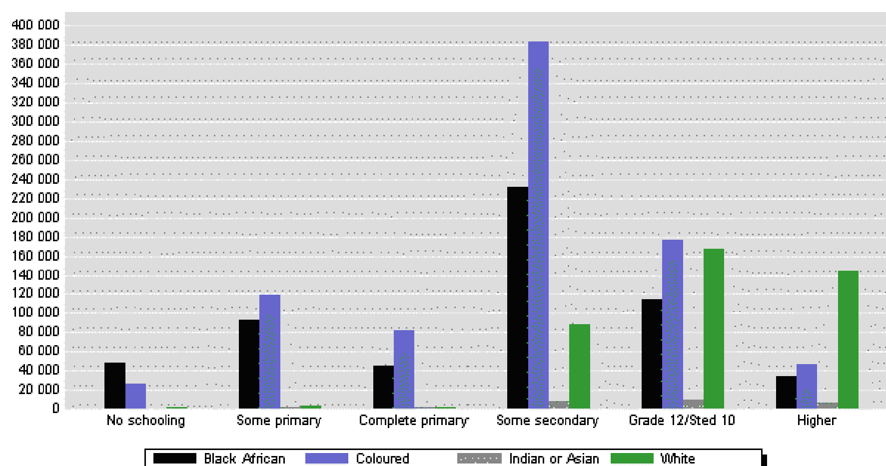

Figure 8. Education Levels by Ethnic Groups in Cape Town. Source: StatsSA

The Western Cape is often referred to as a relatively wealthy province, but the standard of living in the Western Cape generally, and Cape Town in particular, is much lower than the national average. According to the 2001 census, the unemployment rate in Cape Town was just over 26 percent, less severe than the national rate, which was over 32 percent.[35] However, the unemployment rate in the Western Cape conceals significant inequalities; it is likely due to how different the proportion of Africans, coloureds, and whites is in the province, compared to the proportion of these groups in the rest of the country. In the Cape Town metropolitan area, 42 percent of households are defined as poor, and 15 percent can be considered indigent, attempting to live on less than R799/month (just over $100).

Figure 7 indicates that coloured people in Cape Town primarily work in unskilled elementary occupations and in the trade and service sectors according to the 2001 census. This is the result of the low level of education among a high percentage of the coloured population and also reflects the lingering effects of apartheid policies, which reserved

[35] The 2001 census used the expanded definition of unemployment.

these positions for coloured people. The statistics displayed in Figure 7 suggest that coloured people, who continue to fare far worse than whites in Cape Town, are still being affected by the policies of apartheid, not only economically but also socially.

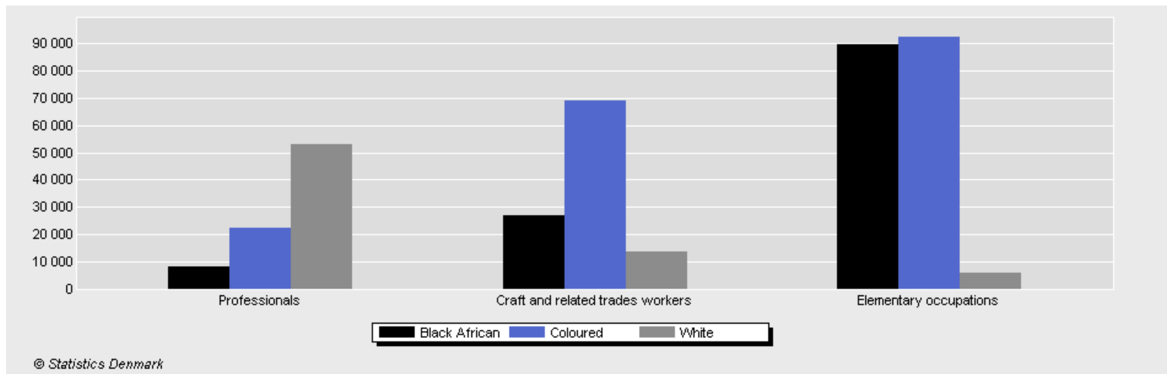

Figure 9. Occupation by Ethnic Group in Cape Town. StatsSA

According to 2001 census data 21 percent of Cape Town's coloureds, 11.5 percent of its Africans, and 58.1percent of its whites worked in professional fields.

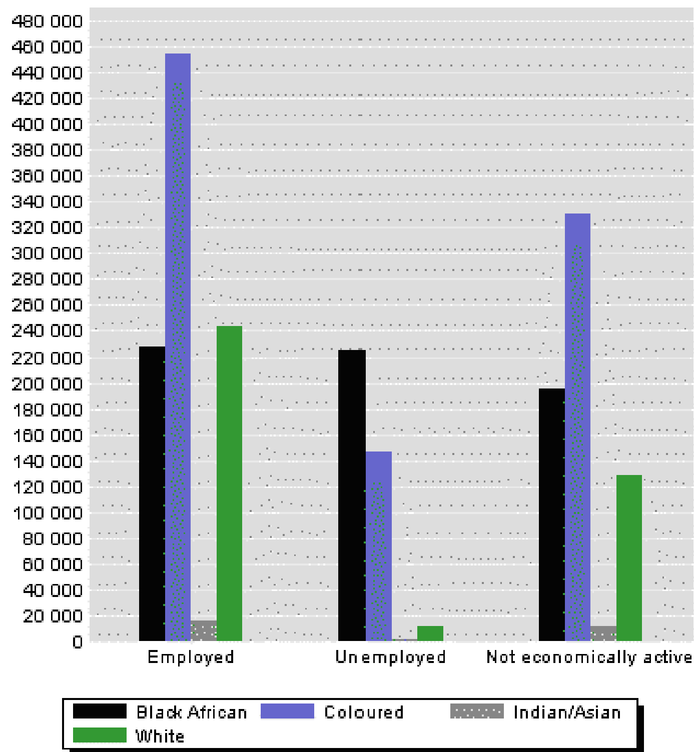

Figure 10. Employment Status by Population Group in the Cape Town. Source: StatsSA

The graph above indicates that the coloured population continues to be affected by structural inequalities rooted in the apartheid past. The graph also shows that coloured people in Cape Town continue to do marginally better than Africans but worse than whites in the areas of employment, housing, and education.

Johannesburg: Research in the City of Gold

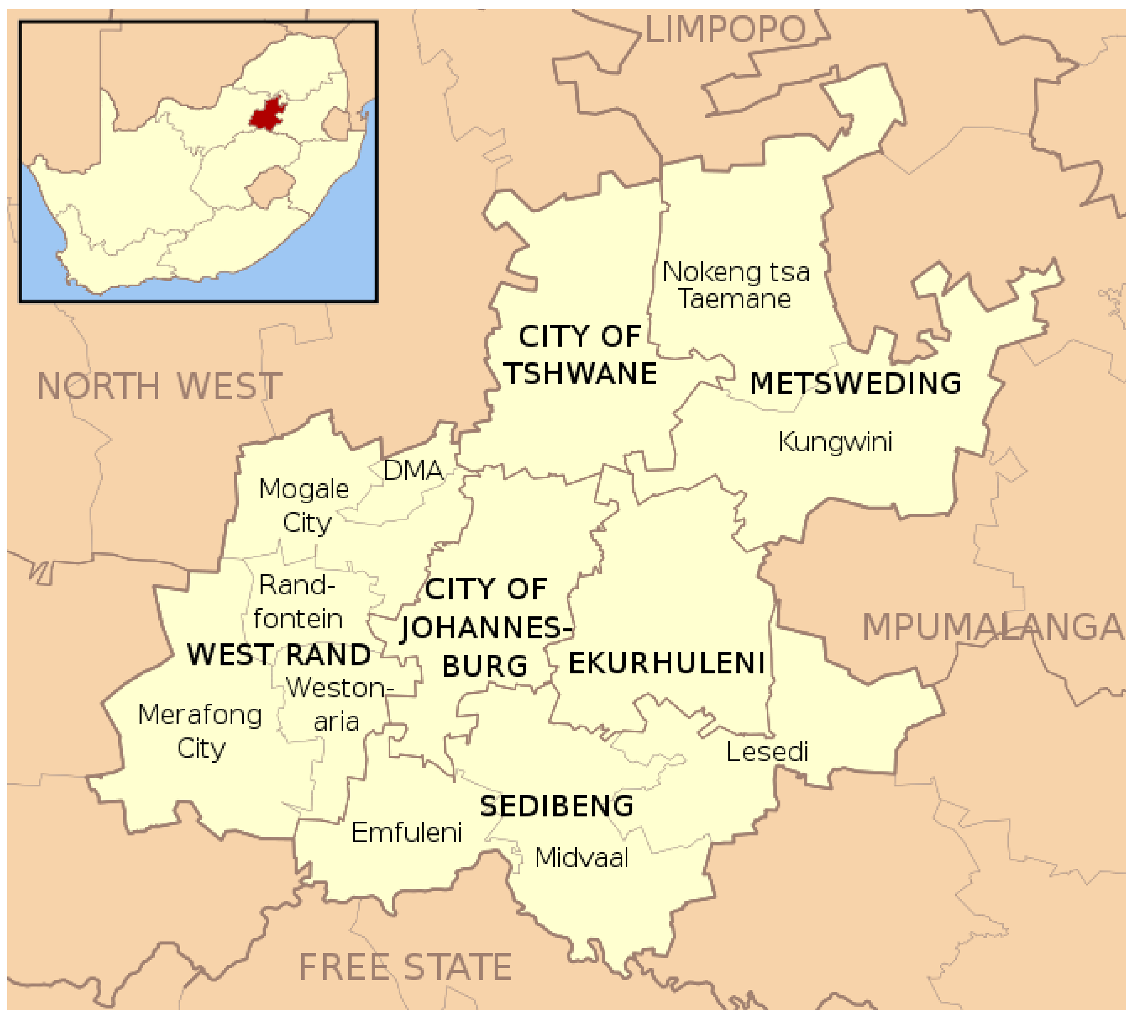

Figure 11. Map of Gauteng province, South Africa, with metropolitan, district and local municipalities labeled.[36]

Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city, is the provincial capital of Gauteng province. The province is the wealthiest in country and one of the most populous and

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prosperous metropolitan regions in sub-Saharan Africa. Johannesburg is the source of a large-scale gold and diamond trade because of its location on the mineral-rich Witwatersrand range of hills.

The residential arrangement in Johannesburg has never been free of racial considerations. The earliest allocation of land designated separate locations for Africans, and the non-white population was routinely removed for a variety of reasons (Lemon 1991). Restrictions on African settlement in Johannesburg intensified after 1924, when the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 was applied to the city. During the 1920s and 30s working-class housing was in short supply, and provisions for public housing primarily affected poor whites and non-whites. However, some housing was specifically built for coloureds at Coronationville, and working-class coloureds also resided in Riverlea. Coloured people also began to occupy the vacant units in the old Western Native location, which was renamed Westbury. Living standards in some sections of the coloured townships were amongst the most desperate in Johannesburg (Brindley 1976).

After the Group Areas laws ended in 1991, when parliament began repealing many of the basic apartheid laws, urban blight afflicted Johannesburg . Thousands of poor, mostly black people, who had been forbidden to live in the city proper, moved into the city from surrounding black townships. Additionally, immigrants from economically depressed and war-torn African countries flooded into South Africa, and since Johannesburg is the most northernmost major city, it was a logical choice for migrants. The result was that landlords abandoned buildings, and corporations and institutions,

including the stock exchange, moved their headquarters from the city centre to suburbs like Sandton.

According to the 2001 South African National Census, Africans account for 73 percent of the population, followed by whites at 16 percent, coloureds at 6 percent, and Asians at 4 percent. The census also indicates that 37 percent of city residents are unemployed and 91 percent of the unemployed are black.

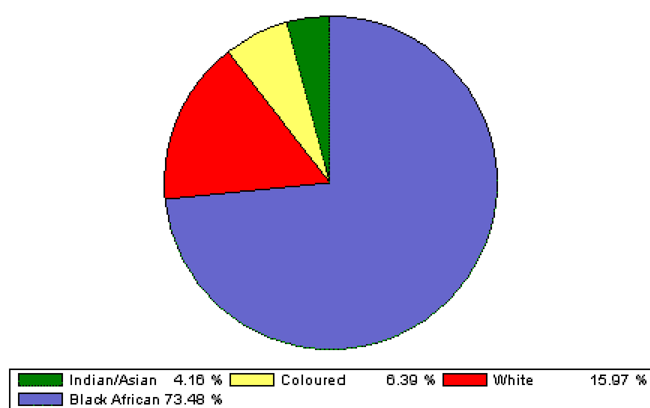

Figure 12. City of Johannesburg by Population Groups Source: StatsSA

Methodology

Several data-gathering techniques were used in this study, mainly because of the nature of the research problem. As stated in the Introduction, I embarked on fieldwork with the intent of examining the various conceptions of coloured identity in contemporary, post-apartheid South Africa. However, the circumstances surrounding the country's coloured population are diverse, and in actuality there is no single coloured community. Who is viewed as coloured varies based on factors such as ethnic background, religion, and class (Erasmus 2001; Adhikari 2005). Therefore, it seemed

reasonable to use a variety of approaches to obtain the data needed to explore why coloured continues to operate as an ethno-racial identity and how it is negotiated and represented in post-apartheid South Africa.

The methodological approach for the ethnographic research included long-term participant observation, individual and group interviews, and conducting life-history interviews. In addition to data collected using ethnographic methods, this dissertation is based on textual data gathered from census reports, published reports from government and non-government entities on the economic profiles of South Africa's "race" groups, and crime statistics. Finally, I included data gathered from media sources such as local television, newspapers, and websites.

After several years of reading about coloured identity in South Africa, my first personal interaction with the country's coloured population occurred through the Internet. For many years, I not only conducted library research but often googled the search terms "coloured identity" and "South Africa" to see what people outside the academy had to say about colouredness in South Africa. On one such occasion, in 2002, I discovered a website called bruin-ou.com. The mission statement on the site stated that it had been created by and for coloured South Africans as a place where they could discuss issues important to the coloured community. To my surprise, the site even had a chat room and a forum where people could discuss issues by posting comments.

I spent the next few years "monitoring" bruin-ou.com. I read the site's content weekly and printed pages from the forums.[37] What I found most interesting about the site was that its users were not simply a cyber community. Rather, they knew each other in real life: some of their posts referred to events from the prior weekend. Bruin-ou.com began to play an important role in my research because I noticed that site users discussed coloured identity, politics, the government, community-organizing efforts, and many other social issues, and yet they also discussed music, cars, and the latest American rap artist, who would soon perform in South Africa. The website became a means for me to observe the various facets of a particular generation and class of coloured people.

In the summer of 2003, I took my first pre-dissertation trip to South Africa to further develop my research question and to decide on the location for my dissertation research. Before departing, I posted a note on bruin-ou.com with the heading "New York Researcher planning to Conduct Research on Coloured Identity" and requested that site users willing to be interviewed contact me. My post led to a discussion about my presence and whether people should reach out to me or not. Some members voiced extreme opposition to anyone assisting me while others stated that they should use me to get their message out in the same way that I would use them. Ultimately, I received numerous e-mails, with contact details, from people primarily in Johannesburg and to a lesser extent in Durban and Cape Town, all of them willing to be interviewed, show me around town, or help me get settled. I phoned several individuals, and a woman with the screen name "Nevada" became my primary contact in Johannesburg and among the bruin-ou.com crowd. Nevada set up a schedule for my initial three-week stay in

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[37] I have thousands of printed pages and several computer files of postings from the site. I also have archived information that the creator of the site did not keep. At some point, I will ensure that the site's founder has copies of these materials, or I will donate copies of these materials to a library in South Africa.

Johannesburg. During that brief visit, I stayed at the home of several users of the site for three to four days so I could "get a real coloured experience," as Nevada put it. I stayed with families in Bosmont, Eldorado Park, Florida, Newlands, and Noordgesig. I also visited people in Coronationville, Riverlea, and Westbury. These areas ranged from working class, underemployed, middle class, and former whites' only "upmarket" areas. Many of my initial bruin-ou.com contacts were either working class or middle class and lived in middle-class areas and formerly coloured townships in both Johannesburg and Cape Town.

During that initial trip I spent much of my time engaged in participant observation. That is, I "hung out" for hours on end at the homes of various people, attending *braai's* (barbecues), Sunday lunches, tea breaks, and other social gatherings. Bruin-ou.com allowed me to learn a great deal about the day-to day activities of coloured people's lives and to further refine my research question. My first Cape Town trip differed from my first Johannesburg trip. In Cape Town I spent most of my time developing contacts at the University of Cape Town and the District Six Museum and meeting people. I also tried to understand the city's layout so I could find a place to live once I was ready to conduct long-term fieldwork.

Long-Term Fieldwork

Upon my return to South Africa in August 2005, I arrived in Cape Town with my husband and five-year-old daughter and settled into an apartment in Rondebosch. Rondebosch, a southern suburb, was once a whites-only residential area but has become very diverse because it is home to the University of Cape Town; students, faculty, and

visiting researchers from the university tend to live there. I chose not live in a primarily coloured area for a number of reasons. As I stated above, Cape Town remains segregated by race and class, the result of apartheid-era spatial planning and class distinctions, which will be addressed in the next chapter. I decided that if I wanted to demonstrate the diversity of experiences in the coloured population in Cape Town, I needed to speak to people from as many different communities as possible. Soon I came to realize that where you live plays an important role in how people relate to you, as it is common for people to ask where someone lives and based on this information assume the person occupies a specific racial, ethnic, or class category. This social dynamic was another reason, a significant one, that I did not want to be associated with any single community.

As stated, Cape Town has the largest population of people formerly classified as coloured; therefore, it was easy to interact with diverse people daily. Access to diverse people came from a variety of places, including contacts from my previous trip to Cape Town, people who worked in the area where I lived, other contacts, and random people I met in various situations. People I met on my previous trip to South Africa invited me to various outdoor gatherings and to dinner at their homes, where I was introduced to other people. Before conducting any research, I spent time getting to know my neighborhood, figuring out how to get around town and learning about the southern and northern suburbs and the "Cape Flats." I also volunteered at an HIV/AIDS education program via a student group at the University of Cape Town. My presence and support created opportunities for conversations that gave people the chance to learn more about me and my research while enabling me to learn about the daily lives and struggles of both the

students I interacted with and their families (I was regularly invited to the students' homes).

I "hung out" and made friends with people who worked in many of the shops up and down Main Road, from Rondebosch where I lived up to Wynberg and through to Town. These shops included supermarkets, stationery stores, clothing stores, and gift shops. I also spent time outside these shops with flower sellers, security guards, and parking attendants, who watched the cars parked along Main Road and several of the side streets. This proved to be an interesting way to meet contacts: I met and interviewed people from various socioeconomic backgrounds and locations; some lived in working- and/or middle-class areas, others in the Cape Flats townships. My own apartment was close to the university. Many considered my area upmarket, yet my contacts were generally impressed that I took mini-bus taxis, buses, and the train because in South Africa these modes of transportation are taken primarily by working-class people. While taking the mini-bus taxis, I often bumped into many of my contacts, who worked in the area where I lived. Some of my contacts were also impressed by my efforts to learn to speak Afrikaans and commented that I must really be taking this research seriously because Afrikaans is not an easy language to learn as an adult.

Participant Observation

The bulk of the data in this dissertation is based on research gathered through participant observation. The goal of participant observation is to gain a close and intimate familiarity with a given group of individuals through an intensive involvement with people in their natural environment, usually over an extended period of time.

Participant observation also reduces the problem of reactivity—people changing their behavior when they know they are being studied (Bernard 2001). Participant observation allowed me to observe and record how identity is negotiated through everyday practices. The activities and social events provided opportunities for me to gather valuable historical and contemporary information, obtain group expressions of attitudes, and gain insight into the dynamics of community; they also allowed me to cross-check information gathered by other means or at other stages of the research project. Through participant observation I gained the trust and friendship of my interviewees, resulting in more open responses at later stages. As a participant observer, I took part in the day-to-day community activities in which my respondents were involved.

As I explained above, when we first arrived in Cape Town, my family and I made a point of going out daily and lingering in the neighborhood. We went into each shop along the Main Road in Rondebosch, often introducing ourselves. Many of the people working in the shops would ask if we were in South Africa on holiday or if we had moved there permanently. I would explain that I was there to conduct a study on coloured identity, and this would immediately prompt people to give their opinions about what exactly I should be researching or whom I should speak with to obtain the best data. I would take down the individual's contact information and/or that of the person they referred me to, and I would leave my business card and ask if it would be okay to stop by to speak at a later date. Many of the people I met this way agreed to speak to me during work hours and often looked forward to my coming in, several of them commenting that

it made the day pass more quickly. Others told me they could not talk during business hours but would be willing to meet me at a different time of the day.

From these initial conversations, I made many friends and became a fixture in the neighborhood. I received invitations to family gatherings and weekend trips; and if people did not see us around for a few days, some would call, inquiring about our whereabouts or asking why we did not attend particular events, such as Braai's, Sunday lunches, holiday observations like Christmas and Easter, birthday parties, school functions, play dates, and art openings. Since my contacts came from various class backgrounds, I was able to participate in a range of activities. I was as likely to be invited to someone's home for a weekend gathering with family and friends as I was to be invited to a major art opening (such as the Picasso and Africa exhibition, which the Deputy President of the country attended) or a wine tour. Further, participant observation provided one of the key means for me to become familiar with the social and political climate in Cape Town: as I grew more acquainted not only with the issues coloured people in Cape Town thought were most relevant but also with the language they used to articulate their views on these issues, I was able to formulate better lines of questioning, especially for in-depth interviewing and the collection of life histories. For example, I could address news reports about local politics. This shift also proved essential for the framing of questions during later phases of research and analysis, as there was a progressive focusing of research through the two-year study.

As various scholars have discussed, the problem with fieldwork in general and participant observation in particular is that participant observation is a deliberately intrusive act (Clifford 1986). During the first few weeks of my visiting people, an

individual, after saying something personal or something that might be considered politically incorrect, would comment, "I'm sure you'll put that in your study, right?" or "I can't believe I'm telling you all this personal stuff when I'm sure it will just end up in your book." Long-term participant observation proved essential to my study—individuals became more comfortable with my presence in the room, with saying things in front of me, and with my occasionally asking, "Do you mind if I write that down?" On one occasion I was at a braai with people very familiar with me, but a friend of the host was in my presence for the first time. When I pulled out my notebook to write down something someone said, my host leaned over to her friend and said, "She's here to study coloured people. You'll see her pull out her little notebook to write things down sometimes. Just ignore it." As contacts became friends, people verbalized their trust that I would "do the right thing" with the information I was collecting.

Group Interviews

Group interviews were used during the early stages of fieldwork to get a sense of the range of issues people wanted to address and to uncover any issues that might be considered sensitive. Another purpose of this method of research was to narrow the focus of the overall project. Group interviews allowed me access to a variety of views and opinions on particular issues and presented an opportunity to examine collective opinions or those regarded as expressible by or in front of a peer group. These group interviews were scheduled by some contacts who thought I could benefit from hearing them discuss these issues with their friends. The size of the groups varied, but most consisted of 6 to 8 people. The groups also varied in terms of gender and age, and even

though all of the people present could have been classified as coloured, people identified as coloured, black South African, South African or human.

Several of the interviews were arranged by contacts themselves because they thought I could benefit from hearing the views of people from diverse backgrounds and social positions. The place of the interview was at someone's home. I usually left the selection of location up to the person arranging the interview because I wanted the participants to feel comfortable. This often meant that if the person arranging the interview was middle class (a lawyer, government official, or professor, for example), most of the people in attendance were of a similar class or income level. I usually started the interviews by explaining why I was in South Africa and giving details about my research project. I would then complete the consent process, explaining that participation was voluntary and individuals could refuse to participate at any time. I would ask if I could record the interview. Although many interviews were recorded, several were not because, as individuals explained, they were discussing sensitive issues. In those instances, I took notes instead.

The group interviews were similar to focus groups but differed in that the group-interview process was not separate from participant observation. For example, the interviews usually took place in someone's home during lunch or dinner and were arranged by the participants themselves. This allowed me to observe social networks. Therefore, the same considerations and observational methods were used. That is, the interview form was more of a discussion format with individuals asking me questions or my thoughts at times. These preliminary conversations often led to open discussion about various issues, and the interviewees were allowed to focus on whatever issues were

most relevant to the individuals at the time. There were few specific predetermined questions for these group interviews; however, I often guided the flow of the conversation to refocus on specific core topics that I wanted to cover in each discussion (see Appendix). In total, I conducted 23 group interviews with people ranging in age from 18 to 79. Participants in these interviews represented various socioeconomic classes.

Individual Interviews

Data gathered from participant observation and group interviews were used to focus research on the specific issues, which needed further investigation during the individual interview phase. Interviewees for individual interviews were primarily selected from participants in group interviews, individuals in the community willing to be interviewed, individuals representing various sectors of the coloured population (a community activist, a former anti-apartheid activist, individuals who refused to identify as coloured) as well as individuals who simply wanted to be interviewed. I also interviewed high-profile people, including Charles Ash, founder of bruin-ou.com; Calvin Cornelius;[38] Michael Weeder, one of the organizers of the December First Movement; Chris Van Wyk, noted for his play about life in a coloured township;[39] and Zane Meas, a prominent actor. In total, I conducted 60 formal, individual interviews for this project; but in the six years that I have been traveling to South Africa, I have regularly engaged in unplanned discussions about coloured identity. In these situations, I explained that I am a

[38] Some claim he is a self-appointed Khoisan chief.
[39] I must note that Chris Van Wyk clearly identifies as Black.

researcher and requested oral consent to include the interlocutors' statements in my study. Many of these impromptu interviews were conducted at the person's workplace or home; a few were conducted in a coffee shop near my apartment.

Individual interviews were semi-structured and usually covered topics that were discussed during group interviews, that emerged from the media, or that emerged during the interview. Topics included how the individual chose to identify, whether she thought a discussion about the continued use of the coloured category was needed, and how she thought affirmative action affected the coloured population. These interviews included open-ended and close-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow the respondent to feel free to respond in an unstructured manner whereas close-ended questions restrict the responses to fixed categories. Several of the interviews were recorded; however, those conducted at people's jobs were not. Additionally, a few individuals expressed concern about the sensitivity of the issues being discussed, in which case I usually took notes.

Textual Methodologies

In addition to data collected using ethnographic methods, this dissertation is based on textual data gathered from census reports, published reports on the economic profiles of different racial groups, and crime statistics. Finally, this dissertation includes data gathered from media sources such as local television, newspapers, and websites. Specifically, I read the *Cape Times*, *Cape Argus* and *The Daily Voice* at least five times a week. The *Cape Argus* and *Cape Times* are the city's major dailies, and *The Daily Voice* is a tabloid whose target audience is the coloured working-class community in the city. I started purchasing this tabloid after one of my contacts said, "You know that we coloured

people have our own newspaper?" Popular magazines, television and radio programs, pamphlets, novels, and other literary works published by or about the coloured community were also monitored. For example, I attended several plays including, *Shirley Goodness and Mercy* and *Ghooma*. Bruin-ou.com was monitored three times a week for updates, and the creator and several users of the website were interviewed. I conducted content analysis of these materials, noting how often issues about coloured identity were addressed. Analysis of these materials included questions about how coloured identity was presented and represented such as: *Do individuals in post-apartheid South Africa still identify as coloured? Is coloured identity presented as a given or contested and problematized? What role does the media play in shaping or reinforcing particular views about coloured identity?* and *Is coloured identity presented as different from that of other ethno-racial groups?*

Positionality of the Researcher

During my first research trip to South Africa, my friend Frankie, a 26-year-old self-described coloured woman born and raised in Johannesburg, asked me "Why do black Americans choose to call themselves African Americas?" She proceeded to argue, "You know there is really nothing *African* about black Americans." On another occasion Charles Ash, who was born and raised in Durban, told me, "You know, you're a bruin-ou just like the rest of us." And during yet another interview, a woman told me, "You know, it's amazing: you could be coloured. Really, if you look at history, you are coloured just like us."

Throughout this research project, my identity, history, and physical appearance were often addressed. For many, my racial identity was a given: I was a coloured just like them, something I was told many times. My light brown complexion actually worked to my advantage. Many of my contacts felt I could relate to them. Some saw me as someone who could have been a relative or family member. One person bluntly told me that in her opinion an African American researcher with a darker complexion would have found it difficult to fit in. In fact, my physical appearance made it easy for me to move in and out of coloured communities without being marked as an outsider – that is, as long as I did not speak. However, even if I spoke, people would sometimes think that maybe my family was from South Africa but was in exile and that I had simply grown up in the United States.

Although being a black researcher with a particular complexion had many advantages, at times my race proved to be a disadvantage. Some coloureds were very critical of African Americans because of what they had seen on television. A few assumed I was there to judge them and could not understand the specific situation of those formerly classified as coloured. One woman who felt I might never fully understand the coloured situation in South Africa went so far as to say, "Blacks in the U.S. share a common blackness regardless of skin color." Interacting with black South Africans was also challenging sometimes. Actually, early on in my research, I found it difficult to interact with them. I am not sure if this was because of my physical appearance or because my research had exposed me to more coloured people, making me more comfortable with them. On one occasion, at a get-together, when I sat down, the young African woman sitting next to me turned away from me slightly. A few moments

later I started a conversation with her. Detecting my American accent, she said, "I thought you were coloured, and that's why I moved away from you because if you were coloured then I figured you wouldn't talk to me anyway." This incident illustrates the continuing tensions in the daily interactions between Africans and coloured people in Cape Town.

Researching Race

Researching race is often complicated. The process of identity construction always involves negotiating many factors. The experiences and perceptions of coloured people in contemporary South Africa have been shaped by their history and the changing political climate. It is essential to note that my own racial identity has similarly been shaped by the specific history of African Americans in the United States. This section examines the issues involved in conducting research on race, particularly the issues involved when African American scholars conduct research in communities of African descent.

Race and ethnicity are not objective, stable, homogenous categories; rather, they are produced and animated by changing, complicated, and uneven interactions between social processes and individual experiences (Gunaratnam 2003). Because of the varied histories of colonialism and slavery, local understandings and perceptions of racial categories, including black, mulatto, mestizo, morena, and coloured, differ from country to country; and the researcher, particularly the researcher of African descent conducting research in a community of African descent other than her own, must be continually

aware that she may be working within a racial scheme different from the one she is used to and comfortable with. This certainly applied to me as I studied colouredness in South Africa. The question was could I, accustomed to viewing race through the lens used in America, remain objective enough to view race through the lens used in South Africa. This question is usually aimed at white scholars conducting research among non-white populations, scholars who, in addition to the lens issue, are different racially and culturally from the populations they are studying. However, during my research project, the question was aimed in the opposite direction, at me, a black American researcher. In my time in South Africa, I became very sensitive to this question because people asked it in different ways. On more than one occasion members of the academic community asked me if I thought I could look at race in South Africa without thinking about how race works in the United States. Perhaps my sensitivity was misplaced, but I wondered if they would have asked a white researcher the same question, if they also thought a white American researcher would have been solely bound by his understanding of American race relations.

People in South Africa often asked what I thought about coloured people using the term "coloured" or why I chose to call myself black when I am clearly mixed-race. One person asked if ultimately I would accuse the coloured community of having colonized minds. What's more, academics, journalists, and others often questioned the use of the term "African American" and asked why black people in America continue to think of themselves as Africans. Finally, another important question I considered throughout the writing of this dissertation was, how does one use empirical research to challenge rather than reproduce racial thinking, particularly in the case of coloured

identity in South Africa, where there is continual tension around and debate about the very use of the term. Throughout my research project, I often met people who would preface the term "coloured" with the phrase "so-called." Others were offended by this phrase, stating, "Coloured people exist and we are not so-called. We *are* called 'coloured.'" All of these whirling issues regarding race caused me to continually question my reliance on the very racial category under question in both my research and South Africa.

Working with Race in the Field

I found that self-disclosure about my own racial background increased intimacy and rapport. During interactions I answered questions about my family and me. . My interviewees often opened up about deeply personal racial experiences and a few revealed that they did so because of my willingness to share my own racial experiences. Although people seemed quite willing to share their thoughts and experiences, some may have been unable to disclose certain experiences because of my cultural distance. This distance was an asset in other situations: I was not caught in a particular race or class dynamic particular to South African society. As I was told by one woman, "If you was coloured or even South African, I don't know if I could be telling you all of this."

According to Windance Twine (2003), "the local calculus of color and race may determine which segments of the community the researcher can easily access, and the normative social roles to which he or she is expected to conform." Through my time in South Africa, I found that my own color and race allowed me different degrees of access to the different racial communities.

This chapter has examined the various methods utilized in this study to explore how people in contemporary South Africa negotiate coloured identity. Because South Africa is a country where the issue of race and ethnicity continues to shape people's daily interactions, this chapter has also explored the specific question of how my race and complexion became both an asset and an obstacle as I conducted fieldwork.

Chapter Four
Negotiating Coloured Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa

My family and I were living in Cape Town for just a few short weeks. We had finally managed to get all of the basics for our apartment in Rondebosch and it was time to turn our attention to getting our five year old daughter ready for school. After finding a local school we went to a neighborhood tailor to ask questions about where one goes to buy school uniforms. There were four coloured women working in the front of the shop. After the younger woman who was in her mid to late twenties heard my American accent she asked, "Are you on holiday? I said no and then I put on the half smile that seemed to appear whenever I was ready to explain why my family and I packed up and moved to Cape Town. "I'm here to study, well, to study coloured identity and coloured people."

"Coloured people, coloured identity," she said in a loud voice, "didn't you hear that coloured people have no culture, have no identity? So you must just pack your bags and go home now because there's nothing to study." I half smiled, I wanted her to keep talking but I didn't want to ask questions. Sensing my discomfort she said, "listen girl, I'm only joking but you must know that we wasn't white enough for the whites and now we're not black enough. No one cares about coloureds in this *new South Africa*."

***

I rushed off to a neighborhood café to meet 60 year old Chris, who was active in the anti-apartheid struggle. An older man came in and walked over, Janette?" "Yes, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me." We ordered tea and he asked me to tell him about my study. I said, "Basically I'm here to study coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa." Chris looked at me with a very serious face and said, "First, I need you to know that I am not nor will I ever call myself a "*coloured*" and he raised his hands and made quotation marks in the air.

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In an interview, Bronwyn who is 31 years old and lives in Westbury, a former coloured-only area in Johannesburg, with her three children states "I'm proud to be coloured. Look, I'm not one of those crazy coloured nationalist type of people who thinks that we should have our own homeland or something. I just think that coloured people need to feel a sense of pride in who they are, in the accomplishments of other coloured people in this country so that they can see that they can go somewhere, be somebody other than the gangster on the corner. I'm tired of seeing our community suffering."

Although there were many interesting responses from people upon hearing that I was in South Africa to examine coloured identity, I highlight these three instances because they each underscore the issues that will be addressed in this chapter. The seamstress' comment*, didn't you hear coloured people have no culture* draws attention to the fact that the nature of coloured identity continues to be heavily debated in post-

apartheid South Africa and is part of everyday discourse. According to Erasmus (2001), racial discourses in South Africa have made it impossible to see colouredness as an identity that could be understood and respected on its own terms. Instead, it has always been understood as a residual, in-between or lesser' identity – characterized as "lacking", supplementary, excessive, inferior or simply non-existent. Discomfort among some people with the idea of being coloured has resulted in a denial of coloured identity, on the one hand (thus the quotes), yet simultaneously, other people embrace the coloured category as they attempt to forge identities that respond to the new post-apartheid moment. For example, when 60 year old Chris' statement, *I need you to know I am not now nor will I ever call myself a coloured* is placed alongside 31 year old Bronwyn's comment *I'm proud to be coloured*, it becomes clear that people in contemporary South Africa relate to colouredness in very different ways. Their different views of colouredness along with their ages indicate that one of the ways people relate to colouredness is affected by their direct or indirect experiences with apartheid. Additionally, in the second half of her statement, the seamstress states *you must know that we wasn't white enough for the whites and now we not black enough* this claim which has become cliché among coloureds explicitly captures the sentiment held by many coloured people that they are undergoing a process of reverse discrimination and that they are as marginalized and disadvantaged under the current government as they were under apartheid.

When the three encounters are placed side-by-side, it becomes clear that people in contemporary South Africa conceptualize colouredness differently and often in ways that relate to the social, cultural and political circumstances of their lives. This chapter

examines how coloured identity is conceptualized and negotiated in people's everyday lives. I explore how and why people identify or distance themselves from colouredness. I also examine how perceptions of marginalization and disadvantage become linked to race and identity in post-apartheid South Africa. To do this, I explore how people talk about colouredness, highlight the ways colouredness is conceptualized and argue that people tend to assert or reject coloured identity based on a variety of social, political and economic factors. Through this analysis, I suggest that present-day coloured identities should not simply be equated with old "Cape Coloured" formations. Certainly legacies from the apartheid past come into play as people draw on racial ideologies developed under apartheid but contemporary coloured identity also contains critical new elements derived primarily from the post-apartheid situation. These redefinitions of coloured identity are being forged in the specific context of the post-apartheid environment which includes: continued disparities in education, housing and healthcare; rising unemployment; low wages; soaring crime and gangsterism; the rise of a Black bourgeoisie through Black Empowerment programs. Finally, I argue that for the first time in South Africa a new generation of individuals have come of age who assert coloured identity in no uncertain terms because post-apartheid South Africa has created new spaces for the assertion and creation of identities in ways that seemed impossible in the past.

Coloured Identity, Cultured Culture and a History of Shame

Auntie Ruby

Auntie Ruby is a 53 year old coloured woman who lives with a white Frenchman. They lived as husband and wife during apartheid and they have never legally married. They explained that during apartheid the police would break up their home and one of them would have to move out and the next week they would be back together again. They currently live in Crawford, a primarily middle class coloured suburb in Cape Town. I was introduced to Auntie Ruby in 2003 by her son Allen, who was a student at the University of Cape Town at the time. We continued our friendship throughout the years and I visited her regularly while I was conducting fieldwork in Cape Town. Auntie Ruby mentioned that she was not active in the anti-apartheid struggles nor was she politically active. Auntie Ruby's colouredness is a given for her because she is of the generation who lived under the official coloured category most of her life but it is also a reaction to how she sees coloured people positioned in contemporary South Africa. Allen often disagreed with his mother's views while I was present and sometimes after we left he would apologize to me and say, "that's just the way she is or she's from the old South Africa."

One Sunday afternoon Allen invited my family and me over to Auntie Ruby's home for Sunday lunch. After our meal, I went into the kitchen to offer to help clean up so that I could speak with her alone. As she pulled out a milk tart and custard from the

refrigerator I asked," I am not sure if Allen mentioned that I'm in South Africa to study coloured identity?" She answered that he told her and went on to say:

> I know you must be saying how could these coloureds like those racist white people. We seem happy because you have to move on. You can't have all that hate in your heart it would turn you ugly and you would want to spit on them and be evil to them but you can't because you have to live and that's not a way to live, so you just forgive. You know things are still sensitive in this country and you can't even talk about politics out in the open. Politics is under the rug. Like that Ngoro situation all it did was make people mad, mad at the ANC and just mad.
>
> I know people say that coloured people don't know how to move forward but you know we coloureds we was the white man's shame and that's how we grew up knowing and thinking that we the white man's shame. That's why I made sure to keep all of that away from Allen. I never, and the people I know didn't talk to the children about apartheid. We kept it from them. You see Allen there, Allen and all his friends, they don't live like they the white man's shame. They live like they can do anything. They're coloureds because they grew up with other coloureds so they coloured. Then if you go to varsity with Allen you will see them in school talking to white and black and everything. They don't have to live with the shame like we do.

Similar to Auntie Ruby, my friend Rashid who is 48 years old from Johannesburg explained:

> When I was growing up being coloured used to be hard sometimes because you always felt like you don't know who you are. I used to feel real bad sometimes, my black friends used to make fun of me. They used to say things like; you don't know who you are or where you're from. You don't have a king or a homeland. It doesn't bother me now but it used to hurt. That doesn't matter now, I know who my mother, father, and grandparents are and that's good enough.

Auntie Ruby and Rashid make reference to the fact that coloured identity is seen as shameful. Erasmus (2001) states, "These [coloured] identities have been spoken about in ways that associate them with immorality, sexual promiscuity, illegitimacy, impurity and untrustworthiness. Other negative associations such as criminality, gangsterism or drug and alcohol abuse could be added to Erasmus' list (Adhikari 2006, 482). For

coloured people these associations have meant that identifying as coloured is linked to feelings of shame and discomfort." Similarly, Zoe Wicomb (1998) has argued, "The concept of "coloured" is fraught with the notions that the bearer of the pigmentation was morally degenerate since, somewhere in the ancestral lineage, there were instances of sexual perversion and deviancy from the accepted moral norm."

The construction of coloured identity as shameful has its roots in colonialism and continued during apartheid and into post-apartheid South Africa. The origins of shame developed in the colonial context when coloured identity was deemed genetically, biologically and culturally flawed. Stoler (1992), who conducted research on colonial Southeast Asia and the Dutch East India Company,[40] argues that "Métissage was a focal point of political, legal, and social debate. Conceived as a dangerous source of subversion, it was seen as a threat to white prestige, an embodiment of European degeneration and moral decay (Stoler 1992, 515). It was under the DEIC that "mixed-blood" emerged as a "powerful trope for internal contamination and a challenge conceived of morally, politically and sexually (Stoler 1992, 516)." Colonial control began to be exercised by regulating relationships impacting who was to be considered white and native thus creating and maintaining the hierarchical structure of colonial society. The Indies government took it a step further by forming commissions and developing thousands of pages of reports outlining the household and educational conditions of mestis children.

There was a similar intervention into the lives of coloured people from the mid twentieth century. In 1934, the government appointed a fact-finding commission known

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[40] The Dutch East India Company, established in 1602, carried out colonial activities in Asia and South Africa.

as the Wilcocks Commission to investigate the social conditions of coloureds in the Union. The commission included liberal and conservative whites and one coloured, Dr. Abdullah Abdurahman, who as discussed in Chapter Two, was the leader of the APO. The result was a 242-page report entitled, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry Regarding the Cape Coloured Population of the Union." This report produced a particular governmental knowledge about the coloureds, which entailed an investigation into virtually every aspect of coloured life, including: economic, health, education, and the legal and political position of coloured communities. A section of the report entitled "Terms of Reference," stated that:

> The terms of reference of the commissioners are to inquire into, collect information and report upon the position in the country's economic and social structure of the Cape Coloured population (including Cape Malays) in the various parts of the Union and more especially in the following matters: (a) The social factors affecting the well-being of the Cape Coloured population, more particularly in respect to education, housing, and health services, …(b) the economic position of the Cape Coloured in urban industry as skilled workers, unskilled workers, having regard to their relation with European workers and to the competition of urban Natives…and (c) the present economic position of Cape Coloured farm-workers and rural dwellers and the place they may be expected to fill in relation to the agricultural industry of the Union (Wilcocks et al. 1937).

In addition to developing a detailed report about all aspects of coloured life the authors of the report state that they also "ventured to make definite recommendations, which, from the facts, have appeared to be urgently necessary or desirable (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 6)." From the very first section of the report, coloured people are portrayed as flawed due somehow to their origins. This is clear from the disagreement that emerges from the Commissioners attempt to define coloured identity. They were unable to agree on a "typical" definition for the coloured population. Instead three of the commissioners defined the "typical" Cape coloured as:

> A person living in the Union of South Africa, who does not belong to one of its aboriginal races, but whom the presence of Coloured blood (especially due to descent from non-Europeans brought to the Cape in the 17th and 18th centuries or from aboriginal Hottentot stock, and with or without an admixture of white or bantu blood), can be established with at least reasonable certainty (a) from a knowledge of genealogy of the person during the last three or four generations; or/and by ordinary recognition of characteristic physical features (such as colour of skin, nature of hair, and facial or bodily form), by an observer familiar with these characteristics (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 10).

The other three commissioners including Dr. Abdurahman stated that they were unable to accept the “type definition” and considered it unadvisable to attempt to frame one because of the varied origins of coloured people and because various Acts defined coloured people in relation to other “races or tribes” (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 10).

The Wilcocks Commission then went on to conclude that “the coloured people may be divided into three classes. One group was described as the undesirable class comprised of the “skolly boys” (often habitually armed with knives or razor blades), the habitual convicts and ex-convicts, the drunkards, the dagga-smokers (marijuana), and the habitual loafers” (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 16). The second class was comprised of “the farm and unskilled laborers, the factory workers, and the household servants in rural and urban areas” (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 16). A third class according to the report is comprised of “relatively well-to-do and educated coloured people, including some 2,400 teachers, independent workmen, skilled tradesmen and the very few members of the legal and medical profession (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 16).” These three “classes” were then examined more closely. A section entitled, *Attitude of the coloured towards the European* states that “a section of the lower classes accept the European without question as their superiors,” and claims that “the attitude is characterized by submission to the European combined sometimes with attachment to a master who in their opinion treats

them well" (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 13). The report also stated that coloured life continues to be impacted by the fact that coloured people are descended from slaves. As a result, coloured people: are dependent on the ruling class to provide all the essentials in life; they have a low estimate of family relationships, leading in many cases to a neglect of family ties and illegitimacy; and are thriftless, and deceitful (Wilcocks 1937, 14-16). With regard to work, coloured people were described as inefficient in many sectors when compared to Europeans but were described as particularly efficient in trade occupations yet not as efficient laborers as natives (Wilcocks 1937, 19).

Another section of the report is dedicated to the analysis of what it termed "special problems." These included deleterious home influences, illegitimacy, juvenile delinquency, intemperance, dagga smoking, theft, minor offences, recidivism, need for legal assistance, social discontent and miscegenation. Stephen Jensen (2008) who wrote an ethnography entitled *Gangs, Politics and Dignity in Cape Town* argues that in this section the images that emerged from the commission was the coloured mother's uphill battle to be a true homemaker. She was obliged to work, had little education and knowledge about nutrition, was poor and worn out by multiple pregnancies and was not supported by a husband. Specifically, the report states, "The mother often puts up a pathetically brave fight on behalf of her home and her children against adverse conditions (Wilcocks 1937, 14-19)." The report goes on to say, "Frequently poverty combined with ignorance as to food values and the correct preparation of food results in the family suffering from undernourishment or malnutrition (Wilcocks 1937, 19)." Finally, the mother is described as being worn out from frequent pregnancies. The coloured father was portrayed as someone absent, indulging in alcohol and not taking care of his

responsibilities. According to the Commission, poverty, overindulgence in alcohol, and lack of proper parenting by the mother allowed the children to go astray, and they ultimately became anti-social and entered the cycle of juvenile delinquency. That is, the child became a skolly and was thus unable to compete successfully with whites and Africans (Jensen 2008). Jensen also claims that the commission racialized coloured behavior by developing an argument around their inherent character, laziness and potential for alcoholism and criminal behavior which emanated from their Khoisan (indigenous) descent (26).

The Wilcocks Commission report and the cultural stereotyping of coloured behavior is reminiscent of the Moynihan Report and the racialization of poverty in the United States with theories around the "culture of poverty" and underclass. The report entitled, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action" was a report written in 1965 by American politician and sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan that claimed to focus on the deep roots of black poverty in America and concluded that the relative absence of nuclear families would greatly hinder further progress toward economic and political equality. In this report, African American families were portrayed as "highly unstable and approaching complete breakdown" with high illegitimacy rates, female-headed households and welfare dependency (Moynihan Report, 1965). Overall the children were described as being in danger and the family is considered pathological. Theories about the so-called culture of poverty emerged from the late 1950s most notably popularized by the work of anthropologist Oscar Lewis (Lewis 1959, 1965). This theoretical perspective claimed that people caught in the culture of poverty have a strong feeling of marginality, helplessness, dependency and of not belonging. Lewis stated that they also experience

feelings of inferiority and personal unworthiness (Lewis 1965). The debates that emerged from these perspectives led to a demonization of mothers. Within these theories there was also a linking of poverty, culture and biology by attributing self-perpetuating moral deficiencies to African American and Latino people similar to the way colouredness and the affects of “mixed” racial ancestry was linked to the poverty experienced by coloured people from the 1930s when the Wilcocks Report was commissioned and the 1970s when the Theron Commission Report was written. There was a strong implication embedded in these reports that defects in the lifestyle of coloured people perpetuate poverty and that such defects can be passed from one generation to the next. These negative portrayals, cultural bias and stereotyping of coloured people are contributing factors to the shame described when referring to coloureds and accounts for Auntie Ruby’s description of coloureds as the white man’s shame.

Standing (2006) argues that as a result of the commission’s findings in the 1930s, there was an increase in the number of coloured men being sent to reformatories and prison. A section of the Wilcocks Report states that the delinquent may be removed from the environment in which the anti-social behavior developed and sent to a reformatory, sentence to a term of imprisonment or placed in a system of indenture to farmers (Wilcocks et al. 1937, 21). The implication was that coloured mothers could not properly rear their children without state intervention. One of the main points in both official discourse and bureaucratic practice was that children had to be protected from the potential for crime and therefore had to be removed from their homes. The Department of Coloured Affairs placed children in foster homes, industrial schools and reformatories

(Jensen 2008). In these schools and reformatories, male children were to be protected from the threat of becoming juvenile delinquents. Therefore, technical training was emphasized over academic learning. This construction of coloured males as "already on the verge of becoming skollies" was perpetuated in adult life, which is illustrated in imprisonment rates for coloured men (Jansen 2008). According to Standing, the national prison population grew from 23,000 in 1945 to about 51,000 in 1959. The rate of imprisonment for coloured people in South Africa, most of whom were living in the Western Cape, was more than double that of Africans: in 1970 for every 100,000 of each racial group, 791 coloureds were in prison compared to 362 Africans, 81 whites and 57 Asians.[41] It seems plausible that this heightened exposure of the coloured population to punitive state institutions was partly driven by the paternalistic attitude held by white authorities.

Further, according to Cheryl Hendricks, Head of the Southern African Human Security Programme at the Institute for Security Studies, "The underlying assumption is that there is something fundamentally wrong with this [coloured] identity and that some ideological transformation of the bearers of the identity will resolve the problems." For many, coloured identity is seen as a holdover from the apartheid past. This type of response draws on the dominant discourse that has portrayed coloured identity as bureaucratically constructed and therefore deviant. The onus is then placed on coloureds to change. This is a limited response that forecloses the debate on the identity as it assumes that it is solely an apartheid construction and does not take into consideration the long history of race and racialization in South Africa. As discussed earlier in the

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[41] According to Jensen, if one takes into consideration that most black South Africans were imprisoned for past law violations, the relative number of imprisoned coloureds is actually higher.

dissertation, from as early as colonialism, coloured people internalized the racist values of the dominant society. They also accepted racial mixture as a defining characteristic of their identity along with indigenous heritage and their history of enslavement which led to the impression that coloured people were somehow deficient. Further, portraying colouredness as a holdover from the past does not grapple with the larger context of identity constructions in South Africa and does not adequately address the socioeconomic issues that are underlying post-apartheid assertions of coloured identity. Conceived in this way, coloured identity is portrayed as a false identity that was imposed on weak and vulnerable people by the ruling white minority, which contributes to why the seamstress at the beginning of the chapter asserts, "Didn't you hear coloured people have no culture." This was a sentiment expressed by many people from all backgrounds repeatedly throughout my fieldwork. On one occasion, after explaining to a group of eight people why I was in South Africa, a young Afrikaans man in his mid-twenties said, "I really feel bad for coloureds because they don't even know who they are." He proceeded, "You should start your book with that line from the movie *Madagascar.*[42] The one where the zebra says my life is half over and I don't even know if I'm black with white stripes or white with black stripes." The notion that coloured people have no culture was expressed by coloureds and outsiders alike. Bronwyn who was quoted at the start of the chapter speaks to this when she says,

> Coloureds are seen as a lost people because they're not one homogenous culture. It's up to us to put forth an identity and understanding of our culture. We can't just wait for someone to come and define us once again. Now we must be black because the government tells us we're so. No, we must decide.

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[42] *Madagascar*, a 2005 animated film produced by DreamWorks Animation, was released on May 27, 2005. The film tells the story of four Central Park Zoo animals who have spent their lives in blissful captivity and are unexpectedly shipped back to Africa, getting shipwrecked on the island of Madagascar.

Asserting Coloured Identity

Figure 13. Westbury, Johannesburg

As discussed in the Introduction, this dissertation takes the position that social identities are constructed in relational settings and are affected by social, economic, political and administrative factors. Colouredness in contemporary South Africa is linked to the many social, political and economic changes described above that have occurred since the end of apartheid. Therefore, new assertions of identity are not simply about coloured racism or fear of black majority rule. Instead perceptions of marginalization in post-apartheid South Africa have become linked to ethno-racial identity because people consider race to be an important factor in determining access to economic resources or political networks. Some coloured people then use these claims of marginalization to mobilize around the identity.

Bronwyn

When I first met 31 year-old Bronwyn, whom I quoted earlier, she identified as coloured; however, in the seven years that I have known her, Bronwyn has come to say that she is proudly coloured. This is something that she and her 60 year old father disagree about. Her father refers to himself as South African or black and he says that he cannot comprehend why anyone would want to hang on to a term that was imposed on people and is concerned with young people who wave the coloured flag without understanding history. I quoted Bronwyn at the start of this chapter when she notes, *Look, I'm not one of those crazy coloured nationalist type of people..I just think that coloured people need to feel a sense of pride in who they are…so they can be somebody other than the gangster on the corner.* This perspective portrays colouredness as an identity to rally around because of the disadvantaged position of coloured people in the township.

Since we met via the bruin-ou.com website, during our first meeting in Cape Town which took place in 2003, I asked Bronwyn what she thought about the site. Instead of responding she gave me a history of coloured people in South Africa. She stated, "They cannot say that they originate from this Zulu King or that colonialist so this left them with many issues. Like the seamstress quoted above, Bronwyn invokes the notion of culture or lack of culture and history to discuss the origin of coloured identity and perhaps identifies this lack of culture or lack of positive identity as one of the root causes for coloured people's suffering. Bronwyn asks, "I'm sure you've heard the stereotype of the coloured." "I'm not sure," I responded. She continued, "That coloureds

are gangsters, into drugs, drinking and there's teenage pregnancy. I get so upset, it's like coloureds have such self-hatred." From her statements, it becomes clear that the negative images of colouredness continue into contemporary South Africa and Bronwyn's analysis of the current state of her coloured community in Westbury and coloured working class and poor people in general is partly a reaction to this portrayal. Bronwyn continued:

> I get so mad at coloured people because we're going to stay exactly where we are if we don't get our act together. The Africans, they know how to try to make right the wrongs of the past. They stress education. You would see an African family living in a shack and that mother is stressing education but a lot of coloured mothers feel like well, I didn't graduate primary school so my children don't have to either.

Bronwyn's statement reveals that she feels coloured people are partly to blame for not taking advantage of their access to education and perhaps other opportunities that would enable them to shift their position. I was reminded about this conversation when I attended the birthday party of fifteen-year-old twins in 2006. What should have been a celebration became a tear-filled evening with speeches from several family members who urged the girls to stay in school and not get pregnant. The mother explained that she dropped out of school and had her first child when she was just fifteen years old. The brother spoke next and said that he was forced to drop out of school to find a job at just sixteen when his girlfriend became pregnant and their older sister by just two years sobbed as she pleaded with them to finish high school. When I visited the family two years later, the girls had both dropped out of school and one of the girls had just given birth.

Bronwyn's position shifted significantly during my interviews with her after 2005. Initially, she seemed quite critical of and frustrated with coloured

people who, unlike Africans, were not taking advantage of the opportunities available to them. However, now she has come to assert colouredness and has taken the position that coloured people need to claim their identity and mobilize on the basis of the identity to access their rightful claim to resources in contemporary South Africa. In one interview she stated,

> I don't know which came first, were coloureds excluded from programs so they said I don't care or the coloureds didn't care so they said we won't include them. This is why I think it's important to have people feel proud about being coloured. It's something to be proud about. We have to move forward or we will end up like your Native Americans. There are no government programs for coloured people. We don't get jobs either because of BEE. I went to a job interview once and when I called and asked the recruiter why I didn't get the job, she said we need someone who speaks Tswana so I told her I speak Tswana and she said look we want someone African. So you see, no one is looking out for coloureds.

Bronwyn's sense of coloured pride is often a reaction to the fact that she does not see change in the day-to-day living situation of coloured people particularly in the working class area of Westbury where she lives. Like other working class coloured areas, Westbury has a high concentration of unemployed individuals who feel that they are not benefitting from any of the changes of the *new* South Africa. Bronwyn, like many other coloured people feels marginalized in the post-apartheid dispensation, and is especially resentful about what she and her community perceive to be a preferential allocation of resources to Africans, when their needs are just as great. Many among the working class, working poor, and unemployed see themselves as having gained little, if any tangible benefits from the new dispensation. A very high percentage of the South African population live in poverty and as with unemployment, poverty affects mainly African and to a lesser degree coloured people. Between 50 and 60 percent of the

African and 22 and 32 percent of the coloured population were living in poverty in 1995 (Terreblanche 2002). Although the skilled and well-educated coloured middle classes have been able to take advantage of opportunities that have become available to formerly disadvantaged people through affirmative action and Black Economic Empowerment initiatives, the coloured working classes have been victims of jobless economic growth and an increasing desire among employers to hire Africans in order to have a more racially representative workforce because the Employment Equity Act of 1998, one of the laws created to counteract the legacy of apartheid, has focused on changing the demographic composition of public and private institutions (Erasmus 2004).

Increasing civil rights gained since the end of apartheid which have clearly enhanced the lives of the coloured middle classes, have meant little to their working class counterparts who remain in poverty and feel marginalized. Seekings and Nattrass (2002) conclude that in post-apartheid South Africa inequality is increasingly a function of class rather than race and Swardt (2003) and Bezuidenhout (2003) note that these policies usually benefit wealthy black people and often cannot deal with the effects of racialized structural inequalities among the working class and poor (Erasmus 2004, 20). Professor Neville Alexander, anti-apartheid activist and a Marxist sociologist at the University of Cape Town has argued that affirmative action betrays the ideals of nonracialism that so many fought and died for during the long struggle against apartheid (Dugger, 2010). Opponents of racial affirmative action in the United States similarly argue that the program actually benefits middle- and upper-class African Americans and Hispanic Americans at the expense of lower class European Americans and Asian Americans (Shere 1983; Garry 2006). This argument supports the idea of solely class-based

affirmative action. However, others stress that it remains perfectly appropriate for the black middle class to be offered special assistance as part of a strategy for overcoming the nation's legacy of racial oppression because people in the black middle class have been and continue to be victimized by that legacy (Kennedy et al. 1992). This type of argument in opposition to Affirmative action in South Africa is even less effective because the African middle class in South Africa is not at all comparable to the white middle class in wealth. Additionally, Max Price, the vice chancellor at the University of Cape Town and former anti-apartheid activist, supports affirmative action policies at the university and states, "Even in the most prosperous black families, children do not perform as well on the national high school exam as white students whose families have been university educated for generations (Dugger 2010)." Therefore, he implies that class-based affirmative action may perpetuate existing racial inequalities because an array of factors contribute to institutional discrimination and not simply income level. However, Erasmus (2003), Vally and Dalamba (1999), Carrim and Soudien (1999), Steyn and van Zyl (2001), Luhabe (2002), and Erasmus (2000) also indicate that attempts to achieve equity targets often allow racial antagonisms to surface in heightened forms (Erasmus 2004, 20). Ultimately, having the right to live where you want and send your children to the schools of your choice means little to the working poor of the coloured townships.

Coloured people I spoke with often claimed that large sections of the African poor have benefitted from the provision of basic services such as electricity, sanitation and running water since the mid 1990s and only a relatively small section of the coloured poor have experienced any improvement in living conditions that can be attributed to the

new order because most of their day-to-day concerns differ in the areas of housing and basic services. The coloured working class and poor overwhelmingly deal with the issue of overcrowded households and it is common to have several generations and extended families living in one household or family members living in temporary housing structures (often called Wendy House) in their backyards. Furthermore, it is common for coloured people in Cape Town to report that they have been on the list for public housing for well over 30 years. People feel resentful when they see newly built housing going to individuals they see as having only recently moved to Cape Town. The Western Cape has experienced a great deal of internal migration from the Eastern Cape and coloured communities often express frustration against perceived threats from newly arrived Africans. People express concern that preference in housing is often given to Africans because they live in informal settlements while those living in overcrowded conditions and backyard dwellings are forgotten.

Figure 14. Backyard dwellings in Cape Town 2008

Coloured working class and poor people also find the high crime levels in their communities to be among their greatest challenges that the government has yet to

adequately address. Recent studies indicate that the coloured population has the highest homicide rate in South Africa with a rate exceeding 80 murders per 100,000 (Thompson 2004; Leggett 2004). According to one study, murder was the cause of nearly half of all deaths of coloured males between the ages of 16 and 30, making it the primary cause of death for this group (Thompson 2004, 11). Another study conducted by the Institute for Security Studies noted that in 2002 the Western Cape, where coloured people represent a regional majority, had by far the nation's highest rate of murder at 85 murders per 100,000. By comparison Gauteng had 59 murders per 100,000 and the national average was 47.

Crime on the Cape Flats is generally understood within the context of gangsterism and coloured young men figure prominently into these discussions so the image of the skolly from the Wilcocks Commission Report emerges again in existing urban renewal efforts[43] and coloured gangs receive greater media attention than other gangs operating in the country. Authorities on gangs in the Western Cape for the most part agree there are approximately 100 thousand gang members in 137 gangs (Merten 2002). Between 40 and 60 percent of all violent crime on the Cape Peninsula is gang-related. Gangs are also responsible for a large proportion of break-ins to houses and cars, the fencing of stolen goods and theft from warehouses (Merten 2002). Kinnes (2003) also notes that the Western Cape has more convictions for gang-related crime than any other province in the country. Despite their growing reach, most of Cape Town's gangs are still mainly entrenched in the Cape Flats, and this is where the majority of the city's recorded crimes, violent crimes in particular, take place. However, there is a fear that crime levels will

[43] See Cape Flats Renewal Strategy.

deter investors and visitors to the city or country. The focus on urban renewal to benefit tourists and business causes the problem of crime to be viewed primarily in terms of law enforcement rather than as a social issue resulting from high unemployment and poverty. This means that there are a lack of social programs that target specific populations. As noted in Chapter Two, just over 73 percent of the coloured population in Cape Town has less than a high school diploma and the majority of the population in the Cape Flats is unemployed (Merten 2002). Lavender Hill, at the southern end of the Cape Flats, is home to about 60 000 people, of which about 65 to 70 percent are unemployed. Female-headed households are also the norm in Lavender Hill and there are only three primary schools and one high school. Similarly, Tafelsig, also on the Flats, is home to about 80 000 people and has an unemployment rate of between 40 and 50 percent (Merten, 2002).

The Western Cape also has one the highest incidences of foetal alcohol syndrome in the world. This is attributed to the long history of alcohol abuse in the coloured community, which was encouraged by the "dop system" of paying farm workers in alcohol. The studies cited above on the murder rate among South Africa's coloured population also noted that most of those murdered were positive for alcohol consumption. Moreover, deepening poverty further contributes to an increase in diseases such as malnutrition and chronic lifestyle disorders, e.g., alcoholism, smoking and drug abuse which are on the rise (Unicity Health Trends Research Group, 2000). The drug abuse rate in Mitchells' Plain was 37 percent in 199 compared with 14 percent average for other Urban renewal Programme areas.

Additionally, because social services and welfare payments have now been extended to the African masses who were neglected under apartheid, the benefits received by coloureds have in most cases been diluted, dropping below the relatively privileged levels of the past (Pietersen 2007). This has caused real hardship among the coloured poor and is generally seen to be the result of inequitable government policies favoring Africans. Some have even chosen to interpret government policy in this regard as a way of punishing coloured people for their relative privilege under apartheid or for not supporting the ANC in recent elections. Though such claims are unfounded, they nevertheless feed coloured suspicion of the ANC government, as well as resentment toward Africans in general. However, according to Seeking (2007), almost 60 percent of social assistance expenditure goes to households in the poorest income quintile; therefore, the grants are based on income levels and not on race. In fact, no social service grants, including the *Grant for Older Persons, Disability Grant, Care Dependency Grant, Child Support Grant, Grant-in-Aid, Social Relief of Distress,* are distributed based on race. Each grant has criteria for application, but according to South African Social Security Agency (2010) official documents, race does not appear as a qualifying criterion for social assistance.

Bronwyn's position that coloured people are being further marginalized since the end of apartheid is not unique, many people expressed frustration with the lack of change in the day-to-day lived experiences of working class and poor communities. Riello, who is 26 years old and lives in Hanover Park on the Cape Flats, represents a particular segment of the coloured population that claims life was better during apartheid. This claim, however, is based primarily on his perception of the material conditions of

coloured communities and less on a longing for a separation of various race groups. Riello states that he does not want any part of nation building and thinks that things were better under apartheid. "I can't even get a job," he says in frustration. Like many other people I spoke with (especially in Cape Town), Bronwyn's initial reaction is to see the inequalities that coloured people are experiencing as a potential point for the mobilization of coloured identity. The perception that Africans are being advantaged over other groups through affirmative action programs such as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) can have a divisive effect on group relations with Africans through assertions that coloured people are purposefully being excluded by new legislation. However, the official definition of the term black used by the government in legislation and equity policies includes "Africans, coloureds, and Indians" and does not provide for hierarchical structuring of affirmative action policies (Government of South Africa, 2003). However, Alexander (2007) and many of my informants argue that when implementing these policies the notion of coloured as black is not acknowledged or is simply ignored. Coloured people are then left feeling collectively excluded and as though they are being punished for the minimal privileges they were granted during apartheid. Although the reality of these claims is clearly difficult to identify these perceived threats in the labor market, housing and services have encouraged an exclusionary group identity among some sections of the coloured population.

Figure 15. Noordgesig, Johannesburg

Wayne, a friend of Bronwyn's invited us to a barbeque at the home of some friends so that I would have a chance to meet and talk to a lot of different people. Wayne, 32, grew up in Wentworth , a low-income, former coloured group area in Durban. Wentworth is known for its overcrowding, unemployment, alcoholism, and drug use (Peek, Root, Ramurath, and Wiley 1996). At the time of the interview Wayne was working as an Internet technology professional and living in Bosmont a primarily coloured middle class area in Johannesburg. The following conversation took place on the way to the barbeque in the car.

> Wayne: The problem with the coloured community is that the kids need role models and there is a need for representation. I'm not anti-white or black, I'm just pro-coloured. I just don't see changes happening now, you could go into any coloured area and life looks like it did under apartheid. I don't see change

> happening with my generation, maybe for me it's too late, I think change will come with the laaities.[44]
>
> Bronwyn: We have to do something for the children, we can't just sit back because right now their role models are the drug dealers and Janette as you can see the government doesn't care kak about coloureds now.
>
> Wayne: These children in the townships come from single parent homes and they can't afford material things. They see that it's the gangsters that has things so they think that's what they must do, be a dealer or a gangster. People make it even just a little and they leave and never want to look back. That's why I got involved with the group Onward and Upward because I know that I have to be a role model for the kids. How else are they going to know that they can make it out, that being coloured is something to be proud about? I'm proud to be coloured and coloured culture is something to be proud of. When I have my own children, I will raise them to be coloured and proud. Coloured people have a lot to be proud of but no one cares about coloureds. Coloured people in places like Eldorado Park here in Jo'burg or Mitchell's Plain or Mannenburg need empowerment. Instead there's mostly a focus on the black areas because they were disadvantaged but coloureds were also disadvantaged.

People in post-apartheid South Africa assert or accept colouredness for a number of reasons. For Bronwyn and Wayne it is more about trying to grapple with the harsh economic and social realities of people in many working-class coloured and poor communities. They claim that in post-apartheid South Africa conditions continue to be the same for the average coloured person. They are frustrated with the government for failing to deliver on the promises of better housing, employment opportunities and overall quality of life. As previously discussed, many coloured people living in the Cape Flats or other public or low income housing created for coloureds during apartheid in Johannesburg and Durban continue to live in communities characterized by overcrowding, poverty, have low levels of education, high levels of unemployment and crime. These coloured "ghettos" were built quickly with poor materials with very little attention to community infrastructure. The preliminary impact assessment for the

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[44] Children.

Khayelitsha and Mitchells Plain Urban Renewal Programme (URP) Report dated December 2006 identified the most pressing challenges in Mitchells Plain, a working class and underemployed coloured area, as: drugs, unemployment, crime and gang activity. The outcomes for the urban renewal identified by the URP are physical development, social development and progress in service delivery. Although Bronwyn and Wayne both feel frustrated when they see newly built housing going to African communities, they both acknowledge that "the blacks live in shacks so they need it more." However, even though some coloured conclude that people are being left out, in this particular instance at least, new housing units were relatively evenly split between Khayelitsha, a primarily African residential area (2066 units) and Mitchells Plain, a primarily coloured residential area (2037 units). In this instance, it seems, the primary issue is that much attention has been focused on people who are in the most dire living situation i.e. those who live in informal settlements or backyard dwellings with poor access to basic services and the sections of the coloured townships most in need of new housing units and better service delivery.

The overall goal of the Urban Renewal Programme is to reduce historical inequalities and improve the quality of life in formerly-disadvantaged urban areas. Most of the areas selected are former African township areas, which were created as apartheid dormitory suburbs. The areas identified for both the urban and rural strategies showed high levels of poverty as well as high levels of crime. According to one report, the selection of urban renewal areas appears to have been both highly political and quasi-scientific (Rauch, 2002). During the first half of 1999, the Social Sector Chief Directorate in the Office of the President initiated a research project to demonstrate and

verify the links between poverty, crime and under-servicing by law enforcement agencies. The project identified nine areas (one per province) which showed a high incidence of crime, low policing resources, high levels of poverty and low economic activity. The report later notes that, “A less formal and less empirically-demonstrable criteria used in the selection of sites related to the broader discourse of race and inequality” (Rauch 2002). The selection of sites was also profoundly political. Politicians and officials who advised the President on the selection of the sites would have been influenced by a range of other factors, in addition to the criteria of poverty and crime levels. The report states that the political interests of individual politicians or political parties may have played a role in the selection of particular locations. For example, one official who was involved in the selection process believed that the Motherwell and Mndantsane sites were selected by former Minister of Safety and Security Steve Tshwete, for political reasons that were related to Tshwete's role in, and knowledge of, the ANC in the Eastern Cape (Rauch 2002). Another national official was of the opinion that Mitchell’s Plain, a primarily coloured area, did not meet the poverty criterion for selection, implying that there must have been some other reason for its selection as a site. One argument is that politicians may have selected Mitchell’s Plain in order to generate favorable public opinion and potentially generate vote’s in future local and provincial elections in the Western Cape. Therefore, some could argue that they were selected and benefitted simply because of ethno-racial background or political reasons.

Charles Ash, who is the founder of a website created for coloured people to discuss coloured identity, states, “As for why we should still bother with an idea like

coloured identity, one has to consider that the majority of coloureds are still caught up in circumstances shaped by a shared past and our challenges in the present and the future can only be overcome if we find unifying factors that can bind us instead of dividing us by harping on the diversity that makes some of us seem a lesser part of the whole." For Ash and others who take this position, coloured people need to organize in order to access the resources needed to improve and uplift coloured communities. Sean Field, Director of the Centre for Popular Memory at UCT, conducted 23 oral-history interviews with former and current residents who were forcibly removed from the Windermere community[45] and relocated to coloured and African townships. Field writes

> The majority of coloured interviews displayed a mixture of racial othering, explicit racism or implicit forms of racism. Coloured interviewees' past experiences of loss and their fears of re-experiencing forms of loss and hurt under a black African majority government are an important part of an emerging explanation. Fear of transformation and rapid change and the possible reoccurrence of marginalization and discrimination are understandable. However, these fears need to be interpreted differently. For example, these fears should not be crudely approached as a defensive protection of social and class privileges. In fact these fears tend to be more pronounced amongst working class coloured residents, who have less material and social advantages to protect.

Ultimately, the frustration that Bronwyn, Wayne and others express is growing in South Africa as poor people in general begin to hold the local and national government responsible for failing to keep the promises of improved conditions. Recent studies indicate that people all across South Africa are organizing based on common issues such

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[45] Windermere is located just north and east of the city center and is considered part of the Cape Flats. It was not incorporated into the Cape Town City Council until 1943. Between 1958 and 1963, all of its 2,500 African residents were forcibly removed. It has generally been known as a dangerous shantytown with some permanent brick and some mixed-iron, makeshift structures.

as the lack of service delivery, improper housing or what communities deem illegal evictions (Desai 2008).

Generational Shifts in Conceptualizing Colouredness

In one of the conversations above, Wayne and Bronwyn introduce several arguments that are central to debates about coloured identity. For example, Wayne's statement *I'm not anti-white or black, I'm just pro-coloured* signals a shift in the way coloured identity is being conceived by those of the post apartheid generation. The pro-coloured position is starkly different from the shame spoken about by Auntie Ruby. Erasmus' (2001) statement, "racial discourses in South Africa have made it impossible to see colouredness as an identity that could be understood and respected on its own terms" no longer holds true as post-apartheid generationers attempt to claim an unapologetic colouredness. Yet many post-apartheid generationers often divorce asserting colouredness from asserting a political position. That is, they do not consider asserting colouredness with a desire to return to the days of apartheid. However, they have been accused by those of the struggle generation of treading a slippery slope for using racialized language in attempts to get the needs of their communities met. Rene, a 25-year-old recent university graduate from Athlone, disagrees and says, "There is a double standard in this country. No one protests and says that the Zulu's in KwaZulu Natal are racists because they organize as Zulu."

Allen and Friends

One Sunday afternoon, 26 year-old Allen, invited my family and I to a barbecue that he was having at his father's home in Ottery, a primarily coloured middle-class suburb in Cape Town. I met Allen along with several other university students in 2003 at the HIV/AIDS peer education organization at the University of Cape Town. At the time he and several of his friends agreed to meet and talk to me about coloured identity. Allen and his friends later toured me around Cape Town and the rural areas in the Western Cape and introduced me to their families and several of their friends. Allen's friends who were present at the barbeque were from both working and middle-class backgrounds and ranged in ages from 19 to 33. Sean, 27, is a chef and lives with his mother in the former whites-only suburb of Rondebosch. Natalie is a 19-year-old college student at the University of the Western Cape and she lives in the Northern suburb of Belville. Aliyah who is 33 years old and lives in Town with her five-year-old son told me that she was raised in Mannenburg, which is considered one of the roughest areas on the Cape Flats. She states that when she was in high school she moved to a much more upmarket area. She said that she remembers printing anti-apartheid posters and tee-shirts and was around people who were active in the struggle.

Not long after everyone arrived Allen told his guests why I was in South Africa so I decided to pose one question to the entire group, I asked, "How do you feel about being called coloured?" Aliyah stated, "That's what we are why should we feel any way. Coloured people raise their kids in a certain way, talk a certain way, we are gangsters and bad asses; we are what we are and I'm proud." I proceed to ask 19 year-old Natalie, what do you think about being called coloured? She states, "fine because I'm coloured." I

push a little further and ask, “What is being coloured to you?” Natalie responds in a somewhat annoyed tone, “I’m just a coloured girl and that’s it. I don’t think about it.” Aliyah who at 34 sees herself as neither part of the younger post-apartheid generation nor as part of the liberation generation interrupts and states, “You see, she [Natalie] doesn’t even have to think about being coloured because there’s no question, she’s just coloured.” These comments indicate that the major reference points for younger people are not the apartheid past, but the new South Africa created by the transition sixteen years ago yet many, are largely though not entirely, free of the emotional baggage of their parents.

One Sunday Allen and his friends decided to take me to Wellington. Wellington is a town in the Western Cape 45 minutes from Cape Town, with a population of approximately 57,500. Wellington's economy is centered around agriculture such as wine, table grapes, citrus fruit and a brandy industry. We were going to a church service, to the pastor’s home for Sunday lunch and then they were going to take me to visit the home of several people in the town who worked on the fruit farms in the area. The following conversation took place in the car. Since all of my tour guides were university students taking classes with several academics who have written about coloured identity, I asked them what they thought about all of the discussions about coloured culture and coloured identity.

Clint: Of course we have a culture; we have Coon's and Carnival.[46]

Lester: We are more than a bunch of coons parading around Cape Town on January 2nd. We have a culture because when we get together we can talk about the same experiences, eat the same foods. Even if it was apartheid that forced us together the point is that it did and now we are coloured.

Clint: It's important for coloured people to have an identity because every nation or people need to have an identity and that means us to.

Allen: It's hard to be united because there are so many classes and views in the coloured community.

Lester: Look at the Africans, they have so many cultures and yet they're all African. It's the same, we have so many cultures but we're all coloured. We have so many bits and pieces of so many cultures but we just make it our own by personalizing it.

Allen: Listen to us, we sound like a bunch of academics. What's important is to uplift the community and the young people by exposing them to successful people, even us. We could make a difference in the life of some child in Mitchell's Plain or Hanover Park because we will show them that there's more than just gangsterism and drugs.

Allen: I'm proud to be coloured and I think I'm helping to change what being coloured is by going to university and getting a good job.

The discussion among my tour guides illustrates that they do not question whether they should claim colouredness or not. For them it simply exists whether or not they can come to an agreement on how to define colouredness.

I met Zita and Felicia, two shop workers, as my family and I were walking through Rondebosch, the neighborhood where I was living. I visited with them in a shop in Rondebosch twice a week for six months. In 2005 Zita was19 years old and lived with her parents in Gassy Park, a primarily coloured middle-class suburb. She

[46] The Cape Town Minstrel Carnival, known locally as the Coon Carnival, is a minstrel festival that takes place annually on January 2, in Cape Town. Up to 13,000 minstrels, many in blackface, take to the streets, dressed in bright colors and either carrying colorful umbrellas or playing an array of musical instruments.

had just completed high school and was taking a year off before attending the University of Cape Town. Felicia was in her 50s and she lived in Mitchell's Plain. Felicia has three children, two sons who were in their 20s and a teen-aged daughter all who lived with her in her two room home. The following conversation took place after I had been visiting them in the shop for a little over two months.

> Janette: I was talking to a woman in town the other day and she said that during apartheid coloured people were in the middle and now after apartheid coloured people are still in the middle, do you agree?
>
> Felicia: No, we are not even in the middle, we are at the back, we get nothing. The jobs go to the blacks. For the ones that's qualified it's good but a lot of them are not even qualified.
>
> Zita: That's messed up people should get jobs because they are qualified and they have skills, it shouldn't matter if they are white or African or Indian or coloured.
>
> Felicia: It's because of affirmative action and BEE. What is affirmative action? Where did it come from.
>
> Janette: One of the reasons for affirmative action is to try to even things out a little, you know since during apartheid people didn't have equal opportunities.
>
> Zita: You can't fix the past. You have to just forget it. The past is history and it should just be left in the past and we should just move forward.
>
> Felicia: There's no future for this country. The blacks, they're going to mess it up.

A customer came into the shop and Felicia walked over to help. While Felicia was helping the customer, Zita turned to me and said, "It's interesting how the older generation thinks. That's why I stay quiet." Felicia rejoined the conversation a few moments later and said:

> I promise I won't ever vote again, there's no use, you vote and nothing changes. People where I live in Mitchell's Plain don't have anything we need to get organized but we can't because we are too busy struggling. If one person finds

> out that they are going to be giving out food, they should tell their neighbors but they don't. They don't even think about their neighbors that's how bad it is. We coloureds are not even in the middle anymore we are at the back. No one cares about us, they just don't care.

Throughout our discussion Felicia's comments return to the political, economic and social reasons for why she imagines coloured people to be singled out in contemporary South Africa. Her frustration with the ANCs inability to address the social conditions of the poor is fully noted when she says that she promises she will never vote again. Their conversation also draws out some of the generational tensions in their views. Zita feels that people should get jobs based on qualification regardless of race. She also looks past the fact (or perhaps does not recognize) that the unequal social conditions of the present are the result of grossly unequal race-based legislation of the past and says that *the past should be left in the past*. Not only does Zita represent one segment of the post-apartheid generation, but her views are also embedded within a particular class position in that she has graduated high school and is planning to attend university in the fall. Zita also grew up in a two parent household with two working parents in a middle-class suburb.

Post-apartheid generationers relate to the past in ways that are distinctly different from their parents' generation. Their experiences have been marked by having always grown up in coloured areas. Many have parents who actively chose to shield their young children from apartheid by not talking about it and keeping their children away from situations that would place them in danger. As a result many grew up with coloured friends, perhaps attending coloured-only schools and because they grew up after the democratic transition their particular coloured experienced is divorced from the official

classifications and forced removals that marked those of their parents. According to 25 year-old James, “there’s nothing to question, coloured just is.” Clint, 24 states, “I don’t have a problem with being called coloured. No white person ever came up to me and said you are coloured, I was just coloured because that’s what I am, I’m not white, I’m not African.” Gregory said, “Look, I grew up in Wentworth, a coloured area in Durban, and my parents and grandparents are coloured. I didn’t even begin to interact with other races, especially white people, until after that fresh smell of democracy in 94, when I went to a Model C[47] school.”

Rejecting Coloured Identity

Not long after the barbecue my friend Bronwyn suggested that I meet an old family friend. She said, “you need to talk to Chris he knows so much, he’s the kind of person you should be talking to because he was active, in the struggle you know.” Chris, who was nearly 60 years old at the time, lives in Muizenburg in Cape Town. He is retired from his job where he worked at an NGO. I was rushing off to the neighborhood café that was my usual meeting place for more formal interviews. When I was alone or with my family the staff often sat down to chat with me but when I was there to interview someone they gave me the space I needed. An older man walked in and I knew it must be him. As I noted at the start of this chapter, Chris walked over, Janette?” “Yes, thank you so much for agreeing to meet with me.” We ordered tea and he asked me to tell him about my study. I said, “Basically I’m here to study coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa.” Chris looked at me with a very serious face and said, “First, I need you to know that I am not nor will I ever call myself a “*coloured*” and he raised his hands and

[47] A former whites-only school.

made quotation marks in the air. "How do you identify, I asked him." He said, "There's nothing wrong with being human is there? I'm South African too."

Chris at 60 represents those who were actively involved in the struggle against apartheid. Chris who very directly stated, *I need you to know I am not now nor will I ever call myself a "coloured"* highlights that the way people relate to colouredness is very much based on their personal experiences but it is also very generational. The post-apartheid generation views coloured identity differently from those who were active in the anti-apartheid struggles because they came of age in a very different country. The older generation came to political maturity at a time when the struggle against the apartheid state was much greater than the need to assert individual identities

My friend Allen arranged a dinner at his friend Sean's house for me to meet Sean's mother Audrey. Allen said that Audrey "is really connected into the community especially the NGOs." Audrey is a single mother of four in her early 50s who lives in Little Mowbray, which is considered an up market (read former whites-only) area in Cape Town. Audrey has a lot of African art and fabrics on the walls of her home, which I did not see at the homes of most of the coloured people I visited. Audrey works for an organization that works on issues of land rights and land restitution for those who were forcibly removed from their homes during apartheid. Her sister and husband who are both teachers were there with their three children. Audrey asked me what I am in South Africa to study and after I explained that I would be researching coloured identity she said that she knows it's an important issue that affects the lives of many people but that she hopes that I write something that is useful to everyday people. She said that she thinks that too many of these people writing about coloured identity are way too

influenced by post-modernism and focus too much on the identity question. Audrey explained, "I think that the removal of people from the land and urbanization are issues that should be given more importance. There isn't much difference between "so-called" coloureds, whites and urbanized Africans."

> Janette: How do you identify?
>
> Audrey I have never identified as coloured and do not see why I should want to now. I lived in Pietermarizburg at one point and those coloureds were totally different. They were darker and different. I have always identified as black.
>
> Janette: There's an academic who said "I am coloured culturally, but black politically." I think that's an interesting phrase and distinction.
>
> Audrey: Yes, I know who you are referring to. My problem is with the question, what is coloured culture? Coloured identity? The fact that my father drinks and plays old Afrikaans music? The way people speak? That's not culture. You see my sister there, she and her husband identify as Khoisan. But his experience is different he grew up in a rural area here in the Western Cape so maybe he's Khoisan but we didn't grow up Khoisan and probably do not have Khoisan origins.

Audrey who is in her fifties represents those who were actively involved in the struggle against apartheid. As I previously addressed in Chapter Two, this particular generation of individuals involved in the struggle were first influenced by the black consciousness movement and later by non-racialism. Coloured activists influenced by Black Consciousness thinking sought to transcend one's personal identity and the official coloured classification of the apartheid state by taking pride in an overall blackness (Adhikari 2007, 138). This pride in blackness signaled a sense of fellowship with Africans in the struggle against apartheid. There was also a strong public disapproval of black people mimicking white behavior, and by implication—especially coloured people's association with whiteness—which many saw as a betrayal of their black

heritage (Adhikari 2007, 142). The black consciousness movement to some extent did attempt to recognize the existence of racial and ethnic differences within the black population, specifically through the definition of the black community as consisting of Africans, coloured and Indians. During the liberation movement in South Africa, for many coloureds, self definition was an oppositional strategy as it disrupted the assimilation of oppressive labels which continued to confine people to state-set parameters. People would self-identify as "so-called coloured" simultaneously employing the boundaries imposed by apartheid and unsettling and disrupting them through their own agency and refutation of the term. The term was often verbally used with an animated gesticulation of quotation marks which Wicomb refers to as "disavowing scare quotes" meaning that they show a rejection of the imposed categorization (Wicomb 1998, 93).

Chris van Wyk who is a prominent writer in his 50s notes, "I remember when I was 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and my father had people over, they knew they had to watch what they were saying because I was always aware. I was listening and if they used the K (Kaffir) word I told them, you can't talk like that in here. Even now, I still don't use that 'coloured' word." He raises his has to make quotes in the air. "It gets hard like if someone is telling a story sometimes you want to know the race of the person they're talking about so you wait and hope they give you something, maybe they say the person lives in Soweto and then you say oh to yourself."

Conclusion

In this chapter I explored the contradictory feelings and thoughts held collectively and individually by coloured South Africans as they attempt to negotiate their identity in the new post-apartheid space. South Africa is still going through social transformation, and people's stories are still unfolding. Therefore, many of the identity questions raised in this chapter remain unresolved, which is why my friend Bronwyn has gone from being coloured to proudly coloured and why Charles Ash states, "I am coloured until further notice." What I have hoped to show is that coloured people are not simply racist people who fear African majority rule or longing for the days of apartheid; rather constructions of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa are influenced by a number of factors including direct or indirect experiences with apartheid, class differences and perceptions of inequality. By examining how people talk about colouredness, I also hoped to illustrate the highly contested and fragmented nature of coloured identity and show how people create spaces to express colouredness in ways that both conform to and disrupt the boundaries imposed by apartheid.

In this chapter I argue that post-apartheid South Africa has opened up a social space where youth and young adults no longer feel constrained by the politics of "the struggle" and feel that they can begin exploring and expressing their identities in ways that were impossible during apartheid rule and during anti-apartheid struggles. This position contrasts with the older generation who came into their political maturity at a time when rejecting colouredness in favor of blackness meant one was aligned with progressive politics. The older coloured left who struggled against apartheid under the

auspices of non-racialism find this new assertion of colouredness to be highly problematic.

In contemporary South Africa the post-apartheid generation are being folded into past discourses of race, politics and what it means to be politically progressive yet they are unwilling to accept the discourse of their parents' generation wholesale rather they are struggling to assert colouredness in ways that make sense to them. They are attempting to transform the politics of colouredness in ways that allow them to assert what they see as their coloured identity while for some maintaining a progressive and non exclusive agenda. Certainly, it can be argued that some coloured people are simply racist; however, my research indicates that overwhelmingly coloured people feel that they are being left out of the promises of post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, notions of coloured identity have become inextricably linked to socioeconomic status, power, and access to resources. Throughout this chapter and dissertation thus far I have illustrated that the situation of coloured working class and poor people has not significantly improved or in some cases has improved marginally in that some have access to basic services or have more broadly benefitted from urban renewal programs in their respective cities. However, the situation is similar for African working class and poor people since the end of apartheid and in many cases their situation is far worse considering that more Africans still reside in informal settlements and in rural areas with little access to basic services and have a greater number of people impacted by HIV and AIDS. Therefore, although many coloured people perceive extensive differential treatment (and there may be some), what appears as race or ethnicity-based preference are actually public policies aimed at improving the situation of those in a particular class. In general, the government

has been working to improve access to basic services and there has been a dramatic improvement in access to water, electricity and housing (Leibbrandt et al. 2004; Bhorat et al. 2006; Seekings 2006). The number of households with electric connections doubled between 1993 and 2004; access to water and sanitation improved, as did access to formal housing (in terms of the number of households in formal housing but not in terms of the proportion of the total number of households) (Seekings 2007). Even with this said; the perception of racial preference is an important contributing factor to assertions of colouredness among certain sectors of the population.

Chapter Five
Rearticulating Coloured Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa

Coloured identity has undergone much transformation since apartheid was dismantled. The new, democratic environment, with its rapid changes in the social, political, and economic landscape, facilitated discussions and debates on the role of coloured identity in South Africa. These new articulations of colouredness were inspired by apartheid's demise, when citizens started to consider their collective space in a society without the structures of segregation and discrimination. The 1970s and especially the 1980s had called for united opposition to apartheid. During that period assertions of racial or ethnic particularities were frowned upon and seen as a distraction from the larger goal of forcing an end to the country's racist, oppressive system. Today, in the new, democratic dispensation, there is no single white supremacist enemy requiring a united front, and the social and political shifts that have taken place as a result have inspired new, group expressions of coloured identity.

As discussed in the Introduction, the end of apartheid, along with discourse about the rainbow nation and the realities of non-racialism, caused a great deal of uncertainty about the future of coloured communities. This uncertainty encouraged broader dialogues about identity, and questions about the ramifications of political transformation emerged. Chapter Four addressed the ways people negotiate colouredness in everyday life and how their assertions of identity are linked to a variety of factors, including perceptions of marginalization and attempts to gain access to resources in the new South Africa. This chapter explores the collective ways coloured people have articulated their identities since apartheid's demise. I explore what people hope to achieve or acknowledge by highlighting specific histories, and I ask what moments from history coloured people select as they attempt to find a place and develop their narratives in a transforming country. I begin by briefly exploring the various tendencies in and assumptions behind their collective action from their early transformation through the present. I then examine the December First Movement, which sought to mobilize coloureds through identification with a slave past; Khoisan revivalism, which tries to reinvent a Khoisan indigenous ethnicity; and bruin-ou.com and the organizing generated around the website, which attempts to assert conceptions of colouredness. Ultimately, I argue that these group expressions of identity are a form of public debate through which, in the words of Charles Ash, the founder of bruin-ou.com, "coloured people are attempting to have a conversation with themselves" and carve out their own space by developing their own narrative in post-apartheid South Africa.

Tendencies within Organized Expressions of Coloured Identity[48]

An examination of coloured people's collective action from as early as the late nineteenth century up to the collective formations that appeared after apartheid's demise reveals that the group's organizing has often been marked by three tendencies: assimilationism, nationalism, and ambivalence.[49] These tendencies are not mutually exclusive. They sometimes overlap, and individuals or groups that exhibit one tendency may later incorporate another.

In Chapter Two, I showed that coloured people developed collective formations from as early as the late nineteenth century, when a non-white colonial population began to develop a group consciousness based on a shared socioeconomic status, which derived from the way they were incorporated into Cape colonial society. From the late nineteenth century, coloured organizing's political strategy was primarily assimilationist—for all their criticism of the system, the leaders did not want to change it; rather, they wanted the state to accept coloured people and grant them full citizenship. During the mineral revolution in the 1870s, as I addressed earlier, non-whites in the colony began to assert a separate identity as coloureds in order to distinguish themselves from Africans, who were being increasingly incorporated into the capitalist economy. By the first decade of the twentieth century, coloureds started to clearly distinguish themselves from Africans and assert their own identity in reaction to increasing discriminatory laws. Ultimately, the

[48] In this section I utilize Mullings and Marable's (2000) analytic framework of the various tendencies in the history of African American organizing.
[49] The notion of ambivalence has a long history in the social sciences beginning with Marx and Durkheim, who pioneered the concept of ambivalence. The work of Robert Merton was particularly influential in the study of ambivalence and was followed by the work of several other scholars, including Gary Thom (1984) and Andrew Weigert (1991).

implementation of a policy of segregation entrenched the coloured category as the laws clearly emphasized coloured people as a distinct group. This group—most notably through the APO, which was led by Dr. Abdurahman—attempted to harden group boundaries in reaction to the continual loss of its civil rights. Until the APO became inactive in the mid-1940s, the organization was the coloured community's primary vehicle for promoting its assimilationist aspirations and communicating its fears of rising segregation (Adhikari 2005, 4). Stressing that what mattered was not color but culture and civilization, the APO fought for the acknowledgment of coloured people's worth and for their inclusion in mainstream society. For the coloured community, especially the petty bourgeois elite, gaining this acceptance was paramount throughout the twentieth century. The community's political leadership had no desire to overthrow the system; and except for wanting to eliminate the institutionalized racial discrimination affecting coloureds, they did not want to fundamentally change South African society. Since they were unable to assimilate into the broader white South African society their new goal became retaining their relative position of privilege. Coloured assimilationism, together with the insecurities engendered by their intermediate status, meant that the most consistent, and insistent, element in their identity was an association with whiteness and a firm disassociation from Africanness. In short, their desire to protect their status drove them to assert a distinct identity.

During the 1930s intensifying segregation precipitated nationalist organizing among those later classified as coloured, and the failure of the APO's approach helped spark a radical movement, inspired by Marxist ideology, among urban coloured intellectuals. By nationalist organizing, I mean the struggle for national liberation, for a

complete change in the system and an end to racial segregation. The National Liberation League (NLL), founded in 1935 by Cissy Gool, the daughter of Dr. Abdurahman, and the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM), founded in 1943, emphasized unity among non-whites and rejected cooperation with white rule. The NUEM had a reputation for fierce non-racialism and attempts to forge black unity, yet the organization still recognized coloured identity as a distinct and separate category. As noted by Adhikari (2005), in a highly influential address, Ben Kies, a founding member called for a united front of black political organization, explained that:

> When we speak of a united front of ALL non-Europeans we do not mean lumping all non-Europeans holus bolus together…only those who are ignorant of both politics and history can believe in this nonsensical type of unity… We simply mean this: they are all ground down by the same oppression; they have all the same political aspirations, but yet they remain divided in their oppression. They should discard the divisions and prejudices and illusions which have been created and fostered by their rulers…When they have thrown off the chains, then they can settle whatever national or racial differences they have or they think they have (quoted in Adhikari 2005,102).

After the Nationalist Party came to power in 1948 with its system of apartheid, which continued the segregationist policies more systematically and proactively, as mentioned above, one response was collective action and organizing, which attempted to retain the few rights coloured people had so they would not endure the harsh legal measures imposed on Africans. This process reinforced a separate coloured identity, especially as people were racially classified and segregated. However, segments of the coloured community continued to reject coloured identity, instead seeking black unity in the struggle against apartheid. These were the people who formed the basis of the nationalist tradition, which was usually limited to a small group of educated, politicized

coloureds. Among them were Dr. Neville Alexander and Denis Brutus. Born in the Eastern Cape Province, historically classified as coloured, Dr. Alexander is a well-known intellectual of the country's socialist left. His father was a carpenter; his mother, a primary school teacher. He did his undergraduate work at the University of Cape Town and earned a doctorate degree in 1961 from the University of Tübingen in Germany (SA History Online last accessed 12/9/10). Three years later he was imprisoned at Robben Island for ten years. In contemporary South Africa, Alexander continues to argue that coloured identity is a white-imposed, racist and reactionary relic of apartheid best left behind rather than used as the basis for ethnic nationalism (Alexander 1996; Erasmus and Pieterse 1999). Denis Brutus, officially classified as coloured, was an activist and poet who, like Alexander, was banned, arrested, and jailed. Brutus was educated in South Africa at Fort Hare, a university for coloureds and blacks; but he learned politics in the Trotskyist movement in the Eastern Cape. He joined the Anti-Coloured Affairs Department Organisation (Anti-CAD), a Trotskyist group which organized against the Coloured Affairs Department, a government agency that attempted to institutionalize divisions between blacks and coloureds. By 1962 he was expelled from his position as a university lecturer, his work was banned, and he was forbidden to teach, write, or publish in his home country. Eventually, he was arrested for breaking the terms of his "banning" and was in 1963 sent to Robben Island. After his release he spent many years in exile in the United States and, once apartheid's dismantlement was certain, returned to South Africa to contribute to the nation-building process. Like Alexander, Brutus rejected coloured identity and maintained a non-racial position. This generation of activists was informed by the non-racial strategy of the ANC during the 1950s and 1960s and

continues to argue against racial particularism, although, according to Adhikari (2005), only a tiny minority of coloured people chose black unity over coloured exclusivity.

From the mid 1970s, as discussed throughout this dissertation, the movement intensified, and an entire generation of young people became politicized. Activists like Trevor Manuel, Christopher Van Wyk, Ashley Kriel, Ashley Forbes, and many others were influenced by the Black Consciousness Movement, which emphasized black unity and rejected apartheid's racial labeling. During this period coloured people were referred to as "so-called coloured." Ashley Kriel was a 20-year-old activist from Bonteheuwel, a coloured township in Cape Town. Kriel was involved in the Bonteheuwel Youth Movement, the Cape Youth Congress, and BISCO–the Bonteheuwel Interim Students Congress. Eventually, Kriel became one of the leaders of the United Democratic Front in Cape Town. In 1985 he left the country to join the African National Congress and its military wing, umKhonto we Sizwe. Kriel was killed by police in 1987, but he, Ashley Forbes, and other members of the Cape Town Sixteen[50] represent a generation of coloured youth who were willing to shed the exclusivity of the coloured community and join with Africans in the fight against apartheid (Adhikari 2005, 156). South African activist, novelist, and poet Christopher Van Wyk, raised in Riverlea, a primarily coloured area in Johannesburg, was part of the literary outburst that followed the 1976 Soweto uprising, which marked a height of the Black Consciousness era (Mzamane 1988). In 1979 Van Wyk published a volume of poetry, *It Is Time to Go Home,* inspired by black consciousness. His poem "It is Sleepy in the 'Coloured' Townships" criticizes the

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[50] The Cape Town Sixteen was a group of young people arrested and sentenced for a number of crimes, including planning attacks, storing explosives and furthering the aims of the ANC. Their trial was one of the most historic trials for anti-apartheid activists in the Western Cape.

indifference of the coloured communities, Riverlea, Noordgesig, El-dorado Park, Bosmont, and Newclare in Johannesburg, an indifference he saw reflected in their failure to rally to the support of Africans during the Soweto upheavals despite their proximity to Soweto (Mzamane 1988, 5). Christopher Van Wyk and I became friends, and we often visited each other and spoke while I was conducting fieldwork in Johannesburg. He repeatedly told me he does not understand why young people want to assert coloured identity. One day I asked Van Wyk about his recent novel and play, *Shirley, Goodness and Mercy*, which many had called a coloured story. He corrected me, explaining that his book was semi-autobiographical and told the story of everyday life during apartheid. Although he acknowledged that Riverlea was a coloured area, he said, “It’s a story about life, and all types of people have told me they relate to some part of it, that they felt like I was telling their story, too.” Like Van Wyk, Trevor Manuel identifies as black or South African and maintains a non-racial position. Primarily known for his position as Minister of Finance in the post-apartheid national government, Manuel gravitated towards Steve Biko’s black consciousness movement in the 1970s because, in his words, “politics came to him,” whether he liked it or not, when he witnessed people being divided and moved because of color (Perry 2009). Manuel became active in several local organizations before becoming a founding member of the UDF. The apartheid government detained him three times. Later, Manuel became influential in the ANC and participated in the CODESA talks that negotiated the transition to democracy. Overall, these activists were informed by the ANC’s non-racial strategy and a nationalist strategy whose ultimate goal was to change, rather than work within, the system. Chris and Audrey from Chapter Four participated in the resistance movement, and both maintain a non-racial perspective. This

is why Chris made sure to tell me he does not refer to himself as “a coloured” and Audrey continues to identify as black.

Although assimilationism and nationalism are the most conspicuous types of collective organizing, most coloureds were “fence sitters,” people who chose not to act, who practiced the politics of ambivalence. “Ambivalence” is used here in two different, but related and complementary meanings: contradiction and uncertainty. According to Adhikari (2005, 12), it should come as no surprise that some coloureds, especially within the petit bourgeoisie, were ambivalent about their identity: although the racial discrimination they endured revealed non-racism to them as an option, their position in the middle social stratum, where their few rights and privileges could at any time be stripped away, forced them to organize on a racial basis. Related to this is what Simons (1976) referred to as “colouredism.” According to her, colouredism is as a cultural consciousness of the unskilled and those leaders and followers who accept separate institutions and separate development as a means to improve the position of coloured people (Simons 1976). She states that this group despised the portrayal of coloureds as drunkards and spendthrifts who must uplift themselves before they can win white approval. She further claims that they justify white superiority and request handouts from whites but do not challenge racism. Finally, she argues that years of dependency have created a fear of competing in open society, a fear of confrontation, which expresses itself in a desire to separate from other groups (Simons 1976). Ultimately, this position does not stem from an organic racism as has often been described but rather from people attempting to look out for their communities’ best interests. In Chapter Four colouredism or ambivalence is evident in the position of many of my participants, who claim, *Race*

doesn't matter. I'm not anti-white or black. I'm just pro-coloured, or who claim, *I'm experiencing reverse apartheid.* My interviews with Bronwyn, Wayne, Auntie Ruby, the seamstress, Charles Ash, and many others clearly shows that they assert colouredness because they want to see the lives of their neediest community members improve. They themselves recognize that many Africans live in far worse conditions, but they also know that the lives of most coloured people have changed little since the end of apartheid. Bronwyn, Ash, and my college-age informants want to see coloured people move past being stereotypes, a desire that drives them to assert colouredness instead of forming class-based alliances with other groups.

As I have shown above, the adoption of different names or positions at different historical junctures shows not only that colouredness remains a contested category but how coloured identity has been modified based on shifting motivations. Virtually all coloured organizations, whether cultural, professional or political, were formed in response either to coloured people's exclusion from corresponding white bodies or to one or other segregationist development. Coloured exclusivity was, in this sense, fundamentally reactive in nature, being shaped by the need to contend with white racism and the state's segregationist policies (Adhikari 2005). As indicated earlier, the basic stimulus behind this response was to protect coloureds' position of privilege relative to Africans and to keep hopes of future acceptance into the dominant society alive. Yet radical tendencies among the educated and the youth always existed.

Developing a Collective Coloured Narrative

While some have questioned the motives behind coloured activists and organizers' attempt to understand and assert their identities when ethno-racial identities should have waned, while some have accused coloureds of essentialist ethno-racial nationalism, what is important about this moment is that the group is attempting to find its social space in the new democracy. What narratives is it creating and how is it using history to create narratives? In the following sections, I examine its collective attempts to understand and assert its identities as well as the wide variety of forms these assertions have taken.

One of the earliest narratives upon which coloured identity was symbolically claimed and contested was the construction of District Six, as almost the homeland of coloured people where residents shared a sense of community, cooperation, and belonging that helped them endure socioeconomic hardship (Angelini 2003). After the end of apartheid, after the forced removals, District Six came also to symbolize the pain, suffering, and trauma coloured people experienced at the hands of white oppressors. District Six was an inner-city residential area in Cape Town that was declared a white Group Area in 1966 under the Group Areas Act; this declaration precipitated the evictions of some 60,000 residents, evictions that continued until 1982.[51] According to Bezzoli, Marks, and Kruger, approximately 94 percent of the residents forced out of their homes and into segregated Cape Flats townships were coloured. By 1982, the only structures spared from demolition were churches and mosques, which remain in use today. Since the forced removals, District Six has figured largely in coloured people's imagination and is one of the principal Cape Town sites on which coloured identity is

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[51] Some researchers and residents list the number of people at one hundred fifty thousand, claiming that several generations of extended families often lived in one residence.

based. However, before the end of apartheid, narratives about District Six emerged. Among the many literary accounts are Richard Rive's *'Buckingham 'Palace', District Six*, a novel that recounts life in the community before and during the removals, and David Kramer and Taliep Petersen's *District Six–The Musical,* a love story set against the backdrop of the evictions. In many ways, the combination of colouredness and place that occurs in the conception of District Six serves as a constant reminder that coloured people also suffered greatly during apartheid, in this case through the loss of a coloured space. According to Western (1981), the symbolism of District Six has given coloured people "a place of origin," or home; and Zoe Wicomb (1998) states that the neighborhood has been reimagined as an ethnic homeland for coloureds in the Western Cape. Ultimately, District Six serves as a unifying narrative for coloureds in Cape Town. Since apartheid's demise, the District Six Museum— through photographs, historical documents, artwork, personal accounts, and recovered objects— has memorialized this history of forced removals and the community that was lost. It is worth noting that many residents who were forced out are currently claiming land rights under the Land Restitution Act.

According to Jackson (1999), Farred (2000), Adhikari (2005), and others early in the new democracy, some collective assertions of colouredness were based on the fear of losing the relative privileges they had gained during apartheid. Jackson elaborates: their fear was that their own access to education, electricity, and housing would be threatened if more resources were shared with the most underprivileged segments of the population. She claims that this fear, accompanied by the fact that many township residents still

aspired to assimilate, set the stage for rather volatile reactions to the ANCs current plan of economic redistribution.

One of the first collective formations to emerge after the formal end of racial segregation, the Coloured Liberation Movement for the Advancement of Brown People (also known as the Kleurling Weerstadbeweging fir de Vooruitgang van Bruinmense, or KWB) was driven by this fear. The KWB, founded in February 1995, was spearheaded by Mervyn Ross, a thirty-seven-year-old former Umkhotnto we Sizwe recruit and University of the Western Cape student activist who grew up in one of Cape Town's coloured townships. The KWB resembled the Afrikaner Weerstadsbeweging (Afrikaner Resistance Movement, or AWB), a far-right secessionist political organization that was committed to the creation of an independent Boer-Afrikaner republic or "Volkstaat/Boerestaat." The KWB was built on a political rhetoric of ethnic particularism; claims to lands in the Northern and Western Cape and to 12 islands off the Atlantic Coast, including Robben Island; a demand that the government preserve the culture and languages of the Khoi, San, and Griqua; and the assertion of a distinct identity for brown people. The KWB was ultimately dismissed as a small group of insignificant extremists. Some have called it an embarrassment.

In the remainder of this chapter, I examine the collective formations that have emerged in order to assert coloured identity. I specifically use the term "collective formations" because these group actions cannot yet be described as social movements. Often these are groups of people grappling with and working through what it means to be coloured now that apartheid has ended. In the case of December First, the goal was to understand the election results and find a way to bring coloured people in the Western

Cape into the nation-building process. Those involved in Khoisan revivalism want to recapture aspects of a lost history and make claims for land or other financial resources. Finally, the people who utilize bruin-ou.com and those involved in the events and organizing facilitated through the website represent the views of those who have come of age in post-apartheid South Africa. Through the discussion that follows, I show how these groups adopt particular positions (slave or indigenous identity) that are modified based on shifting allegiances. In this way, Ethnic or cultural entrepreneurs are reconfiguring various aspects of South African history. By identifying with an indigenous or African identity, groups structure new kinds of relationships in an attempt to increase their access to resources and to gain political recognition from the government. Ethnic identities are predominant among the country's coloured population because historically these identities have provided access to goods and services that were doled out according to race. Various coloured groups' reclamation of history resembles other formerly colonized groups' attempts to do the same.[52]

The December First Movement

The December First Movement was an early attempt to renegotiate coloured identity after apartheid's dismantlement. Shocked by the 1994 election results, several former liberation-movement activists and academics launched the December First Movement in late 1996. The organization's founders wanted to start a dialogue to understand why the coloured population voted for the Nationalist Party, but they also wanted to bring the concerns and issues of the coloured community onto the national stage and perhaps even argue against those who saw South Africa's coloured population

[52] I will further discuss this topic later in the chapter.

as "backward and voting against progress" (Farred 2000). In an interview conducted by Michele Ruiters, who has written about coloured identity, David Abrahams, one of the organizers, said that they "wished to demythologize colouredness and to take it out of the realm of reactionary ethnic group identity" (Ruiters 2009, 119). In 2006, when I interviewed Father Michael Weeder, a former liberation activist and one of the founders of the Movement, he stated, "We formed December First because we who were so involved in the anti-apartheid movement were also shocked by the election results. Coloureds' overwhelming commitment to the National Party woke us out of a great illusion about our people's consciousness. Were they really being racist? What could they be responding to by voting the way they did?" According to Father Michael, after the vote many leaders from the UDF[53] days met regularly to dissect that question and to discuss other issues relating to the coloured community. According to Father Michael, during one of these meetings they concluded that "coloured people are alienated and need to be brought back in, they need to be reincorporated into society and politics." Father Michael said they discussed how this could be accomplished and came to the realization that maybe they had to go back and extract from their history before they could move forward. Those involved in the Movement, Father Michael noted, recognized that "what was needed was a point of departure, for rebuilding our community, our people so that the masses could be aligned or realigned with liberation." He explained that this led him to think, "Let's look at pre-apartheid because maybe we gave apartheid too much power. The nature of slavery is to disarm the slave, to take away everything that allows him to

[53] United Democratic Front. Addressed in Chapter Two, this was a group of coloured anti-apartheid activists in the Western Cape.

say 'Ndimlo.'[54] This is how we coloureds are African. It's in slavery. Slaves were African, you know. Slaves were from Mozambique, Madagascar, and other places. They were also Asian."

The Movement, which took its name from December 1, 1834, the day slaves in the Cape Colony were emancipated, was primarily an intellectual effort focused on getting coloured people to participate more fully in the new South Africa. However, upon closer examination, it becomes apparent that the identification with a "slave past" was used to engage the coloured masses in non-racial politics. This view was echoed by organizers Trever Oosterwyk and David Abrahams in a letter to the editor of the *Cape Times*, where they wrote, "We need to extract from our history a pivotal event that both locates us as a people while providing a symbol that is particular to the coloured experience and its emergence as a specifically South African community." Father Michael adds, "We aimed to inform people about their past in order to foster feelings of belonging to the new democracy." Moreover, in an article the founders state, "The Movement is concerned about the extent to which coloured people have been marginalized in the transformation process." One official December First document states:

> Essentially, we need to respond to a deeply spiritual need to heal ourselves of the trauma besieging our community. This coming home to Africa requires bold and honest acts of political courage that are neither captive to partisan politics nor naïve about the task at hand. The formation of the December 1st Movement would be such an act that would have as its founding charter an incorporation of the descendants of the ex-slaves into the process of the African renaissance. Our communities salvation lies in the moving from our scattered points of angst and trauma and political "gatvolheid" (dissatisfaction) to our eventual coming to terms with the fact that we are an African people who have emerged at this special point in our nations history along a path uniquely ours:

[54] This is who I am.

> the experience of slavery not known to the rest of our nation. The essence of our identity was shaped within this crucible of history's suffering. (n.d.).[55]

This was a very early attempt at reclaiming a history that until then was viewed negatively. This document reveals various problems that the December First organizers saw themselves as undertaking. Their use of this history and The Movement in general served multiple purposes. First, the very name draws on a very particular aspect of the history—slavery—of South Africa's coloured population. It was aimed at the masses of (primarily working class) coloured people in the Western Cape, who voted for the National Party. This is evident when they referred specifically to the Western Cape's political situation: "This coming home to Africa requires bold and honest acts of political courage that are neither captive to partisan politics." Here the organizers stressed to coloured people in the Western Cape that they were faced with a new political environment. They also emphasized that coloureds could not simply trust the then New National Party rhetoric, which played on coloured fears, but had to recognize that the ANC controlled the country and the organization could not and should not be dismissed; therefore, it was in their best interest to work with those in control. The final segment of the sentence—"nor naïve about the task at hand"—exhorted the people of the Western Cape to consider "the task at hand," which is to find a way to build a democratic government not based on racial politics. The organizers also urged the coloured masses to "come to terms with the fact that they are an African People." By naming the organization after the date of emancipation, the organizers attempted to carve out a uniquely coloured space while simultaneously asserting that coloureds also endured

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[55] The document in which this statement appears was part of a collection of documents and articles deposited at the African Studies Library at the University of Cape Town. Some of the documents did not list the origin, source or date.

trauma and oppression. This acknowledgement of trauma, angst, and suffering distances the coloured community from privileges it may have enjoyed during apartheid.

The organizers' decision to use the experience of slavery was also an attempt to carve out and claim a distinctly African identity for coloured people. It was an attempt to remind them that they are in fact African, particularly because, as discussed in the Introduction, in the country it has become common to use the general term "African" to refer to black South Africans, thereby restricting coloureds from claiming Africanness in their own country. The December First organizers also attempted to maintain coloured people's distinctiveness by proclaiming that the experience of slavery was unique to coloureds and *not known to the rest of the nation*. During our interview Father Michael touched upon this issue when he stated:

> We saw ourselves as Africans first and in some ways we were contesting the narrow concept of African because we coloureds have our history here on this continent and we are Africans and South Africans. This is an important post-liberation question, *which way am I African*, because pre-liberation we only had a political identity and that was blackness, but blackness is limiting. Being African is more comprehensive; it's about the essence of who you are.

The December First Movement was one of the earliest attempts to highlight the issues affecting coloureds in the Western Cape post-apartheid. Coloured activists and academics saw a need to question the 1994 election results, but many were also trying to bring the issues of their constituencies to the surface. An article in the *Cape Argus* stated that, "The Movement was led by a group of ANC leadership figures who were unhappy about the way their own organization is dealing with the majority population in this province (10/18/1996)." Many coloured leaders felt their communities would gain self-esteem and self-confidence and ultimately become engaged in the democratic process. In

their assessment of the political situation in the Western Cape, the founders of the December First Movement felt the ANC failed to take into consideration the specific issues present in the Western Cape. The ANC believed non-racial policies would smooth out differences in the province. This did not happen. Disadvantaged communities, battling for limited resources, fought to gain recognition and assistance from the provincial and national governments. Organizers blamed the ANC's failure to take into account a major factor: in the Western Cape a national minority group was a regional majority. According to Father Michael:

> "Here in Cape Town coloureds were members of the UDF. The worst thing the ANC did was to get rid of the UDF because the ANC was foreign to coloureds in the Western Cape. To most people they were foreign and the people were alienated because of language and even culture. What was good about the UDF is that they were able to mobilize and organize people around basic issues. That was the way to keep the coloured people active and to help them see that democracy and transition was for all people, not just Africans. The UDF had a constituent base, and if the ANC had worked with the UDF, they could have won the province (Father Michael, pers. comm.)."

The Movement's three broad objectives also served to remind coloured people that they must play a role in transforming and developing a new democratic South Africa. Perhaps, the objectives also reminded the provincial government in the Western Cape that the coloured community could, because of their numbers in the Western Cape, exercise political power through their vote. In an untitled document deposited in a packet to the library at the University of Cape Town, the aims of December First were listed as:

1. The need for political lobbying and advocacy aimed at the ending of the political and social marginalization of coloured people.
2. The encouragement of an intellectual and political culture based on an understanding of a non-essentialist politics of difference and diversity towards building the nation.
3. Organizing the broadest layers of coloured people in social action aimed at restoring their rightful place in their own upliftment and participating in the broader social, economic and political transformation of this country.

The ANC did not support the continued existence of the December First Movement; and within months of its launch, the ANC and the media critiqued it for appearing to stress differences between voters in the Western Cape, thereby playing into racial politics. The Movement was condemned "for evoking a separatist ethnic identity which divided our brothers and comrades of the recent past," and its supporters were stigmatized as reactionaries, racists, and gravy train wannabees (Wordern 2009, 27).[56] However, the Movement did not wish to perpetuate racial differences. Father Michael stated, "The reaction to us was overwhelming and we hadn't even really gotten off the ground. It became very difficult to contain what we were doing, and that's why we didn't want to launch. We did not see ourselves based on or against African domination. We did not see December First as a permanent condition. In some ways, I think the idea was before its time. We weren't moving toward being a political movement. We were in line with the ANC, and it was never going to be something else."

The December First Movement received a great deal of media coverage, with over 13 articles published in newspapers across the country. However, as Father Michael stated, the movement's organizers aimed to understand the coloured vote, deal with the aftermath of the coloured vote, and try to draw coloured people into the new South Africa

[56] Letter from Geoffrey Mamputa to *Cape Times,* October 23, 1996, and "The Children of Slaves Gather Together," *Weekly Mail and Guardian,* October 18, 1996.

by starting a dialogue, one that would result in an understanding of the concerns of working-class coloured people in the Western Cape. Although the December First Movement was active for only a few months, in 1996, and was not necessarily effective in gaining support from most coloured people, it was effective in that it brought coloured people's identity and position onto the national stage, something it achieved through discussing and remaking coloured identity. One result was that the government began to make a point of acknowledging the legacy of slavery. The history of slavery, along with the history of indigenous and liberation struggle, was incorporated into the heritage of all South Africans (Worden 2009). In 1998 the Cultural History Museum in Cape Town was renamed the Slave Lodge in honor of the races that lived in bondage for 179 years (Worden 2009).

Khoisan Revivalism

The end of apartheid led to a significant change in the way coloured people articulated their identities. In the previous chapter I examined the ways they develop a narrative colouredness in relation to socioeconomic and political changes or, for many, the lack of significant changes. Thus far in this chapter, I have explored some of the ways coloureds have reformulated history in their attempt to articulate collective notions of colouredness. After the 1994 democratic transition a small but growing number of coloureds unattached to longstanding "indigenous" communities[57] started to promote Khoisan and indigenous identities. Khoisan revivalism exemplifies how a once denigrated history has been

[57] Such as the Griqua, who always identified as indigenous.

reinterpreted post-apartheid, and the story of neo-Khoisan identity is deeply intertwined with the politics of identity and the realignment of forces now at play. The term "Khoisan" is a neologism, coined in the twentieth century and used to describe two related groups: the pastoral Khoi and the hunting and gathering San (Lee 2003). In South Africa, it was generally accepted that indigenous Khoi and San people were exterminated. However, South African historian Nigel Penn (1999) and Swiss-Hungarian anthropologist Miklos Szalay (1995) argue that this was not strictly the case as it has been "documented that many coloured people today must have had Bushman ancestors" (Lee 2003, 83).

This new and steadily increasing articulation of indigenous identities reflected for many the need to "raise awareness of our heritage," as Cecil le Fleur, Chairperson of the Khoisan Consultive Council, stated at a 2001 conference. According to Besteman (2009) more than 400 people representing at least 30 Khoisan organizations from across the country attended. He also asserted:

> We need to re-introduce the pride of who we are. We want to penetrate the coloured community. There's so much gangsterism because people want to belong. They want to fit in and to be part of something. They call themselves coloured but they don't know where they originate. We need to unite our people, we need to show them where they belong (Garman 2001).

According to Mountain (2003), Khoisan revivalists believe that despite political equality, coloured people have inherited a legacy of economic and political disadvantage that is the result of being descended from dispossessed San hunter-gathers, Khoikhoi herders, slaves, and the progeny of interracial unions in a country that privileged whiteness. Revivalists also claim that it will take much wisdom and time to redress the alienation coloured people have experienced in the wake of colonialism and racism, that

before sustained growth, change, and reconciliation can be achieved, the qualities that colonialism took away—dignity, self-worth and personal empowerment—must be restored.

Khoisan revivalism was facilitated by the changed political and constitutional environment and coincided with a number of international developments regarding indigenous peoples or First Nations. The affirmation of a Khoisan heritage was silenced during apartheid, with only a relatively small number of people acknowledging or affirming their indigenous identities. For example, individuals from the Griqua, Nama, and Southern Kalahari San communities refused to identify as coloured and were recognized under colonial and apartheid governments as indigenous communities. Issues around Khoisan identity or indigenous communities did not figure into the pre-1994 political landscape because, as discussed in Chapter Two, these identities were denigrated throughout the colonial and apartheid periods, with South African "Bushman or Hottentots" positioned on the bottom rung of humanity (Lee 2003). In the book, *The Bushman Myth*, Robert Gordon (1992) noted that previous representations of Khoisan people were saturated with colonialist discourse. By the time the Dutch established their more permanent settlement at the Cape, the Cape of Good Hope and its indigenous Bushmen and Hottentots were characterized as the most barbarous, heathenish people, who were not given to any goodness (Marks 1981). They were often referred to as bestial, the very opposite of humankind (Marks 1981). Eventually, settlers came to think of them as a dull, stupid, and lazy nation prone to thievery and not to be trusted (Marks 1981). The Khoisan, Marks notes, did not fare much better with historians, who described them as having put up little resistance to the white man; having willingly

bartered away their cattle for beads, brandy, tobacco, and dagga (marijuana); and having, in short, been an overall embarrassment (Marks 1981). These views, Marks asserts, serve to seriously telescope the events of nearly two hundred years of cultural contact and seriously distort understanding of Khoisan society and cultural change. It was understood that most Khoisan descendents were officially incorporated into the coloured category and, to a much lesser extent, "native" categories.

The end of apartheid, together with anxiety about the future, created space for some sectors of the coloured population (primarily in the Western Cape) to reevaluate their heritage and to (re)affirm an indigenous ancestral heritage, which could be potentially empowering.[58] After apartheid fell, so did the stigma attached to being indigenous, something that spurred reclamation of this identity. Connecting with an indigenous South African heritage led to a rethinking of what it means to be indigenous and African in the post-apartheid era. As was the case with engagement in the December First Movement, when coloured people embrace a Khoisan identity, they claim an identity indigenous to South Africa and Africa in general and can articulate "true" Africanness. For many, an important aspect of Khoisan revivalism is feeling that one now belongs to an ancient group that was living on the continent long before European colonialists landed at the Cape, a group that therefore has a right to equal citizenship in South Africa. Being indigenous also enables one to negate the insult applied to being coloured, which in some senses insinuates a lack of cultural roots and identity.

As Khoisan identities resurged in the 1990s, several international developments stimulated growing Khoisan organizations (Besteman 2009). For example, greater global attention was focused on indigenous people when the United Nations (UN) declared 1993

[58] There are a small number of white South Africans who are also claiming Khoisan identity.

as the year of indigenous people and 1994-2004 as the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People (Besteman 2009). The perception that the government was unaware of or insensitive to the needs and concerns of the Khoisan motivated them to reposition themselves as "aboriginal" and "indigenous," as "a First Nation," and to utilize international instruments for First Nations. Therefore, national and international developments merged with and contributed to the realignment of elements associated with colouredness.

Additionally, coloured concerns generated by the democratic political transition, together with the historical association of coloureds with the Khoisan, provided some receptivity to Khoisan identity entrepreneurs. By reevaluating the historical association of coloureds with partial Khoisan ancestry, those asserting Khoisan identity developed interpretations of colouredness emphasizing indigenous heritage and de-emphasizing (at least in public) a mixed heritage, particularly the notion that coloureds were the products of sexual liaisons between whites and indigenous peoples. It was now emphasized that the majority of coloureds were descendants of the Khoisan, with slave heritage occasionally acknowledged in public (*Cape Argus,* September 20, 1996, 7). According to one self-appointed chief,[59] "the aim of this movement is to foster unity among historically coloured people and to give the pride in their indigenous origin and to restore coloured peoples (sic) heritage to its former pre-1652 glory" (*Mail & Guardian,* July 25, 1997, 12)." Additionally, Khoisan activists such as Chief Joseph Little, Chief Jean Burgess, Chief Harleen Sassman, Hendrik van Wyk, Ron Martin, and Chief Joseph Marks mostly argue that their movement aims to engage people in self-determination and recognition of

[59] There is a great deal of controversy within the Khoisan revival movement around who is a chief. Many are said to have been self-appointed, but some are more vocal and visible than others and have managed to appear authentic.

their historical identity, whose origins predate the arrival of the Dutch (Ruiters 2009, 121). Further, while I was at a community organization in Athlone, a Cape Town suburb, Calvin Cornelius came in to say hello. When a group of children entered the room, he told them, "I am your chief. I am descended from a great Khoisan chief, and you all here are also Khoisan. You must go home and ask your parents your history." When I was introduced as Professor Janette, who was in South Africa to study coloured people, he said, "Good. You must help tell people that coloureds come from a long line of chiefs, and they must be proud."

After the democratic transition, Khoisan identity was projected publicly at a number of conferences and public events, which were a means to assert a Khoisan presence and make demands as indigenous or First Nations. Moreover, they perhaps gave leaders or chiefs a chance to introduce themselves to the broader coloured and non-coloured public. In April 1996 an exhibition titled *Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture* opened and ran for five months in the South African National Gallery in Cape Town. Khoisan (coloured) revivalists used the exhibition to assert their presence in this early stage of the post-apartheid period. A group of ≠Khomani received a great deal of attention in the press because they attended the opening in "ultra traditional" skin dress (Saugestad 1996). Khoisan activists associated with various groups also used the exhibition to assert their presence, commenting on and critiquing the show (Saugestad 1996). The day after the opening, over 700 people attended a public forum, where discussion topics included organizational building and economic and community development, with one of the primary concerns being land restitution and the right to self-determination (Skotnes 2002). Martin Engelbrect of the Khoisan

Representative Council sensed that the exhibit would play an important role in the awakening of Khoisan identity politics. He asserted, "We may be endangered, but we're not yet extinct. Sunday gave us a platform to raise our concerns and remind South Africa that Khoisan people are still alive today…. This is the beginning of the Khoisan wake-up call" (Besteman 2009).

In July 1997 the Conference on Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage convened in Cape Town. According to Lee (2006), it was the first time that this conference of linguists, archeologists, and anthropologists met in Africa, and the events that took place shifted the tenor and shape of the conference radically. Two days of events preceded the scientific segment of the meeting. During these two days Khoi and San from over 20 communities were present, and coloured people in Cape Town "came out in force" (Lee, 456). Two sheep were slaughtered at the South African Cultural History Museum; Khoisan, Nama, and Guiqua provided entertainment: choir singing, storytelling, and dancing. Richard Borshay Lee, who has conducted research on indigenous people in Namibia and South Africa since the late 1960s, commented on the opening ceremony organized by Joseph Little:[60]

> Nothing prepared me for the ceremony that unfolded in the atrium of the South African Museum. The founder of the Dutch colony at the Cape, Jan van Riebeeck, is a cultural icon of Afrikanerdom and to non-white people a symbol of their oppression. At the time of van Riebeeck's arrival at the Cape in 1652, there were 11 Khoi clans present and recorded in his journals. Over the course of the next two centuries of predatory colonialism all but two of these clans had been driven to extinction. Yet in a solemn service conducted almost entirely in Afrikaans, these 11 Khoi clans were reconstituted. One by one, members of the audience were called to the podium where they donned a highly eclectic mix of regalia and announced to the assembly who they were, what clan they were representing and what Khoi name they were adopting. The atmosphere was one of reverence and joy. Hobsbawm and Ranger would have had a field day (Lee 2006).

[60] Joseph Little identifies as a Khoisan Chief and has figured prominently in the Khoisan revival movement.

Miscast: Negotiating Khoisan History and Material Culture, at the South African National Gallery, 13 April 1996. (Photo: Jos Thorne)

Figure 16.

The Opening of the Miscast exhibition, the public forum, and the Conference on Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage cultivated a sense of solidarity amongst the Khoisan revivalists and allowed coloureds to publically assert Khoisan heritage. These events were not about celebrating coloured identity, but about “recapturing a lost history, casting off the persona of brown Europeans given them by apartheid and reclaiming their identity as indigenous Africans” (Bank 1998 quoted in Lee 2006). In presenting themselves as indigenous in the post-apartheid period, those who promoted Khoisan identities appropriated a term that was very closely associated with Africans in South Africa during apartheid (Besteman 2006). They argued that the Khoi and San were truly indigenous because they were the first to live in the region. Therefore, among Khoisan

claimants, *indigenous* became dissociated from being a black South African. Joseph Little of the Cape Cultural Heritage Development Council, who claims to be a Khoisan chief, has played an important role in Khoisan revivalism in the Western Cape (Besteman 2009, 145). At a heritage conference at the South African Cultural History Museum in Cape Town, he explained "our very first objective in the Cape Cultural Heritage Organization is to create a spirit of unity among all South Africans, especially those under the statutory title as coloured" (Besteman 2009, 146). Little also asserted, "Black people have no respect for us [coloureds] because we have no ancestral roots" (Besteman 2009, 146).

However, many coloured people do not feel the Khoisan movement represents them. I conducted group interviews with 12 college students from the University of Cape Town and with 12 from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Of the 24 interviewees, 10 clearly identified as Khoisan. The overwhelming sentiment among these students was that many more coloureds would identify as Khoisan if they really knew their history. Bernie, a 26-year-old theater student born and raised in Cape Town, stated that coloured history needed to be reclaimed for coloureds to know their heritage. Overall, people who identified with Khoisan revivalism were from the Western Cape whereas those from Johannesburg were less inclined to claim Khoisan ancestry. Some people refuse to embrace a perspective that calls for ignoring other aspects of their identities. In 2001 Calvin Cornelious acknowledged that many people do not identify as Khoisan when he stated, "Few coloured people realize that they are in fact descendants of this [Goringhaicona] clan" (*Cape Argus*, June 24, 2001). Greg, a university student from Durban, said, "Being Khoisan doesn't apply to us over here in KwaZulu Natal or even

Gauteng for that matter. There were no Khoisan in my family. I have a black great-granny and a white great-grandfather." Julie, a forty-year-old woman from Johannesburg, echoed this sentiment: "That Khoisan thing is a Western Cape thing, and I wish they would stop trying to tell us all coloureds that we are Khoisan" (Julie, pers. comm.).

John has lived in Cape Town all his life, is in his late 40s, and works for a community organization. In the past he was involved with a group that researched Khoisan history. "The first people in South Africa," he declared, "were the Khoikhoi and the San. They were the first and rightful people in this land, and just over 100 years ago the Xhosa-speaking people came, and now they are the ones in control of the land, and we the descendants of the first people get nothing." He warns, however, that some people claim to be Khoisan for the benefits. He looked at me and in a serious tone said, "There are people in the movement who are driving BMWs and have a lot of money, but most of us have nothing. Some people are in the movement because they want some of the money." John's position that some of the motivation behind Khoisan revivalism has been echoed by many people I interviewed. Many claim that post-apartheid Khoisan rearticulations are motivated by opportunists driven by material incentives. Allister, a 20-year-old student at the University of Cape Town, argues that these new chiefs "only want to be recognized as traditional leaders because the African leaders get salaries from the government, and they want them, too." Bernie, on the other hand, has a different stance: "Why shouldn't the Khoisan chiefs get salaries? Our chiefs should be recognized, too." In fact, the 1994 Restitution of Land Rights Act requires restitution of Khosian historic lands, but to date none of these demands have been met. The government has,

however, enacted legislation to protect and promote Khoisan languages and has included Khoisan heritage in national projects (Besteman 2005).

Khoisan revivalism also coincides with what Jean and John Comaroff (2009) refer to as Ethnicity Inc.—that is, the self-conscious fashioning of meaningful, morally anchored selfhood that is becoming more corporate, more commodified, and more implicated than ever before in the economics of everyday life. Comaroff and Comaroff contend that one aspect of contemporary ethnic distinction resides in recognition from others, which can be by merchandizing themselves and their cultural products (Comaroff, 2009, 10). Given that South Africa is a major tourist destination, marketing indigenous culture can be lucrative, and perhaps some Khoisan revivalists want the economic benefits that other communities have reaped. Khoisan revivalists have also spoken about empowering their communities. Comaroff and Comaroff state that in the post colony, empowerment connotes privileged access to markets, money, and material enrichment, and in the case of ethnic groups, it is frankly associated with finding something essentially their own that they can sell (Comaroff 2009, 15).

Like the December First Movement Khoisan revivalism primarily aims to resolve some of the tensions involved in coloured identity in contemporary South Africa. While proponents of the movement claim to want to restore the Khoisan to their rightful place in history and get the restitution their ancestors deserve, most coloured people are not pursuing these goals. Those I have met who acknowledge their Khoisan heritage do so not to make demands on the state but to try to understand their cultural heritage, which was denied them from the early years of the South African colony until the end of apartheid. Ultimately, assertions of Khoisaness and Khoisan revivalism in general

represent another way for coloured people to discuss colouredness as they try to situate themselves in the post-apartheid present.

Bruin-ou.com

Figure 17. Image from the bruin-ou.com website

Charles Ash created bruin-ou.com[61] in 2000 for those formerly classified as coloured. His aim was to address coloured identity in the new South Africa. Bruin-ou.com combines information and education with social networking. As a computer-mediated public sphere, the site provides information and education through online dialogue among community members. In 2005 the number of users peaked at approximately 7000. Core users range in age from 18 to 35 years old, and many are personal friends while others meet in person several times a month for social and community-organizing events.[62] They are young professionals, many residing in primarily middle-class areas in Johannesburg, Durban, and, to a lesser extent, Cape Town. Many regular users of the site, however, communicate solely online and never attend events and are therefore known only by their cyber personalities. Over the years

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[61] *Bruin-ou* is a colloquial/slang term used to refer to a South African coloured person (particularly a male).
[62] From 2003 to 2004 I attended several "informal" gatherings of users of the site in Johannesburg. Since then organizers of the site put together official Bruin-ou.com events, including parties and barbecues.

bruin-ou.com has undergone many changes. The completely redesigned site officially launched in 2005, a year that marks not only bruin-ou.com's technological maturity but also Ash's intellectual and political maturity. And yet the overall structure and content of the site has remained the same. Bruin-ou.com consists of a *News* section, where the administrator and others write articles about issues pertaining to coloured identity. There is an *Articles* section, in which local and international articles deemed relevant to South Africa's coloured population are posted. There is a section called *The Forum*, which has several subsections, including *Seriously Speaking* and *I'm Chooning*[63] *You.* There is also a chat room. *The Forum* is the heart of the site. It is the section where users can post and respond to messages at any time. The chat room and *The Forum* do not always work together as people in the chat room are often concerned with greeting and meeting one another while those who utilize the forum respond to messages and news reports. The newest version of the site has a blog as well as sports and entertainment sections.

As discussed in the Introduction, social-identity formation is a dynamic process; and in order to fully explore the construction of colouredness in contemporary society, it is important to consider the Internet and computer-mediated communication (CMC), which have become a significant aspect of the daily lives of a particular generation. Media, especially cyberspace, has transformed the ways communities build, maintain, and question social identities. Additionally, Garcia et al. (2009) suggest that ethnographers must alter their research techniques to accommodate social and technological changes. Accordingly, websites can offer a "liminal space where ambivalent and unstable points of personal, national and ethnic identification are

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[63] Afrikaans slang term meaning "to talk, speak or tell." In this section, people talk about virtually any topic.

negotiated" (Shi 2005, 6). In "Oppositional Politics and the Internet: a Critical Reconstructive Approach," Khan and Keller (2005) posit that online discourse can generate transformative possibilities but can also cement traditional identities and activate exclusionary formations. Furthermore, media forms like websites, discussion boards, and chat rooms constitute new public spheres where group identities can be asserted, disseminated, and rethought without the constraints of physical proximity (Cunningham 2001, 135). Campbell (2006), on the other hand, argues that online worlds are not separate from other aspects of human action and experience; and therefore what participants write conveys important information about their identity, presentation of self, and definition and perception of the world. Dominguez et al. (2007) note that there are numerous problems of representation when considering the Internet, problems that can be more pronounced when the virtual field surpasses the physical world. However, the potential for this problem was diminished since monitoring bruin-ou.com was only one aspect of my interaction with site users, since I also interviewed them and engaged in participant observation of their everyday lives.

Through bruin-ou.com, site organizers, and users have created an alternative public space for people often excluded from discussions about what it means to be coloured in post-1994 South Africa. The Internet therefore assists this particular generation in building community and engaging in dialogue that often occurs among academics, politicians, or former anti-apartheid activists in the academy, in symposia, and in roundtable discussions in other public venues. Bruin-ou.com makes users' voices as relevant as anyone else's in debates on coloured identity. Users posting messages to *The Forum* are concerned both with broader questions about colouredness and with

everyday concerns, including the state of their communities, where in some cases jobs are scarce and education is limited. Incidentally, their concerns resemble those expressed by people in Chapter Four. Bruin-ou.com has also "broadened" the coloured community, connecting coloured people from different cities (like Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban) and from different socioeconomic backgrounds (like middle-class suburbs and the Cape Flats). Moreover, the site provides opportunities to influence and be heard as Charles Ash and other organizers are sought out to speak publically on issues pertaining to colouredness. For example, several of the organizers have spoken on the *Noleen Show,* a popular talk show. Ash, for his part, has been interviewed by several newspapers and magazines and has appeared on television and radio shows.

Bruin-ou.com aims to give coloured people a platform to address the issues important to them. Site users, mostly post-apartheid generationers, see themselves as exploring coloured identity together and trying to erase negative images of coloured people. They have entered the debate on colouredness, working through categories inherited from apartheid while simultaneously debating the usefulness of the coloured category itself. Analysis of online discussions, participant observation, and interviews with current and past core users bear this out. Like those engaged in December First or Khoisan revivalism, bruin-ou.com users, as I stated before, are trying to shift or create new narratives on what it means to be coloured. As will be evident from my discussion below, online posts in *The Forum* resemble in many ways the dialogues other coloured groups are having. As I will later demonstrate, colouredness is a problematic and dynamic category that is not a given for site users. Although Ash has his own definition of colouredness, users often challenge his definition and that of others. This illustrates

that even among this new, global, technologically savvy generation, which has some distance from the forced, race-based categories of apartheid, colouredness and identification as coloured remain complex. When asked whether an Internet community can really effect change and drive a movement, Ash stated, “I see bruin-ou.com as an online community that reflects the aspirations of a real-world community. I’m not sure if it’s a social movement, but I do think of it as laying the foundation or groundwork for later and maybe greater social change.” Ash’s position is consistent with that of Parker and Song (2006), who argue that “Internet discussion forums can act as witnesses to social inequalities, and through the sharing of experiences of racism and marginalization, an oppositional and social perspective may develop.”

Charles Ash started the bruin-ou.com website at age 21. He spent his earliest years in KwaZulu Natal with his parents, who were then schoolteachers; his brother; and his two sisters. Later, he lived in Wentworth and Newlands East, former coloured areas in Durban, and attended high school in Swaziland after his father accepted a position there. After high school he went to a technical school and majored in computer technology. Now he works as an information technology professional and is married with two children. Ash stated that he is essentially the coloured stereotype: driven by an uncontrollable rage, he grew up with violent inclinations. His parents confirmed this, his father one day commenting, “I’m not sure why, but Charles was so angry. He would get so mad and [he] would fight anyone.” When I asked Ash to identify the source of his rage, he said he could not quite put his finger on it but knew it had something to do with feeling socially deficient as if his identity was not good enough. This point has emerged regularly in discussions of coloured identity. Ash said, “I always felt like I had no

culture." When he reached high school, he explained, and started learning and reading and thinking about the anti-apartheid struggles, he was so angry and frustrated with his parents. *Where were you?* He wondered. *What were you doing during those years? How could you just go on living your lives like nothing was happening in the country?* It was only later, he said, that he learned that his father and many coloured families did their part by supporting the families of men active in the struggle when these men were gone for months at a time or were jailed.

Ash conceived bruin-ou.com at a *braai*[64] while engaged in yet another heated discussion on "the avoided topic of coloured identity" (Bruin-ou 2009). His goal at the time was to "put bruin-ous on the map" and "put to rest the incessant dinner-table discussions of people bemoaning the fact that coloured people have nothing of their own" (Bruin-ou 2009), a sentiment that has echoed throughout this dissertation. Ash put his computer training to work, creating an online community "by coloureds and for coloureds, a website whereby the coloured community locally and internationally could go for news and information specific to our community." Bruin-ou.com has allowed those who have come of age after apartheid to address identity issues online despite the widespread feeling that race discussions are too political. During one of my first meetings with a group of 15 site users, some spoke of their excitement at finding a space where they could articulate their frustrations and concerns over the tensions now surrounding colouredness. Bronwyn, the friend I mentioned in Chapter Four, said, "I felt so good when I found the site. Just knowing that there were other people out there who

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[64] Barbecue.

were talking about these issues and in my *bushie*[65] language, that made me feel good." In a post on the site, Rjay[66] added, "I think the bruin-ou website is fantastic—hats off to the initiators and founders for doing something positive." Lee-Ann, a 36-year-old human resources associate who lives in Noordgesig, a former coloured-only, low-income area in Johannesburg, explained why she liked the site and said she looked forward to going to work so she could log on, chat, and post:

> In Noordgesig people only think about how to live. All you see is poverty but no one knows why. When I found bruin-ou and saw that other coloured people were thinking about these issues, I was so happy. You see, I'm not a political person. I don't talk politics because I'm not so smart, but I knew that there was something wrong with the way coloured people were living. How could we still be living like this when apartheid is over?

In an early version of the site launched in 2001, Ash defined coloured as a person of mixed-racial descent. He added:

> As an apartheid-defined, legitimate race group, we are not entitled to the same racial and ethnic pride that is so prevalent among other, South Africans who are members of a more established race group? Let me explain…Black South Africans can be proud to be Black "Black Consciousness Movement", kwaito, black empowerment etc,…Whites can be proud to be White…what the heck do you think apartheid was all about…it was about white supremacy!!!...Indians can be proud to be Indian…ever watched Eastern Mosaic or East Net?? Why then can't a coloured person be proud to be coloured!? Why should I be made to feel that it's wrong for me to be "coloured and proud!" Like most, I have a burning desire to proclaim my social identity…It is thus the aim of this website, not to promote racism, but to promote a sense of identity and belonging amongst an already categorized people (Bruin-ou 2003a)

In the FAQs section under the question "Are coloured people black?" Ash wrote:

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[65] A term used to refer to a coloured person. The term is used freely among coloured people, but in general it is derogatory because it refers to a coloured person as a "bushman."

[66] I will use the screen names of all users. However, it is common knowledge that CritiKill is the screen name of Charles Ash.

> This is a very contentious issue to some, whereby Coloured people are labeled as being Black. The nature and history of South African society, however, is that Coloured people were always categorically separated from Blacks. Worldwide, people of mixed racial descent are usually labeled as being Black. Whether this is some covert ploy to maintain the integrity of institutionalized binary race thought of there being only 2 sides to the race coin, Black and White. Or possibly an effort to avoid addressing the issue at its root and looking at the Coloured race as being just that group that subverts all efforts to give race thought any credibility. Coloured people are neither Black nor White. If Coloured people are Black, then the apartheid government certainly succeeded in robbing us of our Black identity. In South Africa, the Coloured identity is much more established than in other parts of the world that have a mixed race population. Here the Coloured race group is seen as being very insular. This is definitely not an attempt to further complicate the racial ruckus that already exists by creating further division with an added racial category. The general consensus is that while race exists in any form, standing up and asking to be counted is the only way to avoid being marginalized and ignored (Bruin-ou 2003b).

In that earlier version of the website, Ash said it exists:

> a) To promote the Coloured/mixed race identity.
> b) To identify and introduce Coloured people and culture to the rest of the world.
> c) To give Coloured people a voice of their own.
> d) To network and connect, locally and internationally, a community divided.
> e) To promote dialog on all issues affecting Coloured people.
> f) To combat ignorance on issues of social importance.
> g) To remove the perceived question mark surrounding Coloured identity.

Bruin-ou.com attempts to give a voice to a community it deems voiceless, offering users a social space where they can engage in conversations that are taking place in mainstream public spaces and conversations that are not. The site's ability to accomplish this mission is hindered, however, by the digital divide—those disparities in access to information technology that run along the lines of race, ethnicity, economics, geography, and other variables. In South Africa, which has a national poverty rate of 45 percent, the digital divide is quite wide. An online survey completed by users of the site indicates that most access the site at work or school, with a smaller number paying for

access in Internet cafes or at home. However, since I started my research, the number of users accessing the site on their mobile phones has grown, part of the African continent's growing trend of mobile-phone usage.[67]

From 2003 to 2009 I monitored *The Forum* on bruinou.com at least three times a week to determine the types of topics being discussed and the frequency with which the topics arose. As noted in my discussion of methods in Chapter Three, individual threads were grouped according to recurring themes. The following themes appeared regularly in one form or another:

- *What is coloured identity? / Is there a coloured identity?*
- Coloured racism
- Coloured political parties
- Crime in the coloured community or community upliftment
- African coloured relations

Bruin-ou.com has changed from a space for open discussion and online chatting to a site that appears to have a strategic vision of engaging users in broader issues regarding the coloured community. This transformation seems to coincide with Ash's own political and social maturity. On the most recent version of the site, Ash states:

> "With content aimed primarily at the coloured community of South Africa, bruin-ou.com attempts to explore race; identity; politics; Africanism; social hybridity; religion; business; society and life within the context of South Africa's heavily-laden, real-life coloured community. As the coloured community of South Africa exists squarely on society's Black/White seismic fault-line, this makes bruin-ou.com the ideal electronic venue where these hotly contested topics can be intelligently, creatively and thoroughly explored. Like broader South African society which is on its own national journey of self-discovery, bruin-ou.com is an attempt to chronicle the coloured community's own journey to finding itself within the greater South African whole" (Bruin-ou 2008).

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[67] By the end of 2008, Africa had 246 million mobile subscriptions, and mobile penetration had risen from just five percent in 2003 to well over 30 percent in 2010 (Ghanabusinessnews.com accessed on November 22, 2010).

In the site's early days there were many discussions about what constituted coloured identity and if it was even correct to speak of a coloured culture. No longer solely an online community, bruin-ou.com now takes an active role in community activities. Most recently, there has been a marked difference in the way Charles Ash and bruin-ou.com have positioned themselves in the community. In his recent newsletters Ash has called for a more action-oriented approach, asserting that it is no longer productive to simply go online and discuss the issues. "It is time," he says, "for us to roll up our sleeves and get dirty." Ash is tired of discussing issues like *What is coloured identity* and *What is coloured culture?* He states:

> The reality is that there is a section of the South African population that identifies as coloured and that's that whether people like it or not and this segment of the population has many issues and are not participating fully in South Africa society. Do people realize that coloureds have the highest growing incarceration rate in South Africa, are more likely to get murdered than other social groups and have the highest rate of drug addiction. There are significant problems in coloured communities and they need to be addressed now (Bruin-ou 2007).

As mentioned above, the topic *coloured identity* or *coloured culture* surfaces on the website several times per year and is one of the posts that gets the most responses. The responses the post garnered in 2003, 2005 and 2007 fall into the following categories:

- The usefulness and continued use of the term coloured
- Coloured identity is an apartheid creation
- Coloured culture exists with people citing Khoisan heritage or the history of slavery
- Coloured identity should be claimed by people

Here are some of the responses this post received:

> Allen:
> We must realize that the experience of coloured people in this country is a unique one. Nowhere else in the world have people of mixed racial parentage developed the notion that they are of a different race.
>
> We have developed a unique culture, set of traditions and norms that are different from any other racial grouping in the country. It may be a broad set of borrowed cultural practices, but we have put these together in a unique way. The case for Coloured culture does not have to be made. It's made every day when someone remarks how Coloured somebody is. Granted, that normally is a reference to their drunken brawling and a take no shit attitude—but it does exist. The rest of the country recognises us as different from them and the same as each other.
>
> In trying to understand what it means to be Coloured the only thing that seems to make sense as a unifier are the places we come from. We are largely creations of the spaces we grew up in. We have developed the norms, values and attitudes we have because of the places we come from, not because there is some grand genetic or cultural heritage that binds us. We have to accept that in order to walk like a Coloured, talk like a Coloured, be faulty like a Coloured, we have to be exposed to other Coloured people.
>
> A person who has parents of different racial backgrounds is not Coloured. They are mixed race. There is difference between the two. Coloured people know who they are and where they come from. They do not have to decide on one culture or the other they already have one. They have space and a sense of community and have a history (it may be short, but it's there) and they know other people like them who have had the same experiences that they have had. Unless they grow up Coloured, in a Coloured community, mixed race children do not.

> Foxxy:
> Being coloured is not about the mixture of races, it's a cultural identity. It's the way you are, the way you were socialised....Coloureds are a group of people who have a shared identity depending on where they come from. Coloured differ as well. Cape coloured are very different to Durban coloureds, as are JHB coloureds and Beufort West coloureds. But somehow we're connected by our colouredness. We were all classed the same and as such have an invisible thread that binds us together. We're not like Mulattos. We have a culture. A sense of belonging to something by virtue of just being.

Allen:
I had an interesting conversation with a boy from Wentworth the other day. He sees himself as mixed race because his mother is Coloured and his father is Black/African...

I think the important question still remains... Why do we want to assert our identity as Coloureds? What purpose will it serve if this identity is accepted—celebrated perhaps? Who does it benefit and how does it benefit them?

I ask these questions because there is a tendency to want to separate ourselves out from 'the rest of the Blacks'. We do have to acknowledge that there are strong racist elements in our culture in addition to all the openness and acceptance. And, attempts to assert an identity could quite easily become (be viewed as) reinforcing those negative, racist attitudes.

Meecegirl:
I think its not an issue of a separation but more so of belonging.

As the Colour Game poem points out that we are darker than white. lighter than black who are we?

Allan you asked what purpose will it serve if this identity is accepted or celebrated and who benefits. The truth is that whether we are accepted or not is irrelevant whether our identity is celebrated by others is irrelevant. why you ask because trying to articulate such a diverse culture like been coloured is merely impossible. Yes it has a bit to do with been mixed race but that alone doesn't make one coloured. Yes it has to do with your upbringing but not that alone makes one coloured. Yes its has to do with our clothes, particular style and our language..but that alone doesn't make one a coloured. It's a blend of all of so many things that makes us coloured. well at least I think so.

I definitely agree on the lack of participation on the things that fundamentally affect usa. but since I am far away and cannot do my bit in the community I am not gonna point fingers as there would be three pointing back at me.

Lonelypixel you have broken threw barriers that before were once considered unattainable. You are doing what you love and you worked hard to get there, I applaud you and all of our coloured community who pursue their dreams and take them to higher levels, in just that you are making the difference by been just who you are, you are inspiring someone somewhere, and to me that movement, that inspiration, is stronger than anything.

> Ask not what your country can do for you but what can YOU do for your county.

> Allen:
> I think I am trying to ask the notion of Coloured identity is important to you—as an individual? What value does an exploration of our identities hold for us, as individuals and collectively? What do we do with it? I agree that its not a simple definition—and maybe that is the core of the identity—our diversity and how we have managed to weave our histories into patterns a that make sense to us. But what is it all for? How can we use our identity positively?

A closer look at the posts above signal that users understand that the coloured category is socially constructed—for example, when Allen wrote, "We are largely creations of the spaces we grew up in. We have developed the norms, values and attitudes we have because of the places we come from, not because there is some grand genetic or cultural heritage that binds us." He later stated, "It may be a broad set of borrowed cultural practices, but we have put these together in a unique way." Although users acknowledge that colouredness is socially constructed, they essentialize coloured identity to establish coloured people as a legitimate group in South Africa. This is achieved through the use of words like *norms, values, traditions, attitudes,* and *cultural identity*. However, even though there is an explicit discussion of what the term coloured means, broader questions about why coloured people want to assert this identity are also introduced. This indicates that a dialogue is taking place, with people asking what purpose does exploring or asserting colouredness serve individually or collectively. The range and subtlety of positions on, and perceptions of, identity in these discussions reveal a diversity of personal, group, and community experiences. These discussions resemble the discussion about coloured identity noted in Chapter Four and in the sections above,

illustrating that people do not accept the identity wholesale but rather problematize it, that which aspects of colouredness get highlighted shift, depending on who is asserting the identity and for what purpose.

In another post Ash asked, *would you support a coloured political party*? People responded for over three months, and replies surpassed 150. Ash's post led to a heated debate about what it means to be coloured, why coloured people should want to continue to be identified as coloured, and the reasons coloured people might want their own political party. Although the overwhelming majority of users who responded favored being recognized as coloured, most were completely opposed to developing a political party separate from the existing parties in South Africa. Here are some of the responses, which totaled more than 150 over the three-month period:

> Tessie : To answer the question with my limited understanding on the subject, my answer is no. I would not vote for a 'coloured' party just because it's a coloured party. For me my political decisions are not based on racial and cultural categories, and in fact it annoys me when race is the driving force behind the mandate of political parties.
>
> Roco0909: The fact that the arty would be coloured doesn't warrant a vote from all BO's.[68] However, I feel that we need to be represented by a party of sorts. How long are we going to continue flying under the radar for our entire lifetimes is senseless to me… We need recognition as a coloured race.
>
> CritiKill: Independent newspapers see fit to publish a national supplement in the Sunday Times aimed at the Indian community yet the same has never been attempted for the coloured community…Unfortunately, the majority of coloured people continue to live in squalor, with absolutely no revolutionary hope in change. The revolutionary hope that was meant to arise after the 94 elections and subsequent party-hooping has yielded absolutely no fruit for the coloured community and as such, the national broadcaster continues to ignore us and treat us like foreigners in our own country.
>
> Tessie: I would support a party that I think is serious about tackling the issues in the communities I inhabit sure, but it doesn't take a all new

[68] Roco0909 is referring to bruin-ou's or coloured people.

"coloured party" to do that. Honestly that will probably alienate coloured communities more from the mainstream of political agendas.

Allan: If we want to build any kind of movement we have to start local, in the communities we live and work in. The possibility of a something bigger only arises when we can convince ourselves and the people around us that we can win the small victories.

CritiKill: Heck, it's only ever racism when we oloured folk mobilise ourselves, but when anybody else mobilizes along partisan, ethnic lines, then it's robust, heterogeneous politicking…symptomatic of a healthy, representative political system.

Critikill: Nobody is advocating for a coloured homeland, just a vehicle to represent coloured interests politically. Why do ppl always assume that a coloured party must automatically have a separatist agenda.

Spell jammer: My political sphere is a tad more developed than operating on the principle of watered down tribalism of particular races interests being represented. I think you should be a tad more careful about wanting to change the composition of a nation for racial and political reasons. That's a bit like destroying a community to save a community to me.

Milo: However, much we dislike it, this country is still divided along racial/ethnic lines and it'll continue to be like that for a long time – so the question is how long will coloureds just tag along, always getting the short end of the stick, before they stand up and do something for themselves.

Kazoom: Where have you all been for the last 14 years? We've witnessed the wide scale marginalization of coloured people in this country, over the last decade and a bit, but you still voting for the best man for the job. The problem with that thinking is that every other race group will be voting for the best man and that is the man that will serve their narrow interests.

Lee-Ann: Coloureds require mobilization, change of thinking, all for the advancement of the population. This will happen and I don't expect to see the benefits in my lifetime.

The responses to Ash's question vary, underscoring a number of issues. There is no homogenous or overarching political position among the coloured users of this website. While Tessie clearly and simply states, "No, she would not vote for a coloured

party just because it's a coloured party," Milo and Kazoom argues that the country remains divided along racial/ethnic lines and that perhaps it is time for coloured people "to do something for themselves." Some do not see themselves as solely coloured. Others feel that being coloured does not necessarily determine one's political position. Site users maintain that the coloured community is marginalized in post-apartheid South Africa, and some are growing increasingly frustrated by what they perceive as the government's complete indifference and neglect. Frustration is apparent in Kazoom's response: "We've witnessed the wide scale marginalization of coloured people in this country… but you [are] still voting for the best man for the job." Many have concluded that only by asserting their political power and a stronger presence will they have a chance of forcing the government to address their respective communities' needs. In short, there is no consensus about how to move forward, with some unwilling to engage in racial politics. Despite the lack of consensus on political strategy, what is clear is that there exists a generation of people, represented by site users, who fully accept the coloured ethno-racial category. However, the complexity with which site users and post-apartheid generationers in general approach colouredness indicates the continually problematic nature of this category, even for those with some distance from racial segregation.

In a statement after the website relaunched in 2005 following a six-month hiatus, Ash wrote, "While we could debate ad-nauseum the merits and pitfalls in usage of the term coloured or the colloquial term, 'bruin-ou,' bruin-ou.com has left the classroom and is NO LONGER an academic exercise." The transformation in and refocusing of Ash's position becomes even clearer when one examines how the topics and issues he addresses

in his newsletter, *The Bruinbow Nation,* have changed. Some recent issues of the newsletter have been more action-oriented. For example, in an article titled "The Bruin Drain" he discusses the issue of young coloured professionals leaving their communities for Gauteng for better jobs and asks what will become of those communities if these professionals do not return and develop social programs. Responses to this article were mixed. Some lauded Ash for taking steps towards action, yet others felt his article read as though it had been written by the very academics he criticized in the past. In another article, titled "Where to From Here (part I)," Ash lays out what he sees as some of the problems plaguing the coloured community, and in the follow-up article, "Where to From Here (Part II): The Clarion Call," he asks site users if they are ready to join him in the move from talk to action.

Responses to recent newsletters and discussions with various some users of the site led Ash to conclude that the coloured community is in dire need of "re-education." According to him, coloureds must be educated on their history, contributions to contemporary South African society, and the issues facing their community. Insisting discussion must move forward to the action stage, Ash has proposed organizing a conference with workshops and panels that would address the contributions of coloured people to South African history, the struggles that coloured people continue to face in contemporary South Africa and possibilities for coloured people to contribute to contemporary South Africa.. At the conference's closing event participants would network and not only discuss how to take the information they learned back to their communities but brainstorm on how to develop a program of action.

For Charles Ash the answer to the coloured question and the solution to the marginalization of coloured people lie not in an examination of history but in a blueprint for the future, one that lays out programs that benefit, improve, and uplift the coloured community. Yet for Ash it does not stop there. He asks, "What good is it if various coloured people or organizations are working individually if their work has no exposure?" He asserts:

> We need a media outlet. That is the only way we can change the image of coloured people. We need people to know what's happening in other coloured communities, how others are struggling for change. We also need to normalize coloured identity, and the way to do this is for coloureds to see themselves on television, to have a dialogue with one another. You know, I don't think we've ever had a public dialogue with each other, and I think—no, I know that is extremely important and would go a long way in helping coloured people's self-esteem.

Because it would not require access to a computer and Internet service, a media outlet for the coloured community, Ash believes, would reach more coloured people than his website ever could. Furthermore, a media outlet would not lose as many of its followers as his site does. In the seven years I have studied bruin-oh.com, I have noticed that several individuals who were once very active no longer use the site. I asked a number of them why, and they explained that they can no longer access the site at work now that they are at later stages of their careers and have much more responsibility. Significantly, several noted that they were tired of rehashing the same debates. Denzel, a 30-year-old IT professional, said, "How many times can we ask if coloured identity is real or if coloured people have culture? I mean, I am real; people in the townships are real. Let's talk about the real important questions like how to make people's lives

better." Charles Ash believes the social ills Denzel bemoans can be remedied if coloured people attain their own media outlets. Ash asks:

> Do you believe that other social groups have radio programs and TV shows. Indians who represent an even smaller percentage of the population than we do have their own SABC sponsored radio program and television show. I am not asking for anything ridiculous. The constitution says that they will recognize everyone and coloured people need to be acknowledge and allowed to make social progress. We are nearly in the same place we were at the end of apartheid; in fact I think we are in a worse position. Coloureds in South Africa have the highest rate of drug addiction and the highest increasing incarceration rate. This is not right, this is a new democracy and we are supposed to be moving forward. Look, I am no separatist and I can and do acknowledge that Africans in this country have and have had it really bad but I know that the situation is getting worse for coloureds and in many ways coloured people are living outside of society. Imagine that, in this day and age there are groups of people whose daily existence does not go further than trying to survive. This just doesn't make sense. I think we have a chance here to build something new if we are willing to work together and acknowledge the issues across all communities. Coloured people also continue to be disadvantaged. So for me the answer lies in normalizing coloured identity and getting media for coloured people. I think that's where we need to start.

The way forward for Ash was to develop an action committee that met regularly at various sites throughout Johannesburg. Nearly a year later, the meetings led to the formation of a new organization, the South African Movement for Equality (SAME). The organizers of SAME sent a mass email to the users of bruin-ou.com, stating that:

> SAME, a recently formed section 21 organisation was founded after many months of intensive and thorough deliberation, research and consultation. After numerous meetings, debates and discussions, it was decided that the biggest problem facing the coloured community nationally, was the absence of a national radio station and that something had to be done in order to highlight and remedy this persistent problem. The fact that the SABC was not in any way addressing the media needs of coloured South Africans meant that this issue would have to be addressed at the very top. Yes, we know that there are many social ills plaguing our communities such as gangsterism, drug abuse, fetal alcohol syndrome, unemployment, apathy, lack of entrepreneurial activity and a growing sense of detachment

> and alienation; all of which require focused and urgent attention. Faced with this knowledge, we came to the conclusion that these social ills were merely a manifestation of deeper sociological issues and instead of pursuing a course of action to gallantly fight symptoms whereby our efforts would invariably be doomed to either limited efficacy or failure, we felt we would be much better off tackling the issue at the root and putting in place mechanisms so that future generations would have the means to take charge of and shape their own destinies.

Another underlying issue within the assertion of this pro-coloured identity from this bruin-ou.com group is that there are regional tensions embedded with articulating coloured identity within this framework. Bruin-ou, a term used primarily by younger coloured people in Durban, was made popular by the song "Bruin-ous are the Main-ous" by the Durban-based hip-hop group The Real Ones (TRO). Although the bruin-ou.com site's popularity continues to grow, it has not taken off in the Western Cape. Ash has often wondered why the site does not appeal to coloureds there. Perhaps a number of factors are at play. One factor could certainly be language, as Ash speculates. Given the data listed in Chapter Three, another factor may be that the daily realities of life are a much more immediate concern in the Western Cape. Coloured people in Cape Town face poverty, high levels of crime, and high incarceration rates. As indicated in Chapter three, a report in the March 2004 edition of *SA Crime Quarterly* argues that the coloured population has the highest murder rate attributed to homicide and the highest incarceration rate of all the "race" groups in the country (Thomson 2004). According to another report in the same journal, the Western Cape has emerged as the country's most crime-ridden province. These statistics initially baffled criminologists because the Western Cape is among the most developed provinces in the country, with the highest employment levels. However, upon further investigation, these statistics are linked to

severe poverty, low levels of education, high unemployment, widespread gangsterism, and substance abuse among coloured people, the largest population group in the Western Cape (Legget 2004). The high employment levels do not reflect daily life for the coloured masses who reside on the Cape Flats.

Aside from their preoccupation with surviving day to day, another factor that makes coloured people in the Western Cape distance themselves from bruin-oh.com is, I believe, their disinclination to support the site's "in your face" assertions of colouredness. Additionally, Adhikari (2005) argues that that "coloured identity is better understood not as having undergone a process of continuous transformation during the era of white rule but rather as having remained essentially stable during that period." He adds, "This stability was derived from a core of enduring characteristics rooted in the historical experience and social situation of the coloured community that regulated the way in which colouredness functioned as a social identity under white domination." Underlying this argument may be the notion that coloured people in the Western Cape came to accept their position in the racial hierarchy and did not develop assertive forms of activism (this is not quite right). As one young man put it, "We coloureds here are not like that. That bruin-ou thing is too aggressive and wild it's too much in your face, neh. Those people have parties and wear their bruin-ou shirts. They go on TV to talk about being coloured but to do this that Ash guy talks about the other races. We coloureds here in Cape Town would never."

Conclusion

Coloured identity has undergone tremendous transformation since apartheid ended. The new democratic environment, with its rapid change in the social and political landscape, has facilitated discussions and debates on the role of coloured identity. As the country transitioned toward democracy, coloured people questioned how their narrative would be incorporated into the nation-building strategy of the new South Africa.

In this chapter I have illustrated that there are competing interpretations of what constitutes colouredness post-apartheid. I have also attempted to illustrate that contemporary organized expressions around coloured identity do not constitute a social movement but rather a public debate within both the coloured community and the broader population. This debate is uncomfortable as the country tries to move away from racial politics but sees that the legacy of colonialism and apartheid is unavoidably at the heart of any discussion on coloured identity. Several people I interviewed said it would be easier to simply accept the government's claim that all those formerly oppressed under apartheid are black, but, as one woman put it, "to deny that I am coloured is to deny that coloured people exist, that we continue to exist—so what if that makes people uncomfortable. I'm here and we have a right to be who we are."

The adoption of different names and/or positions at various historical junctures shows perhaps the difficulty the term "coloured" has in taking on a fixed meaning and how identities are modified based on shifting allegiances. Various segments of the

coloured population are configuring boundaries according to their perceptions of whose needs and aspirations are being represented by the government. Groups structure new kinds of relationships to increase their access to resources and to gain political recognition from the central government. To move away from negative stereotypes, coloureds have been forced to act and react within the bounds of apartheid. I suggested that these organized efforts to assert colouredness are a form of public debate in a non-racial South Africa that has not created a space for a meaningful discussion on race. Ultimately, these old identities are being reused because "new" identities are not attainable and can only be (re)imaginations of existing ones. However, my interaction with post-apartheid generationers illustrates that a new generation of coloured people has come of age, one that identifies as coloured but is unwilling to be exclusionary. The following chapter explores how this new generation is (re)imagining and (re)articulating new identities.

Chapter Six
Deterritorialized Blackness:
(Re)making Coloured Identities Among the Post-Apartheid Generation[69]

"When I was a kid in the early eighties, this music [hip-hop] was the first I'd heard that I could relate to. You know, 'Fuck da Police', and all that shit, that's what I was feeling."[70]

"We're like African Americans. We can relate to them best because we don't always know where we're from, and like the African Americans we live in Ghetto's. We're like the same only we live in Cape Town."[71]

Black is not a question of pigmentation. The Black I'm talking about is a historical category, a political category, a cultural category.… Black was created as a political category in a certain historical moment (Hall 1998).

Although it is no secret that hip-hop as both a musical genre and a defined lifestyle has gained recognition and popularity around the globe, I was not prepared for what I experienced in South Africa. I encountered cars blasting Jay-Z, Sean Paul and Kanye West among others; people wearing Sean John, Avirex or United States sports team jerseys; and cell phones ringing to the tunes of the latest 50 Cent or R. Kelly songs. I found that as a black person from the United States, I felt a common blackness with the coloured people I interacted with not because

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[69] An early draft of this chapter was published in 2006 Post***amble*** 2(1) Centre for African Studies, Cape Town, South Africa p 46-58. Deterritorialized Blackness: (re)making coloured identities in South Africa.
[70] From the Shamel X interview. Shamel X is a producer and DJ in Cape Town. He is also a member of the rap group Prophets of the City (Battersby 2003, 116).
[71] Interview conducted December 15, 2005. The names of all interviewees have been changed throughout this dissertation.

of a common African heritage but mainly because of black popular culture and hip-hop culture specifically. After spending a few months in South Africa, I became aware that coloured young people rely heavily on black cultural images emerging out of the United States and to a lesser extent the Caribbean and Europe.

For many African Americans, discussions of Africa conjure up images of "the motherland", their origin, the place they imagine when constructing their blackness. Simultaneously, African American popular and hip-hop culture has become global in nature touching many corners of the world. I suggest that hip-hop and black popular culture has become a site used by coloured youth and young adults in South Africa to articulate transnationally engaged notions of blackness. Through a focus on hip-hop and popular culture, fashion and hair politics, in this chapter I argue contemporary racial identities are constructed through an engagement with local racial categories and black popular culture. In this way, the universe of potential racial identities and race in South Africa is no longer situated in one place or space but rather inhabits a deterritorialized shifting cultural space. Through such identity processes and cultural strategies, I argue that post-apartheid generationers are actively engaged in remaking the historically structured coloured racial identity in post-apartheid South Africa.

By exploring the ways post-apartheid generations use hip-hop and other aspects of black popular culture emerging out of the diaspora, I ultimately argue that shifts in coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa can be attributed to forces within the country as well as external forces. In Chapter Four and five I examined the way the inequities from the apartheid past and present conditions bear on the way post-apartheid generationers conceptualize colouredness. In this chapter I examine the way coloured

identities have been affected by influences outside South Africa. Specifically, I explore how post-apartheid generations are actively engaged in remaking the historically structured coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa by using hip-hop and black popular culture.

Deterritorialization and Blackness

Figure 18. Hip-hop group Big Idea performing in Durban, 2007.

I have entitled this chapter "Deterritorialized Blackness" and will begin by addressing my use of this phrase. The movement of symbols and meanings—in this case images of blackness—can be seen as part of a current of goods and ideas that move among populations. Here I draw primarily on the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai's use of the term deterritorialization in his article, "Global Ethnoscapes: Notes and Queries for a Transnational Anthropology." According to Appadurai (1996), "this term applies not

only to obvious examples such as transnational corporations and money markets, but also to ethnic groups, sectarian movements, and political formations, which increasingly operate in ways that transcend specific territorial boundaries and identities." Additionally, the concept of "scape" also captures the processes and relations that are involved as globalized images of blackness move, mutate and are re-created in various spaces around the world. A scape is a way to characterize the flow of global cultural movement that influences and transforms the practices, identities and meanings of local groups who use those spaces. Rather than place cultural flows in a linear relationship between core and periphery, the scape captures the intense interactions that occur as a result of the movement of capital, people, ideas, media and technology. Similarly, anthropologist Ulf Hannerz (1987) describes a world of creolization, where holistic notions of bounded cultures do not have explanatory power. Instead the boundaries between existing cultural units shift, dissolve and are reconstituted in a world that exhibits high degrees of transnational connectedness (Back 1996). Further, Stuart Hall (1998) states, "Because of the process of globalization the relationship between the national cultural identity and the nation-state is now beginning to disappear." The coloured young people in my study, are situated within and affected by the flow of global black popular culture yet simultaneously they select various images of blackness and incorporate them thereby creating distinctly new local spaces and identities.

Cultural theorist, Paul Gilroy (1993) developed a similar approach to describe the interconnectedness of peoples around the world. However, Gilroy refers specifically to the connectedness of dispersed African populations globally. Gilroy argues that for a century and a half, black intellectuals traveled and worked in a transnational frame that

precludes anything but a superficial association with their country of origin. Gilroy (19) states: "The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through [a] desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity." Further, central to Gilroy's argument is the shared experience of slavery among black diasporic communities. It is this common experience that is at the heart of a transnational black experience. Through an examination of black popular music and specifically the musical mix of soul, reggae and hip-hop of performers like Soul II Soul, Monie Love or Maxi Priest, Gilroy (109) argues that ideas and styles travel, interact, and become transnational. Additionally, making reference to his own experience with music as an adolescent, he writes:

> When I was a child in London, black music provided me with a means to gain proximity to the sources of feeling from which our local conceptions of blackness were assembled. The Caribbean, Africa, Latin America and above all black America contributed to our lived sense of racial self. The urban context in which these forms were encountered cemented their stylistic appeal and facilitated their solicitation of our identification. They were important also as a source for the discourse of blackness with which we locate our own struggles and experiences.

Hip-hop artists and other young people in my study have asserted similar views regarding the appeal of hip-hop. In the quote at the beginning of this chapter, rapper Shamel X states that hip-hop was the first music he heard that he could relate to because its content is so close to home.[72] Further Reddy D, the lead singer of Brasse Vannie Kaap (BVK) states, "We use hip-hop and speak about our reality here on the Cape Flats because that's where we come from"

[72] Shamel X is currently a producer and DJ in Cape Town. He is also a member of the rap group Prophets of the City (Battersby 2003, 116).

(Standley 2000). More recently, Berni of the all female hip-hop group Godessa states that like the South Bronx in the United States, the Cape Flats are synonymous with the birth of hip-hop because of the similar urban experiences and feelings of marginalization.

According to Gilroy (1993), blackness can be understood, not simply as a racial entity, but also as a common experience of racialization and discrimination throughout the diaspora that unites peoples of African descent who are identified as "black". Though blackness can at times be essentialized as a racial affiliation emanating from primordial African roots, for Gilroy it is not confined to the territory of Africa, because it is also an identity of displacement, the feeling of belongingness to a community that transcends national boundaries, and it is a much less territorialized identity. Similarly, Hall (1998) states that black is a historical category, a political category, a cultural category created as a consequence of certain symbolic and ideological struggles. Therefore, in this chapter, following Gilroy and Hall, I use blackness to refer specifically to the shared experiences of oppression, discrimination and marginalization among black diasporic populations. Today the global "traffic in blackness" (literally the exchange of consumer goods and images) facilitates this identification across national borders and challenges the primacy of nationally bounded affiliations. In this chapter, I am interested in examining the methods by which local identities are formed within international as well as national spaces. I argue that black experiences or diasporic constructions of blackness operate as a key source of identity construction among South Africa's coloured young people. I am specifically interested in the ways hip-hop and black popular culture create spaces for coloured youth and young adults to engage in efforts to transform coloured identities in post-apartheid South Africa. This is done by mixing, blending and layering hip-hop symbols and global images of blackness with their

local cultural influences ultimately fashioning black identities and plugging into a blackness that bypasses place and space.

Many theorists of cultural globalization argue that cultural flows move from the North to the South and lead to northern hegemony and local cultural destruction (Salo 2003, 345-365). However, Daniel Miller argues that cultural globalization does not necessarily lead to generic Westernization (Miller 1995, 5). Not only are global cultural forms incorporated and shaped by local histories and cultural contexts but in the case of Africa and the Diaspora, as I have discussed above and will further argue throughout this chapter, there has been a circulatory ongoing exchange of ideas and cultural forms. For example, according to Sheila Walker, in an effort to reconnect with an ancestral heritage, African-Americans look across the ocean to Africa for roots, identity and inspiration. Although the African American relationship to Africa is more pan-Africanist in orientation, African Americans look to the African continent nonetheless to re-establish those symbolic connections (Walker 2002).

In the realm of popular culture, the flow between South Africa and the Diaspora stretches back to the 1940s (Haupt 2001). For example, David Coplan (1985), Ulf Hannerz (1994), and Rob Nixon (1994) address the influence of global [black] popular culture from the United States on blacks in South Africa. Nixon examines the ways that the blossoming of artistic expression in Sophiatown in the 1950s draws on the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s and other black American influences (Dolby 2000). Similarly, Coplan examines the history of the interaction between American and South African jazz musicians during the 1940s and 1950s (Dolby 2001). According to Nixon, it was the musical influence of Dizzy Gillespie, Count Bassie, Bessie Smith, Charlie Parker and

Duke Ellington that took root and inspired South Africa's most scintillating performers such as Miriam Makeba, Dolly Rathebe, Hugh Masekela and Abdulla Ibrahim. As the South African musician Todd Matshikiza testified, "some of the mission educated musicians had internalized a disdain for African forms. Yet, ironically, it was the African undertones in Ellington and Count Bassie that increased their appeal to South African Performers" (Nixon 1994). Nixon states, certain performers who felt ambivalent about African music found it more alluring and acceptable when it returned in a transmuted, transatlantic guise yet what emerged from this influence was distinctly South African (Nixon 1994, 19). For those active in Sophiatown, there were many similarities between the cultural renaissance in Harlem and Sophiatown but the similarities were not merely imaginative, they sprang from particular social affinities. Both Harlem and Sophiatown experienced a cultural upsurge in the aftermath of black migration toward the inevitable unsteady promise of urban employment during an era of growing industrialization. These migrations led to a distinctly black urban population in both New York's Harlem and Johannesburg's Sophiatown. Many of the writers of Drum magazine, the principal outlet for writers from Sophiatown, recognized in the Harlem literature a world that was black and urban and spoke of the trauma and promise of displacement (Nixon 1994, 16). At the time when the very idea of belonging to the city was coming under increasing legislative pressure, the Harlem Renaissance helped emergent South African writers fortify their claim. The contemporary flow of hip-hop and other aspects of black popular culture between Africa and the Diaspora therefore become part of the long history of this interaction.

Certainly some will argue that hip-hop has taken on a new meaning because young people around the world use it as a vehicle for addressing the oppressive forces they experience.[73] However, according to Tricia Rose, this should not be equated with a shift in rap's discursive or stylistic focus away from black pleasure or black fans (Rose 1994, 5). Rose states, "Rap's black cultural address and its focus on marginal identities may appear to be in opposition to its crossover appeal for people from different racial or ethnic groups and social positions" (Rose 1994, 17). It is true that rap music, like many black cultural forms before it, resonates for people of vastly diverse backgrounds; however, Rose asserts, "To suggest that rap is a black idiom that prioritizes black culture and articulates the problems of black urban life does not deny the pleasure and participation of others" (Rose 1994, 5). She further states, "The drawing power of rap is precisely its musical and narrative commitment to black youth and cultural resistance, and nothing in rap's commercial position and cross cultural appeal contradicts this fact" (Rose 1994, 5).

[73] There are many studies that highlight youth around the world who use hip-hop as a means of expressing …

Urban Marginalization: Making Coloureds Black

Figure 19. Image of graffiti on a wall in Cape Town.

Abdou Maliqalim Simone (1993) states by the mere act of being born, coloureds were denied fundamental access to the [black] African world. That is, politically coloured people were drawn into complicity with apartheid as a result of their ambiguous positioning between whites as full citizens and African black people as tribalized subjects locked into ‘pure’ cultural traditions (Erasmus 2001, 18). Simone states that even though coloureds certainly were not striving to become black in the South African sense, as discussed earlier in this dissertation, during the 1980s politicized youth began to invoke the term “so-called” coloured or even black. This was the by-product of the black consciousness movement, whose theoretical formulations were largely imported from the Diaspora—where the common blackness of light and dark-skinned people was viewed as a historical achievement. Yet, Erasmus states, although the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s promoted blackness as inclusive, the politics of the time prevented this discourse from acknowledging the specificity of coloured experiences or the heterogeneity and locatedness of blackness (Erasmus 2001, 18-19). The Black Consciousness Movement tended towards a universal and single notion of being black which privileged African

experiences (narrowly defined) and papered over racial hierarchies and differential racialization[74] among racially oppressed South Africans. Erasmus further states that although coloured people could identify with the struggle against apartheid by rejecting coloured identity and identifying as black, they would always still be 'blacks of a special type' (Erasmus 2001, 19). Simone emphasizes that this move to identify as black or to invoke the "so-called" was not so much a vehicle of identification with Africans but rather was a mechanism of undoing the absence of an identity or filling a void (Simone 1993). This void was particularly strong for the generations of coloureds who because of the Group Areas legislation were forcibly removed from their homes, particularly from areas like District Six.

The Group Areas Act and the subsequent removals of coloured families to the Cape Flats were instrumental in the transformation of working-class communities (Pinnock 1982). Before group removals, a supportive network of extended families and neighbors held working-class culture together. This 'extended kinship network' created cultural continuity and stability (Pinnock 1982). The Group Areas removals had the effect of breaking this web of mutual support and solidarity as families were removed to various nuclear family units scattered across the Cape Flats. A generation of young people grew up in "fabricated" neighborhoods with little history, few institutions and without the cultural practices, social networks and urban inventiveness that had characterized everyday life for their parents (Simone 1999). This particular generation of coloured youth therefore grew up in townships that were very similar to the urban "ghettos" of the 1970s in the United States.

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[74] Erasmus (2001) states that differential racialization refers to the various ways in which different black people have been and continue to be racialized. This conceptualization is based on an understanding of racisms and racialization as processes which are not uniform and immutable. Racisms and racialized identities are formed in the context of and so shaped by very specific relations of power.

In the 1970s, cities across the United States were gradually losing federal funding for social services, information service corporations were beginning to replace industrial factories, and corporate developers were buying real estate to be converted to luxury housing, leaving working-class residents with limited affordable housing, a shrinking job market and diminishing social services. Postindustrial conditions had a profound effect on black and Hispanic communities because they were among the poorest and least powerful groups. These communities were more susceptible to slumlords, redevelopers, toxic waste dumps, drug rehabilitation centers, violent criminals and inadequate services and transportation. In the case of the South Bronx, which has been dubbed the "home of hip-hop culture," these larger postindustrial conditions were exacerbated by disruptions considered an "unexpected side effect" of larger politically motivated policies of "urban renewal?" In the early 1970s, this renewal project involved massive relocations of economically fragile people of color from different areas of New York City into parts of the South Bronx. The newly "relocated" black and Hispanic residents in the South Bronx were left with few city resources, fragmented leadership and limited political power (Rose 1994).

According to Rose, hip-hop culture emerged as a source for youth of alternative identity formation and social status in a community whose older local support institutions had been all but demolished. Alternative local identities were forged in fashions and language, street names and most important in establishing neighborhood crews and posses. Rose states that these crews were new kinds of families that provided insulation and support in a complex environment. She also states that at a time when social services were no longer available and budget cuts to schools reduced access to various programs early Puerto Rican, Afro-Caribbean and black American hip-hop artists transformed obsolete vocational skills from marginal occupations into raw materials

for creativity and resistance. Many of them were trained for jobs in technical fields that were shrinking or that no longer existed. Therefore, hip-hop emerged from complex cultural exchanges and larger social and political conditions of disillusionment and alienation. Rose asserts that hip-hop was an especially aggressive public display of counterpresence and voice as it asserted the right to inscribe one's identity on an environment that seemed resistant to its young people of color. Further hip-hop produced internal and external dialogues that affirmed the experiences and identities of the participants and at the same time offered a critique of larger society that were directed to both the hip-hop community and society in general.

Out of a broader discursive climate in which the perspectives and experiences of younger people of color had been provided little social space, hip-hop developed as part of a cross-cultural communication network. It was not long before similarly marginalized black and Hispanic communities in other cities picked up on the energy in New York hip-hop and developed local hip-hop scenes that linked various regional postindustrial urban experiences of alienation, unemployment, police harassment, social and economic isolation to their local and specific experiences via hip-hop's language, style and attitude. It was under the similar circumstances of urban relocation and alienation of the Cape Flats that the conditions became ripe for coloured youth to begin looking to black America for ways to articulate their experiences of marginalization in South Africa because they experienced hardships similar to those that led to the emergence of hip-hop in New York's black and Latino neighborhoods.

This view is echoed by Jane Battersby who argues that "South African hip-hop as a genre is a form of social text and as such offers opportunities for new identities for the South African coloured community." She also posits, "That hip-hop can be seen as an expression of a particular facet of [African-American] blackness, one that is rooted in a

radical urban identity relating to ghetto life" (Battersby 2003, 109). She also states, "The overtly political messages of early U.S. hip struck a chord with many highly politicized coloured youths in the early 1980s. At this time the youth dissatisfied with apartheid education, were taking to the streets for their education. During the 1980s, coloured youth from the Cape Flats used hip-hop to work through the tensions of being socioeconomically and racially marginalized in a space where their experience of racial oppression and marginalization was experienced differently from the African population. It was also a way for these young people to identify with black people around the globe based on a common oppression and struggle against racism. This view is consistent with Stuart Hall's argument that, "In that very [symbolic and ideological] struggle is a change of consciousness, a change of self-recognition, a new process of identification, the emergence into visibility of a new subject— a subject that is always there, but emerging, historically" (Hall 1998, 54).

Adam Haupt examines the ways that the early rap groups Prophets of da City (POC) and Brasse Vannie Kaap (BVK) employ *Gamtaal*[75] in order to problematize hegemonic representations of black subjects.[76] Haupt (2001) states, "It appears that the group's use of an African-American art form, rap music, conforms with black artists' reliance on African-American or Caribbean material in their attempt to construct black nationalist narratives that rely on the notion of a global black experience of oppression and resistance." Although the members of POC and BVK consciously rely on a music style from the African Diaspora, this global music form is mixed with the local influences of Jazz and other African sounds. Therefore, my focus on the influence of the global

[75] A Cape Flats dialect of Afrikaans which has stereotypically been associated with poor and working-class coloured people.
[76] POC and BVK were two of the first rap groups to emerge in South Africa during the early 1980s.

does not discount the impact of local influences. In fact it is important to note that hip-hop is continually reworked and molded to fit a distinctly local South African racial and class context through the use of Afrikaans and local English idioms and by commenting on local South African situations. For example, both POC and BVK were involved in voter registration drives and POC in particular was actively involved in the voter education program *Rapping for Democracy* and they went through great pains to persuade Cape Town's largely coloured electorate not to vote for the Nationalist Party (Haupt 2001, 179).

During the 1980s and 1990s, early hip-hop groups such as POC and BVK used U.S. hip-hop to express an explicit black nationalism, an opposition to their lived experiences. However, one cannot conclude that all youth from the late 1990s onward look to hip-hop to express an explicit black nationalism. My research suggests that although there are some who continue to assert the black consciousness perspective a new generation of coloured South African young people use black popular culture as a means of actively engaging with, reworking and creating identities that rely on apartheid era racial classifications but the identities in the making do not necessarily conform to old South African notions of race. Additionally, a new generation of hip-hop artists are using hip-hop to speak specifically to issues affecting working class coloured communities, the perceived marginal experience of coloureds in post-apartheid South Africa, stereotypes of the coloured population and as a way to work through various other issues affecting coloured people in contemporary South Africa. The fall of apartheid and the new moment of globalization with faster flows of information that emerged during the 1990s have given post apartheid generationers daily access to varied global images. Yet, coloured young

people do not accept all popular culture wholesale. They continue to filter their choices through local realities and continue to draw on global black popular culture and hip-hop culture and African-American athletes and actors continue to hold a prominent place for constructing identities (Dolby 2001).

Coloured identity continues to be contested in post-apartheid South Africa and new generations of coloured young people continue to use hip-hop as a vehicle for engaging critically with colouredness. There are many young people who reject the term coloured, opting instead to see themselves as South African while others, such as Bronwyn, Wayne, and Charles Ash, who are from working class backgrounds, continue to adhere to a racialized conception of colouredness as a means of identification (Adhikari 2005). Yet through their engagement with hip-hop, some coloured young people are attempting to problematize and reinvent coloured identity as well as link into a global notion of blackness based on common understandings of dislocation, displacement, rootlessness, poverty, violence, marginalization and racial oppression. For example, in a song entitled, “Journey of Mine,” the group Godessa, which released its first album in 2004, notes that it was the group’s engagement with hip-hop that allowed members to view themselves as black. In the lyrics below it is clear that they firmly identify as black and not coloured.

> But let me move on to the days
> When self-development began
> It was strange to my fam[ily]
> How I changed all my plans
> And from the onset
> Knowledge of self was the concept
> I never thought of myself as being a born black
> Till the contact with hip-hop
> Led to even more facts. (Godessa 2004)

By identifying with the situation of black people globally, hip-hop artists bypass local South African understandings of blackness and move past perceptions of being half-victims to authentic marginals (Simone 1996). People like Bronwyn and Charles Ash have been trying to show that during apartheid coloured people also suffered inequities, which continue to affect their lives today. Hip-hop has created space for such discussion.

As young people engage with black popular culture generally and hip-hop specifically they are able to plug into the global black experience. Yet simultaneously they continue to use hip-hop to speak specifically to local issues of identity in post-apartheid South Africa. In a hip-hop track entitled, "You Never Know," the Durban-based hip-hop group Big Idea (2006) grapples with the issue of coloured identity. In the following lyrics rapper Jet draws attention to the fact that the lived experiences of those formerly classified as coloured remains tenuous in post-apartheid South Africa and he is addressing and working through many of the contemporary issues being discussed and debated within various sectors of the coloured population. The rapper also claims a distinctly African identity for South Africa's coloured population when he states, "I'm a brown African my cuzzie [cousin] this is my gully [hood]."

> The gods must have been crazy when they made me
> Misplaced people
> But they call me a bushie
> That's an irony
> Coz bushie's are the original inhabitants of the Kalahari
> I'm with my band touring the country
> It doesn't mean I'm on Safari
> I'm a brown African my cuzzie
> This is my gully,
> Don't worry, I'm certain of my identity
> Cultural complexity
> Means your black and white visions

> Keep on vexing me
> I'm proof there's an in between. (Big Idea 2006)

In his lyrics there are also traces of the views of the Khoisan revivalists particularly when he states, *coz bushie's are the original inhabitants of the Kalahari*. Here the rapper draws on the first nation or indigenous status of the Khoisan and ultimately the coloured especially in the line *I'm a brown African my cuzzie*. In this line there is an assertion of both colouredness and Africanness which seems to resolve some of the tensions and mixed feelings expressed by older generations of coloured who seemed to only be able to articulate colouredness or Africanness rather than both simultaneously. The lyrics of this particular song speak to various ways that coloured people in post-apartheid South Africa continue to negotiate their complex identities in everyday life as they engage in debates and attempt to develop a narrative about who they are and where they fit. In another song entitled "Laaities from the Wenties," the group Big Idea again addresses both the pain and confusion of being coloured. Yet they also stress that although they are fully South African their place in post-apartheid South Africa continues to be contested and unstable. These lyrics show that colouredness continues to be informed by the way it has been historically conceptualized as lacking particularly as the rapper notes that he *is lost, paying the price of being a half-breed*. This illustrates that although apartheid generationers attempt to reclaim colouredness, the identity cannot simply be divorced from some of its historical meanings.

> I am South African
> But how do I measure my worth in this country
> Full of diversity
> What's the entry of your history that's what they keep asking me
> Like where would I be if everyone was sent back to from whence they came

> Half of my family tree is here but does that mean I'm staying
> I'm lost paying the price of being a half-breed
> Until I see the light the pain will never ever cease. (Big Idea 2006)

By examining these lyrics it is clear that what is key is what is selected from the outside yet how the external is absorbed is influenced by the politics of what's going on inside the country. During the anti-apartheid struggle, black consciousness and uniting against apartheid was the primary goal; however, in post-apartheid South Africa what is more relevant is understanding how and where coloured people fit in within the new democracy and how to prove that life has not changed for most coloureds. In the following lyrics the rap group Blaq Cream from Eldorado Park in Johannesburg tackles the place of coloureds in post-apartheid South Africa:

> Come into my streets and see that it's just as messed up stressed out
> Mothers with problem children many they don't let out
> Left out from the rainbow society painted in black and white lives
> From affirmative action keeps no colours futures bright right

When the emcee states *come into my streets and see that it's just as messed up stressed out* he is making a direct comparison between coloured communities and African townships. He is referring specifically to the low quality of housing, high crime levels and unsafe conditions that children face daily in coloured communities and townships throughout the country. Later the line, *left out from the rainbow society painted in black and white lives*, refers the marginalization that coloured people claim in post-apartheid South Africa. This is reminiscent of the argument proposed by others in this dissertation that they are just as marginalized under the new government as they were under apartheid and it is common to hear people claim that they were not white enough under apartheid and now they are not

black enough post-1994. When the emcee raps *affirmative action keeps no colours futures bright right* he addresses the perception common among many working-class coloureds that Africans receive preferential allocation of resources when many feel their needs are just as great. Although the skilled and well-educated coloured middle classes have been able to take advantage of opportunities that have become available to formerly disadvantaged people through affirmative action and black economic empowerment initiatives, coloured working classes have been victims of jobless economic growth. Increasing civil rights gained since the end of apartheid that have clearly enhanced the lives of the coloured and African middle classes, have meant little to their working class counter parts who remain in poverty and feel marginalized as discussed throughout this dissertation.

The Global Traffic in Blackness

It is now commonly understood that individuals construct identities with the tools of cultural production made available to them. Through an examination of how young black men in Colombia use rap music to create a cultural identity, Peter Wade (2002) argues that individuals are constantly involved with producing representations of their cultural identities and that this production is both material and symbolic. Similarly, Nadine Dolby argues that local and global contexts and tastes based on global popular culture emanating from the United States and Europe shape the ways young people in South Africa create identities. In this article based on a one-year ethnographic study at a high school in Durban, South Africa, Dolby argues that, because of the effects

globalization and the expanding influence of global popular culture, youth identities no longer belong to one place or location; instead they are influenced by a plurality of languages and cultures (Dolby 2001, 11). She further concludes that global popular culture is a key site for identity formation as students spent a great deal of energy both in and out of school consuming the global popular. She states that notebooks were plastered with pictures of musical groups and movie stars while the latest dance craze dominated lunchtime conversation (Dolby 2001, 11). She also asserts "that students desire to model their lives not on Nelson Mandela but on the lives of the then most popular American celebrities-Michael Jordan, Oprah Winfrey or the cast of New York Undercover" (Dolby 2001, 11-12). Dolby ultimately argues, "The global commodity, explained and policed through a discourse of taste, becomes the fulcrum for constructing one's own racial identity, connecting self to others who are of a similar race" (Dolby 2001, 11).

Dolby makes an important point when he notes that youth are not passive receptors of an undifferentiated onslaught of corporate-generated popular culture, but that instead they carefully select, mold and combine specific commodities and other aspects of popular culture to create identities that are both racialized and contextualized within particular circumstances. Based on my research, I would take this a step further by arguing that coloured youth and young adults in particular engage in the consumption of *black* popular culture and not simply global popular culture. This has been illustrated by the history of identifying with hip-hop artists from KRS-ONE to Tupac Shakur, and other West Coast rappers and the consumption of contemporary African-Diasporic artists such as Ludacris, Jay-Z, Sean Paul, Nas or Kanye West. Since 2005, I have spent a great deal of time listening to local South African radio stations primarily targeted for black and

coloured audiences and most music played has been a mix of mostly popular R & B and rap music from the United States and to a lesser extent local South African music. For example, U.S. based R&B and rap artists dominate the weekly list of the top singles played on MetroFM, Good HopeFM and P4 radio. Further, the entertainment news sections on air and on radio station websites usually cover the latest news on American rappers and R&B singers, African-American movie stars and other African Diasporic celebrities. The daily give-a-ways usually include CDs and posters by American R&B and rap artists or other African Diasporic artists including reggae and reggaeton[77] musicians. Additionally while in Johannesburg, I visited the MetroFM radio station and was able to observe one of the radio programs and interview the host and producer. After the interview the producer pulled me aside and stated, “If you ask me I think there’s more America in South Africa than Africa in America.” She then amended her statement by stating, “You know, I mean black America, right?”[78]

During 2004, I observed a weekly hip-hop show titled *New York Live Crossover with Allen* that was produced in New York but aired live in South Africa. The show was co-hosted by a young South African man in New York and DJ Zak in South Africa. The goal of *New York Live* was to give South Africans the most up-to-the-minute news on the U.S. hip-hop scene by addressing music, music videos, movies and the latest celebrity entertainment news. Throughout the hour-long show, there was great emphasis placed on the fact that they were “coming straight out of NYC.” Both hosts also stress that listeners are getting the “hottest info” because “they’re bringing it live straight across the Atlantic.” Throughout the show, Allen made many references to the New York City

[77] Reggaeton is Spanish reggae.
[78] Interview conducted on August 23, 2003.

weather outside or what he observed on the way to the studio, again adding emphasis and perhaps an added level of authenticity to the fact that he was in New York. After observing the show for several weeks, I was reminded that hip-hop culture also encompasses discourse about rap music and there is also an emphasis on language and word choice. It is common knowledge that slang is a key identity marker for youth in general and rap music in particular. The use of slang creates a sense of identity and a common culture with which young people in South Africa and the United States can relate and identify.

Hip-hop culture does not solely include rap music, but also includes a particular generation of R& B singers as well as the way people dress, style their hair and use language. Therefore, in order to plug into this particular way of life, as Peter Wade argues, individuals must continually engage in representing this through the use of particular symbols. This means that individuals' consumption of very specific brands of clothing and particular forms of dress become key. Post-apartheid generationers often modeled their daily clothing styles and speech on the celebrities they watch in music videos and movies and the websites they accessed. I attended a braai[79] at the home of Swift and Tanya, a 27-year-old couple in Cape Town where I had the opportunity to observe and interview the ten adults present. Hip-hop and R&B by U.S. artists was the only music played during the night and a few of the other men present were impressed by Swift's CD collection. Conversations about new cell phones, sneakers and other clothing dominated most casual conversation. I was asked the prices of several items of clothing in the U.S. and also asked if I would be willing to purchase particular items and send them back to South Africa once I returned home. Some of the items included Yankee

[79] Afrikaans word for "barbeque."

Starter jackets, basketball jerseys and caps and the latest Timberland boots. This situation repeated itself several times throughout my time in Cape Town and Johannesburg as individuals continually asked me the prices and to purchase items from abroad. Although I was asked about these items, economic constraints often affected people ability to actually purchase the items. What remains important, however, is that the interest of these young people in the brands and clothing styles most affiliated with black popular culture emphasizes that clothing can take on very specific and charged race and class connotations.

Hair can be another symbolic method of expressing blackness. According to Kabena Mercer hair, which is as visible as skin color and also the most tangible sign of racial difference, takes on a forcefully symbolic dimension (Mercer 1994). Further, Zimitri Erasmus states, "dreadlocks until recently was specifically a black style and an article in the April 1999 edition of Marie-Claire refers to dreadlocks as a natural and African "hair-type" as opposed to hair style (Erasmus 2000, 380-392). However, Mercer links the origins of dreadlocks to the Rastafarian movement in Jamaica and states that, "they [dreadlocks] are specifically Diasporean and they do not signify Africanness but rather blackness" (Mercer 1994, 108). Erasmus states, "In South Africa today, this style has come to represent African-ness". Erasmus posits:

> The increasing popularity of dreadlocks in post-1994 SA can be understood as a process signifying a re-making and revalorization of Africanness through the borrowing and localization of Africentric black American images and ideas. This 'turn to dreadlocks' can be seen as post-1994, post-liberation cultural formations. These transnational cultural borrowings and recreations suggest local uses of and for the global. (Erasmus 2000)

Further, Teresa, a young woman who grew up in Hanover Park on the Cape Flats states, "If you look around Cape Town today, you'll notice that it's now in for coloured women to wear their hair natural or in dreads so that they can show they're black too."[80] Her observation seem correct at least among a certain generation as it is common to walk around the University of Cape Town, the suburb of Rondebosch where the university is located or in town and see young males and females with dreadlocks or naturally curly hair. Audrey from Eldorado Park echoes this view when I asked what made her grow dreadlocks, she states that she wanted people to know that she thinks of herself as black.

Conclusion

It is widely understood that there has been a long history of cultural and political interaction between Africa and the Diaspora. In this chapter I have argued that hip-hop and black popular culture have assisted in creating a blackness that is less territorialized because it transcends geographical and national boundaries. Through the global traffic in blackness including the exchange of ideas and goods that travel between Africa and the Diaspora, contemporary identity among coloured young people in South Africa becomes a continual and complex interaction between local experiences of identity construction and global black popular culture. It is ironic that the coloured population are not black in the South African sense yet by looking to a blackness based on urban marginalization and the struggle against racism originating in the United States, coloured youth and young

[80] Interview conducted on January 23, 2006.

adults are able to articulate a blackness that links up with global understandings of blackness based on oppression and discrimination. This examination of coloured identities among post-apartheid generationers points to the way black popular culture facilitates the articulation of broad racial categories and political affiliations that transcend racial categories. Research in this area is important not simply because it illustrates that local identities and political consciousness are formed within both national and transnational spaces, but because it also points to the fact that hip-hop culture can be a potential site in the organizing and struggle against oppression. Perhaps hip-hop will become a space to facilitate linkages across race so that people that have yet to benefit from the full promises of apartheid can organize and petition the state based on their common interests rather than narrowly perceived ethno-racial interests.

Conclusion

At the start of this dissertation, I quoted from a 2005 editorial by Roderick Ngoro, the media advisor of the Mayor of Cape Town. In the editorial Ngoro claimed that coloureds are struggling with the fact that the regime of representation used by apartheid rulers no longer exists. He added, “No longer can they hear on the radio, television or the newspapers (sic) that they are indeed number two after the whites and that if coloureds don't undergo an ideological transformation, their race will not prosper and they will die a drunken death” (Kassiem 2005). Mr. Ngoro’s comments drew on popular stereotypes about coloured people and were built on the implicit assumption that assertions of coloured identity are based on fear of black majority rule and that coloured people have internalized the divisions created by apartheid and therefore are simply racist. Although his assumptions may be true for some sections of the coloured population, ultimately his argument misses some of the most crucial reasons some coloureds have chosen to cling to or assert an identity that many assumed would wane after the end of apartheid. The fundamental question of this dissertation is, what are the driving forces behind contemporary assertions of coloured identity?

This research draws on theoretical approaches which assert that identities are constructed, imagined, or invented in relational settings and are affected by social, economic, political, and administrative factors. These theoretical perspectives emphasize that identities are not only constructed, but are also multiple, unstable, fragmented, negotiated, contingent, and contested. However, this framework has been taken for granted and it is often difficult to understand *how* identities are not only shaped but also maintained. Through this study of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa, I seek to move past broad theories that address the constructedness of group identities and try to show in detail the many factors that contribute to how people conceptualize and develop a narrative around a specific identity–colouredness. In the early chapters, I trace South Africa's history, starting with colonialism, to reveal the conditions under which a heterogeneous group of people came to understand themselves as different from the black, white, and later Indian populations. Ultimately, this dissertation argues that the end of apartheid ushered in new ways of conceptualizing coloured identity because of the social, political, and economic transformation that accompanied the transition. Rather than waning, colouredness has resurged. In fact, coloured identity has become *more* entrenched since the end of apartheid, and new formulations of coloured identity need to be understood in the context of: 1) apartheid-era categories; 2) post-apartheid conditions; and 3) diasporic scapes.

Through this analysis, this study reveals that present-day coloured identities should not simply be equated with old "Cape Coloured" formations, where people struggled to retain privileges granted to them under the stratified racial system of apartheid. Instead, the experiences and racial narratives of my participants illustrate that

redefinitions of coloured identity are being forged in the specific context of the post-apartheid environment, which includes extreme poverty, with at least 45 percent of households in the country living in poverty and unemployment rates of 40 percent in urban areas and up to 50 percent in rural areas. The country's crime rates are among the highest in the world, with gangsterism accounting for the excessively high murder rate. The South African people face some of the most unequal conditions in education, housing, healthcare, and wages. This social environment reinforces the impression that apartheid's demise has disadvantaged coloured people and left them feeling marginalized: they often argue, *First we were not white enough and now we're not black enough*. Those who express this position of marginality often cite the virtually unchanged living conditions of poor and working-class coloured people, especially in former coloured-only areas. In these areas poverty and unemployment help push young men into violent street gangs, and life appears to many to have become harder . Many feel there is no place for them in the new South Africa. These social inequalities, which are rooted in the past, have come to influence how coloured people relate to colouredness as they see members of their communities struggle to survive. The result is that some coloured people have developed a racial narrative that portrays the community as systematically marginalized and perhaps even discriminated against because of the privileges they were granted during apartheid. This has led some to argue that an overall sense of pride would help uplift the community.

As I illustrated throughout this dissertation, coloured people often claim that Africans are receiving preferential treatment through programs intended for racial redress and have increasingly critiqued affirmative action programs. As stated in Chapter Four,

Seekings and Nattrass (2002) conclude that in post-apartheid South Africa inequality is increasingly a function of class rather than race, and Bezuidenhout (2003) and De Swardt (2003) show that affirmative action policies often fail because they do not benefit the working class and poor. Finally, others claim that affirmative action betrays the ideals of non-racialism that so many fought and died for during the struggle against apartheid, that these policies constitute a form of reverse discrimination and ultimately will serve to re-racialize South African society (Dugger 2010; Durrheim 2003). Mullings (2005) notes that this color-blind perspective implies that the playing field is now level. Referring specifically to the United States, color blindness argues that the civil rights movement ended racism and the United States is now a color-blind society, where each individual is free to determine his or her destiny. Proponents of color blindness have sought to undermine many of the measures won during the civil rights period designed to prohibit and correct the consequences of the 300-year history of discrimination, such as affirmative action in education and employment and the federal enforcement of anti-discrimination laws (Bonilla-Silva 2003; Mullings 2005). This position would basically argue that apartheid has ended and South Africa is a color-blind society that is equal for all. This view is popular now, as noted earlier in this dissertation, and is asserted by the primarily white Democratic Alliance political party, the party that opposes the ANC. The political organization claims that their goal is to build an open-opportunity society for all. The organization’s website states:

> There is a long history of racial and ethnic division in South Africa; of racist discrimination; of racial suspicion and competition. In order to transcend this past, and usher in an era in which people are judged by their character, their effort and their contribution – and not by their race – we believe that attitude and policy should be based on the following:
>
> - An absolute rejection of discrimination on grounds of race and other characteristics of birth.
> - A clear acknowledgement that there is a long history of racial discrimination and oppression in South Africa, that it was wrong and that positive action is now required to make it right.
> - That positive action must be targeted at individuals who still suffer the effects of discrimination, not at groups. It must provide opportunity to the disadvantaged without shutting off opportunity to the advantaged.
> - A clear acknowledgement that all South Africans are legitimate and enjoy full moral equality – that is what it means to say South Africa "belongs" to all who live in it.
> - The active protection and promotion of the language and culture of all South Africans. (Democratic Alliance 2011)

Although equality makes sense, the main problem is that South Africa is not at all an equal society. Therefore, this position denies the centrality of the effects of racialized structural inequalities created during apartheid. A great disparity separates white and non-white populations. In fact, even though I have illustrated throughout this dissertation that most coloureds continue to struggle to meet their day-to-day needs, the reality is that overall their standard of living is still above that of the African population, which remains at the bottom of all social scales. It's clear that apartheid race categories continue to shape economic disadvantage in the country, particularly among poor African people.

This dissertation also explored the contradictory feelings and thoughts held collectively and individually by coloured people as they attempt to negotiate their identity in the new post-apartheid space. South Africa is still going through social transformation, and people's stories are still unfolding. Therefore, many of the identity questions raised in this study remain unresolved. This is why Charles Ash states, "I am

coloured until further notice." What I have hoped to illustrate is that constructions of coloured identity in contemporary South Africa are influenced by a number of factors, including class differences, perceptions of inequality, and direct or indirect experiences with apartheid. In Chapter Five I sought to show that in the new democratic dispensation coloured people have tried a number of ways to collectively analyze colouredness, reaching back into the past and highlighting certain historical or cultural aspects of coloured identity. I also attempted to illustrate that contemporary organized expressions around coloured identity have created the possibility for a public debate on the racial legacies of the apartheid past. Any form of public debate on coloured identity in the new South Africa would prove uncomfortable as the country tries to move away from racial politics; however, it is clear that the silencing of race is not the best way forward because it leaves some communities feeling left out of national discussions. In their book, *Under Construction: Race and Identity in South Africa Today*, Disteller and Steyn (2004) call for "a new vocabulary to address race in South Africa today." However, in *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism*, David Theo Goldberg (2009) argues that antiracialism's decategorization cannot be used to resist racism adequately. In other words, according to Goldberg, the terms of race are necessary to both understand and dismantle racism. Without racial language, without its categories, it becomes difficult to speak the name of racism and do the work of uncovering its disseminated presence. Goldberg further writes if antiracist commitment requires remembering and recalling, antiracialism suggests forgetting, getting over, moving on, wiping away the terms of reference. He ultimately describes doing away with the categories of race as a dangerous fiction if one thinks this serves to end racism. It is dangerous because simply mobilizing

against race at a discursive level allows deeper structural inequities to continue (Gillespie 2010). Similarly, Bonilla-Silva (2003) refers to this as color-blind racism. His theory of color-blind racism derives from the question, "How is it possible to have a tremendous degree of racial inequality in a country where most whites claim that race is no longer relevant?" (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2). The essence of "color-blind racism" according to Bonilla-Silva is that it "explains racial inequality as the outcome of nonracial dynamics, such as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, or cultural limitations" (Bonilla-Silva 2003, 2). The problem according to Goldberg is that "we are being asked to give up on race before and without addressing the legacy, the roots, the scars of racisms' histories, the weights of race. We are being asked to give up on the word, the concept, the category, at most the categorizing. But not, pointedly not, the conditions for which those terms stand" (Goldberg 2004, 19). It is clear then that the language of non-racialism is inadequate for addressing race in contemporary South Africa. First, it suggests a complete rupture with the past and fails to deal with the racial divisions and inequalities shaped by apartheid. Second, the language of non-racialism can be turned against those who are working to redress the inequities created by hundreds of years of racial discrimination. How then can the country work to empower those who have been historically excluded as a result of apartheid? At this point, the response to this particular question is unclear; however, what is clear is that the end of apartheid has not led to the improved living conditions that coloured working-class and poor people expected and so desperately required. Therefore, a more important question is, how can the working class and poor move past apartheid divide-and-rule tactics in order to mobilize across race and class lines in contemporary South Africa?

In the context of growing poverty and inequality in the country, there has been a growing frustration among working class and marginalized communities, and new resistance struggles are emerging (Desai 2002). Since 2005, the police have conservatively measured an annual average of more than eight thousand "Gathering Act" incidents—public demonstrations legally defined as involving more than fifteen demonstrators (Bond 2010, 17). The most noted examples of these new social movements are the Abahlali baseMjondolo (Shack Dwellers) Movement, Landless People's Movement (LPM), and the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) that, respectively, address land and housing in the city and the provision of water electricity, sanitation, and healthcare; the slow pace of land redistribution; and the government's failure to respond adequately to HIV/AIDS. The Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee (SECC), the Concerned Citizens Group (CCG), and the Anti-Eviction Campaign (AEC), are all attempts to organize poor and marginalized communities to resist local, provincial, and national governments' attempts to cut off electricity and water, and evict residents (Ballard et al. 2005). Additionally, just after the 2010 FIFA World Cup which was held in South Africa, around 1.3 million state sector workers went on strike for four weeks, demanding increased pay. One highly important feature of the strikes was the relatively high degree of interracial union and worker cooperation (Bekker and van der Walt 2010). According to Ballard et al. (2005) contemporary resistance struggles are by no means unitary and uniform. A quick scan of the issues they represent indicates a massive diversity of concerns: land equity, gender, sexuality, racism, environment, education, formal labor, informal labor, access to infrastructure, housing, eviction, HIV/AIDS treatment, crime and safety, debt, and geopolitics. Many movements suggest they draw

from class-based ideologies with such notable self-descriptions as anti-neoliberal, anti-capital, anti-GEAR, anti-globalization, anti-market, and pro-poor, pro-human rights, socialist, and Trotskyite (Ballard et al. 2005).

What I suggest therefore is that contemporary class-based resistance struggles in South Africa have the potential to unearth structural racism[81] and create a space for the articulation of subaltern consciousness and counter-narratives, doing so in a way that can build alliances between different ethno-racial groups if opportunities are acted upon (Mullings 2005). For example, Bekker and van der Walt (2010) note that the most glaring failure of the strikes immediately after the FIFA World Cup was the missed opportunity to link the union struggle to the struggle of other sections of the working class. The strike was strongest in state hospitals and schools in the townships, where the African, coloured, and Indian working class remain concentrated. Therefore, the main impact of the disruption of services was on working-class and poor communities, not private hospitals and schools that serve middle and affluent people. According to Bekker and van der Walt (148), this served to drive a wedge between different sectors of the working class because hospitals were left unattended, students lost days in the classroom, and parents were left scrambling for childcare. These actions were used by the media and government to vilify strikers, especially because a mid-level civil servant already makes about 40 percent more in wages and benefits than the average South African worker, who takes home 6,383 Rand (US$880) a month (Herskovitz 2010). Instead Bekker and van der Walt (149) argue if the strikers had emphasized that state hospitals and township schools are run down and underfunded and had incorporated demands for improvement

[81] Structural racism "refers to the dynamics of economic and social institutions through which racialised groups become systematically marginalized or excluded." (Stavenhagen 1999, 9)

into their platforms, it might have been possible not only to capture proletarian public opinion but also to organize joint rallies. Overall, organizers could have incorporated other sections of the working class and poor (across ethno-racial categories) if they had included broader social and political issues into their economic demands. The problem, however, is that there is no language to address class unity in post-apartheid South Africa. Those fighting for social justice no longer have an overarching state enemy to overthrow.

In this study, I also posit that coloured post-apartheid generationers have responded to the ANC's inability to develop a meaningful dialogue on race by asserting colouredness. Furthermore, they find the language of non-racialism alienating. Many feel the government refuses to acknowledge the very specific social and economic issues facing coloured communities across the country. Coloured post-apartheid generationers have responded by attempting to put forth positive images of colouredness – showcasing either coloured role models or the ways coloureds can unite to get their respective communities' needs met, thereby making the nation-building process work for them. Youth and young adults no longer feel constrained by the politics of "the struggle," which obscured internal differences while people from all racial backgrounds faced a common enemy, apartheid. Young people now express their identities in ways starkly different from the ways older people, who came into their political maturity at a time when rejecting colouredness in favor of blackness meant one was aligned with progressive politics, expressed theirs. Responses from my informants and users' posts on bruin-ou.com's *The Forum* indicate that even while this younger generation is concerned with identifying as coloured, it is not interested in exclusionary race-based politics. This

was noted in Tessie's comment, "To answer the question with my limited understanding on the subject, my answer is no. I would not vote for a 'coloured' party just because it's a coloured party." Similarly, Spell Jammer wrote, "My political sphere is a tad more developed than operating on the principle of watered-down tribalism of particular races' interests being represented. I think you should be a tad more careful about wanting to change the composition of a nation for racial and political reasons." For the first time in the country's history, a new generation has come of age asserting coloured identity in no uncertain terms because post-apartheid South Africa has created new spaces for the assertion and creation of identities in ways that seemed impossible in the past. Diasporean notions of race have created possibilities for post-apartheid generationers to move past local South African notions of race, thus allowing coloured youth and young adults a chance to articulate a blackness that links up with global understandings of blackness that are based on oppression and discrimination. This affirmation of belonging to a broader African Diaspora could serve as one of the building blocks to coloureds' moving toward challenging racial inequality in conjunction with Africans in contemporary South Africa.

Coloured identity remains contentious in the country. One of the factors contributing to what happens with this identity is how well the ANC addresses the extreme social inequities in post-apartheid South Africa. Apartheid entrenched racialized identities and fostered racial division while simultaneously exacerbating inequality in the distribution of income. The new democratic state faces the challenge of tackling these legacies of racialized social engineering. South Africans tend to see their society in racialized terms, and if asked about racial identities, only a small proportion of

the populace considers using terms other than the apartheid-era categories of African, white, coloured, and Indian. This does not mean, however, that these are the only identities citizens have. Asked who they are, South Africans will often say they are South African and are proud of this (see Grossberg, Struwig and Pillay 2006).

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