Unimagined Communities: Post-Apartheid Nation-Building, Memory and Institutional Change in South Africa (1990-2010)

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Political Science
University of Toronto

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Abstract

Studies of nationalism and nation-states insist that the construction of usable pasts is central to the creation of national solidarities and the very identity of a nation. The memory/nation nexus is taken for granted in scholarship on nation-building. However, this scholarship is limited by the scant attention that is paid to how those pasts are constructed, or what the mechanisms are through which decision-making occurs. The results of this neglect are often abstracted assumptions that presume a voluntarism and coherence that most often does not exist.

Repeatedly, studies focus on the products of memorialization which generates a tendency to impose consistency and statist intentionality, after the fact, on what is a contingent, messy and complicated process. In addition, studies often assume a singularity of power, located in an unfragmented state, with authoritarian capacity to produce meaning.

This dissertation remedies these flaws by paying attention to the processes and procedures through which memorialization and nation-building are constructed. It focuses specifically on post-Apartheid South Africa where these processes are currently unfolding. It examines the context of South Africa’s transition, which has produced multiple continuities with and changes from Apartheid institutions. The partial critical juncture that enabled South Africa’s transition ensured that there were no clear victors resulting from the struggle for and against the legislated system. The “new” nation thus had to be imagined within a context of deep antagonisms and a colonialism that was theorized as internal. This meant that the relationship between the settlers and the colonized would have to be transformed into a unified national imaginary; a new nation of equal citizenship needed to be imagined on persistent bedrock of inequality and bitter violence. In other words, the making of the memory-nation is theorized as both path-dependent and contingent.

This perspective emerges through tracing the processes of memory-making; processes that reveal a neglectful, rather than an assertive governing party, contested approaches within the state, and a multiplicity of variables within the party and within local contexts that limit and enable different approaches (including the character of the ANC and the character of opposition). There are numerous factors at play in understanding memory-making including the character of transition, fractions within the governing party, frictions in the state, and the relationship between national, international and local contexts. In tracing the processes of memory-making as
they are attached to nation-building, this dissertation pays careful attention to processual analysis that rejects the reification of “the nation” and its memory. Reification inadvertently or deliberately participates in the production of the very memory/nation under scrutiny. It argues that on-going dynamics of power in bureaucratic states tend to lend formal benefit to the already empowered with the so-called previously disadvantaged reliant on more informal mechanisms of asserting voice; in other words, in the context of the post-Apartheid dispensation, democratization and decolonization are not necessarily simultaneous processes. The dissertation does not present a puzzle for resolution, but instead suggests a method of reading the construction of the memory-nation. This method takes context and contingency not as variables in theory, but as theory itself. Thus, the unexceptional exceptionalism that is the nation-state in this global conjuncture can be analyzed and understood.
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Acknowledgements

If I were to properly acknowledge all who played a role in seeing me through this dissertation process, I would produce a longer document that the thesis itself. Like raising a child, it takes a village to raise a dissertation. My village has consisted of comrades, friends, colleagues, students and family. To all, I am deeply grateful. I am especially honoured to have worked with Dickson Eyoh as my supervisor. I have been enriched by every encounter I have had with his great mind. His patience and intellectual generosity are boundless. His irreverence and healthy cynicism kept my work grounded and helped me understand the interplay of specificity and universalisms as I worked my way out of the heady exceptionalism that those nationalized as South African are notorious for. Also in the village are my teachers and friends, Antoinette Handley, Sean Hawkins and Ato Quayson who went above and beyond any dutiful calls. They have mentored me, calmed me, been interlocutors and emotional supports throughout the PhD. Their intellectual dynamism coupled with thoughtfulness and precision continues to inspire awe. Courtney Jung, Paul Kingston, Wambui Mwangi, Joseph Wong and Eyal Naveh are teachers who have shaped my thinking in significant ways and I can’t believe my luck at having encountered them along the way. At the end of the PhD process, I was examined by Pablo Idahosa and I could not have imagined a more generous and astute interlocutor.

My colleagues and friends, Thembele Kepe and Bettina von Lieres held my hand and sustained my curiosity as we co-edited my first academic book. My dear comrades, interlocutors and friends, Jon Soske and Melanie Samson beat the narrow nationalism out of me as they enlarged my intellectual horizon. Elinor Bray-Collins, Merom Kalie, Juan Marsiaj, Erica Frederiksen, Mitu Sengupta, Arjun Tremblay, Noaman Ali, Luke Melchiorre, Dubi Kanengisser, Kate Korycki, Ozlem Aslan, Karlo Basta, Omar Sirri, James McKee, Khalid Ahmed, Craig Smith, Linzi Manicom and Andrea Meeson (editor extraordinaire) at different times, and some throughout the programme, kept me thinking, kept me (in)sane and offered me friendship that has sustained me.

Carolynn Branton is a saint and walked me through multiple administrative hurdles as if I was the only graduate student she worked with (there are many, many others). Louis Tentsos
provided essential administrative support throughout. The Department of Political Science patiently supported my ill-discipline and reined me in when it was necessary.

New College, where I have taught throughout the PhD, has become a home. The faculty, students and administrators at the College will surely see themselves in these pages as they have enabled and inspired my work.

Sean Jacobs and Africa is a Country as a whole provided me with an opportunity to belong to a more public community which is often inaccessible in the isolation of PhD writing and single parenting. For my comrades, family, friends and colleagues in South Africa and Namibia who opened doors, gave me places to stay and offered their time and insights in interviews, I am truly grateful. The Liebermans, Orfords, Murphy-Naidoos gave me sanctuary. In particular, Subesh Pillay, Pallo Jordan, Mandla Langa, Tony Trew, Saki Macozoma, Bridget Mabandla, Mike Sutcliffe, Neeshan Balton and Mac Maharaj gave time and provided tremendous support for this work. There are many others who are deeply valued who have chosen to remain anonymous.

My siblings, cousins, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews have been my rock. Without my mother, Carla Levin, I would not have been able to do this work. It is to her that I dedicate this work. It is also dedicated to my father, Cyril Levin, who loved me even when I rejected his politics. He would have been proud to see this finished. This work is dedicated to the fighting spirit of the ANC, an organization that has formed me. Perhaps it can forgive my critique. And finally, this work is dedicated to Natali Hava Levin, of course.

This work would not have been possible without the generous financial support provided by Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies Beattie Fellowship, the Ontario Graduate Scholarship Frank Peers Award, the McCuag-Throop Bursary, the New College Senior Doctoral Fellowship, the CERES award as well as the University of Toronto fellowships.

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author and are not necessarily to be attributed to the NRF.
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Preface

Being Inside Out: On Research, Positionality and Methodology

…the researcher’s positionality and biography directly affect fieldwork and that fieldwork is a dialogical process which is structured by the researcher and the participants (England, 1994, p. 80)

The challenge to neo-positivist research disputes the ideal of neutrality in science and disabuses the notion of a subject/object dichotomy. In this sense, the researcher and researched are dialogically related and that relationship is imbued with power dynamics that need to be reflexively accounted for. Post-structuralist and feminist critiques of knowledge production suggest that knowledge and power are mutually constitutive. More recent critiques of knowledge production recognize the limitations of research as a site for reproducing power relations and thus seek to ‘decolonize’ research methods.

Key to feminist, post-structuralist and indigenous critiques of knowledge production is the non-neutrality of research in respect of its methods and findings, the reflexivity in respect of the power relation between researcher and researched and the imposition of a knowledge system that defines the parameters of social reflection. Decolonial theories and methodologies attempt to challenge this power. Inevitably, the issues of reliability of research that is more flexible and reflexive as well as the unpredictability disrupts or unsettles the paradigms of social science and forces a revisit of the ideas of understanding and/or explaining processes in the world.

Conscious of these critiques, my own research has evolved taking a number of considerations into account:

1. Who do I dialogue with? Where do I focus my ‘gaze’?
2. How do I structure my research? What methodologies do I use?
3. What does my position as a white South African mean for my research?
4. What does my position as an activist within the broad liberation formations that now govern the country mean for my research?
5. What does my historical position as an employee of the ANC mean for my research?
Additional issues that came up along the way include the fact that I am a single parent. Most of my field research was conducted when my child was 1-2 years old and again when she was 2-3. This will be discussed below.

In thinking through this project, I have borrowed Pierre Nora’s idea of ‘ego-histoire’. Nora calls on historians to locate themselves in their research, to consider their place in the culture of knowledge production and to reflect on their position as subjects within history. In summary, Nora’s (1987) perspective submits:

For a century now, the scientific tradition as a whole has forced historians to absent themselves from the scene of their work, to hide their personalities behind their knowledge, to set up barricades with file notes, to run away to some other period, to only express themselves through others. The self is only briefly authorized in the thesis dedication or in the preface to a book. For the last 20 years, historiography has shown up the pretenses of this impersonality and how its guarantees lie on shaky ground. Historians today are, unlike their predecessors, ready to admit there is a close and quite intimate link between themselves and their work. No one is unaware that spelling out one’s involvement with the material offers a better protection than vain protests about objectivity. The stumbling block thus turns into an advantage. The unveiling and analysis of existential involvement, rather than moving away from some impartial investigation, becomes instead an instrument for improving understanding.

In other words, we are all, as researchers, implicated in multiple ways in the subject/object of our analysis. Our critique is always immanent.

I arrived at the topic for this dissertation because I was confronted with a number of quite deeply personal issues. The house where I grew up in white South Africa is remembered always in the grainy hyper-colour of soundless Super8. I was never particularly unhappy, in those frames. And neither were the black maids that appeared, smiling, holding me, in many of those moving pictures. I don’t recall much outside of the mediated images of 1970s film and later, some 1980s video. But I do recall the certainty of my world. I was a nationalized subject as a Zionist educated child following a Transvaal Education Department curriculum, and thus took my white place in the world for granted. Even when I became aware of the injustices of Apartheid as a young teenager, my response was premised on my superior interior life.
When I left school at 17, I was headed to Hebrew University in Jerusalem where I would begin a process towards making aliyah. But a few things happened when I was there. I joined an international student organization because of a guy I had a crush on. (It happened to align with a Palestinian students’ organization). I was asked by my progressive neighbours to do a presentation on the similarities between Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa (which caused me to think). I joined another group, amusingly named “The Progressive Zionist Caucus”, also because of a boy. Such was my narrow-mindedness that during the first intifada I walked around Jerusalem’s Old City with a T-shirt declaring my political affiliation. An aged Palestinian man accosted me, yelling, “Zionist, Zionist, why are you a Zionist?” And to my changed awareness amusement, I replied, “but, but, sir, I am a progressive Zionist!” Another opportunity to think beyond the nationalist paradigms of my youth.

But most profoundly, it was a simple friendship that altered my thinking. She was Almaza, a Palestinian student from the West Bank who lived on the same floor as I did in university residence. We became close friends and I would travel home with her on weekends to her family. They were kind, generous and thoughtful. And with that, a friendship trumped nationalism. I spent the rest of the year participating in Women in Black demonstrations and returned to South Africa to join the ANC. I have been a member for 26 years. I was also a member of the South African Communist Party and served in the Provincial Executive for Gauteng. I was a National Executive Committee member of the ANC Youth League. I worked in the headquarters of the ANC for seven years and continued to serve in a voluntary and consulting capacity for many years after.

In my time in positions of leadership and as a director of strategy and research, I was, in equal measure, entertained and confounded by opinion pieces in various media and scholarship that suggested that certain events were tightly managed and directed by the ANC and unfolded according to its collective and united wish. How I wished! I would joke that if we were that organized we wouldn’t just rule South Africa, but the world would be ours! There were so many nodes of conflict that were incurable even with an aspiration to ‘democratic centralism’. From the organization’s basic units, the branches, through to its National Working Committee, various battles played themselves out in often democratic ways and were sometimes resolved and sometimes not. The schism between those who remained in the head office and those who went to government continues to fracture the organization. The conflicts between different provinces
and between some provinces and the national office remain intact. The contests for powers within the leagues remain issues. Sometimes policies and ideas are driven by committees and sometimes by individuals. The Tripartite Alliance fragments the center even more.

Historically there was talk that the different modes of organizing within the United Democratic Front (UDF), the ANC in exile, the ANC’s armed wing and ANC prisoners fractured the unity of the organization. It occurred to me that the ANC was viewed through a lens (over)determined by the course of most anti-colonial nationalist movements on the continent: that they were necessarily authoritarian and incapable of (re)producing democratic institutions. While that was certainly the trajectory of the post-colonial state from the period of so-called decolonization, South Africa’s liberation occurred in the midst of a deep de-legitimization of authoritarianism globally. This does not exceptionalize South Africa as such. But it does suggest that changed global conditions would demand changes in governing and adjustments to our reading of political life in Africa. I thus became interested in understanding what this over-determination does to our understanding of political change and power and how this over-determination is implicated in the production of power and transformation of the polity.

But it was not just ‘reading’ African politics and power that I was interested in. Back to my Zionist roots, I became increasingly interested in the extent to which the narratives I was immersed in as a child and young person necessarily contradicted my friend Almaza’s narratives. Indeed, in my youthful indoctrination, Almaza at once existed and did not exist. In our early nationalist stories, the land destined to be Israel was simultaneously an empty land and a land that needed to be fought for against antagonistic inhabitants. Her Nakba was my emancipation from the horrors of the Shoah. My ‘South African Forest’ in Israel served to erase the memory of the village and its occupants who lived there for centuries before.\(^1\) I began to wonder how these two ‘communities of memory’ would ever find each other, would ever be able to live together in a single community. South Africa’s transition was a place I thought could perhaps give me some answers. In other words, I would look to South Africa to see the extent to which old/new

\(^1\) The villagers of Lubya were expelled in the so-called War of Independence in 1947/48. The Jewish National Fund planted a forest over the village with monies collected from South Africa. The trees in the forest are pine – these are not indigenous to Palestine but instead serve to Europeanize the landscape in an attempt to naturalize its changed ownership.
narratives could forge a single national community where deep historical antagonisms existed and continued to live.

But I come to this research with firmly held ideas about the colonization of Africa in general and South Africa in particular. I come with firmly held perspectives on the relationship of capitalism and colonialism and of whiteness and privilege. This is not exceptional. Every scholar will have perspectives on the world. The additional consideration in my instance, is that I am implicated in the work of ‘history-making’ on behalf of the ANC. In my various roles I have conducted political education workshops for branches and regions that consider the history and unfolding drama of national liberation. I have been directly involved in cultivating ANC election messages that historicize the organization in particular ways. This means that I have, at once, deep insight into the workings of the organization at the same time as I am its product. I have struggled in this research not to become too involved in ‘national’ battles and have deliberately engaged with the work of Jeffrey K. Olick (2003) and Rogers Brubaker (1996) who remind me constantly of the witting or unwitting position of the scholar in reproducing nationalist and nationalizing discourses.

In respect of the questions I posed above, I decided to direct my research agenda to the so-called memory-makers. Scholars such as Wulf Kansteiner (2002) suggest that we spend too much time on the producers of memory and not enough on the consumers. However, I was interested in learning exactly how much authoring of ‘the past’ actually occurs in a centralized way given what I know about the organization. I also somewhat avoided the dynamic of power that is often associated with research and, certainly, with whiteness in South Africa. In focusing on the ‘memory-makers’ I had significant access to considerable amounts of time with many of the key strategic thinkers in the ANC, including Pallo Jordan (a former minister of arts and culture), Joel Netshitendzhe (a former aide to Mandela and CEO of Government Communication and Information Services), Brigitte Mabandla (a former Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture under Mandela), Mongane “Wally” Serote (central in the arts and culture terrain of the ANC and former CEO of the Freedom Park) and Kgalema Motlanthe (the former deputy president and president of South Africa). In total, more than 50 interviews were conducted with key politicians and activists from branch, provincial and national levels, state bureaucrats and academics. I also

2 Funnily enough, at some points in my life I was known across the country as “Melissa from the ANC”!
had access to relevant ANC documents and scoured the parliamentary archives for debates pertaining to commemoration. I visited old and new museums, monuments and memorials including a tour of Robben Island led by Ahmed Kathrada (imprisoned there with Nelson Mandela). Given the tensions that persist within the ANC, I suspect there were interviews I was not able to get because of my perceived closeness to various contending figures.\(^3\)

I have tried hard not to impose my views on my research by paying attention to questions of process. In interviews I consistently ask respondents to describe the processes through which decisions have been taken. The public record, including legal documents and court records, parliamentary debates and newspaper articles have helped me read through some of the issues that have become apparent in the interviews. I have sought to evolve theoretical insights from the empirical evidence, rather than impose theory on the empirics. In this sense, the dissertation makes no claims to generalizable theory, a theory that can be applied to every post-colonial state, to every African postcolony or to every democratizing postcolony of the 1990s. Rather, this study offers insights into a single country with numerous cases that broaden our understanding of reading dynamics of change, and power in fractured, racialized and unequal societies.

As such, the study can be understood as an “analytical narrative” (Bates et al., 1998), an account that seeks to produce an understanding, in this instance, of the “memory/nation nexus” through historical contextualization and paying close attention to the myriad processes through which a nationalist organization, occupying both the place of social movement and the majority party in government, constructs narratives of the past in order to produce national solidarities in the present. The study therefore focuses on “thick description” (Geertz, 1973) and, ultimately points towards “contingent generalizations” (George and Bennett, p. 216). This approach is a reflection of my reluctance to impose analytical order over processes that are often significantly disordered.

Finally, all my research was conducted with my child in tow. As a single parent and student I had limited access to funding and care. My field research was conducted away from what my child considered home and her unfamiliarity with the place and people made it difficult to leave her with anyone while I was away at work. I was thus much less flexible than I would’ve been had I been alone. In addition, when I listen to interviews now, I hear the extent to which I was

\(^3\) Having said this, I did however interview both Saki Macozoma and Mac Maharaj, who are considered to be antagonists. I regard both of them as friends.
distracted from both my work and her. She would sometimes interrupt me and an important insight would be lost. But, she also opened doors for me. Given my political history, I was worried about interviewing some local state employees who were still from the old regime. One person in particular proved to be an excellent source of knowledge and understanding of the frictions between the politicians and the bureaucrats at local level. She was clearly uncomfortable when I first arrived in her office. But my child wanted to nurse and in an instant I was transformed from potential antagonist into potential ally as she sought to make me comfortable, locked her office door so my child and I wouldn’t be interrupted and began talking to me about her children.

I went on to nurse my child in almost every interview I conducted. My choice was either to end the interview at the moment she wanted to nurse or surreptitiously breastfeed her. It is important to note that it is not inconceivable in South Africa, as it would be in Canada, to have a child at work. In many interviews, particularly with people I had not yet met, breastfeeding my child was regarded as an honourable thing and transformed me into an adult, a person with responsibilities, an interlocutor, rather than simply a student. During one of my interviews, when my child began nursing, the interviewee slowed down considerably and invited me to come and observe a meeting of the political committee on place and street renaming. Before that he was rushing through the interview, eager for it to end.
Chapter One

Introduction: The Memory/Nation Nexus, Critical Junctures and the Return of the Repressed in Memory Studies

The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots (Trouillot, 1996, p. xix).

I don’t believe that the question of ‘who exercises power?’ can be resolved unless that other question ‘how does it happen?’ is resolved at the same time (Foucault 1988, p. 103).

…the link between ideology and class is forged, not because the former directly ‘expresses’ the latter, but by the way of a more complex process in which a specific disposition of class power is unconsciously transferred or displaced into the unstated premise of an argument, which then structures the whole of the logic apparently beyond the conscious awareness of the so-called ‘author’… (Hall, 1986, p. 51)

All reification is a forgetting (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2002 [1940], p. 191)

Nations are not made in heaven. They are not static and unchanging. Nations are products of politics, history, and social and economic processes. New issues arise from time to time which require a fresh analysis of nation-building… the national question will always be with us (ANC, Strategy and Tactics, 2005)

This dissertation considers the following three inter-related questions: What is the relationship between ‘memory’ and ‘nation’ in the forging of national solidarity in former settler colonies? In the post-colony, what can an analysis of the production of the memory-nation reveal about power and its exercise? And, finally, within this construction, what are the mechanisms through which cultural identities in nationalist terms, as they pertain to ‘the past’, are contested and produced? To answer these questions, the dissertation pays attention to the multiple processes through which power reveals itself in memorial practices of, specifically, the post-Apartheid South African state. The dissertation argues that South Africa’s “transition” reveals the resilience of institutions even at moments of considerable potential rupture, or what new institutionalist
literature identifies as a “critical juncture”. This resilience often relates to normalized institutional practices, processes and discourses. New ideas and practices engage with the old in a manner that, at once, transforms institutions and reconstitutes community while reproducing already existing relations of power. In other words, constructing ‘new’ South African nationness is rendered possible and also limited by the critical juncture. In this, the dissertation presents an argument where path dependence intersects with constructivism. In the South African circumstance, political will or agency for post-Apartheid nation-building derives capacity from and is limited by sets of national and global restructuring at the end of the 20th century.

In this sense, the argument is a post-constructivist one. Constructivists would view national identity “as the product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as speech code, cultural practice, ecological adaptation and political organization become woven into a consciousness of shared identity” (Young in Yeros, p. 4, my italics). While this challenge to primordialist notions of being and belonging is a necessary one, it too has been challenged on the basis of its ‘normative assumptions’, its “politically disempowering assumptions of a top-down, once-and-for-all understanding of social change”, a voluntarism that is untenable in the world of institutions, legacies, powers, multiple interests and the messiness of everyday life. The perspective of this dissertation then does not take ‘the nation’ for granted, but also does not advance an argument that communities are ‘invented’ from thin air and imposed by elites, so-called ‘social entrepreneurs’ or a state. As such, it advances a three-dimensional argument with respect to nation-building:

- It occurs in an historical context not of the making of the builders.
- There are multiple nodes of contestation that are advanced by groups in the making; that is, their very identity as a group is fashioned and reproduced by the contest itself (including sections of the state and contending forces in within and between political organizations and parties).
- In the context of historical inequalities, the newly forming elite is, at best, a “dominated fraction of the dominant class”\(^4\) in Bourdieu’s terms (1984).

\(^4\) Here, Bourdieu (1984) refers to the place of the intellectual as having cultural capital, but little in the way of economic or political power and thus does not act against the bourgeoisie though it might critique it. I find this designation useful in understanding the position of post-colonial political leadership whose political and cultural agency is contained by its limited economic power.
As such, an historical institutionalist approach, which emphasizes “the importance of political institutions for structuring political behaviour” (Steinmo, 2008, p. 118) provides the lens through which the memory/nation nexus in South Africa is read. Indeed, the thesis will elucidate the manner in which the “battle of ideas”, in particular, the struggles over memorialization and the identity of “the nation” are mediated or refracted through the institutional practices, processes and milieus in which they unfold. That setting, it must be emphasized, is not just national, but is sub-, inter-, trans-national too. This is not always emphasized in the literature on historical institutionalism, which is often constrained by its accent on the national.

What is central to this thesis then is to produce an understanding of the uses of the notion of collective memory in the service of power. The thesis suggests that there are two inter-related deployments of contemporary memory practices:

• To produce the collectivity that is to be remembered (in contemporary terms, this primarily takes the form of the nation-state); in other words, to build and naturalize national solidarities; and
• To produce a justification for, or legitimation of social practices; in other words, to produce and naturalize the limits of the possible that pertain to the particular nation in question.

Drawing inspiration from the opening quotes, this dissertation argues that memorialization serves to normalize and naturalize relations of power and is thus deeply ideological. Indeed, the idea of ‘forgetting’ in respect of ‘collective memory’ refers to a process of naturalization such that relations of power and its consequences assume a taken-for-grantedness, where relations of power are embraced as common-sense.

The memory/nation nexus

As far as nationalism is concerned then, memorialization strategies serve to naturalize both the nation-state form and its content. Even when the content is contested, the battle reinforces its form.

The idea of organizing groups of people into a bureaucratic state that has more depth and potential longevity through producing solidarities has been the primary task of nation-builders.
Such agents of nationalism have pursued their projects on multiple levels in manifold spheres: people are nationalized through bureaucratic procedures, through state-led institutions, and through the stories that are told to provide the justification for binding some people together and not others. The discursive logic of nationness operates to transform “the abstract categorical conception of the nation into a taken-for-granted frame of reference” and thereby naturalizing national belonging (Goswami, 2002, p. 2). The frame and content of this discursive logic are generated through a preoccupation with the historical depth of the political community and the interpretation of the history of the encounter of various groups and peoples as continuous, determined and determining an intimacy that relegates all other intimacies to a subordinate position. In other words, central to the process of nation-building is the imagining of a national past and the production of a collective memorialization of that past (cf. Smith 1986, 1996; Anderson, 1991; Gilroy, 1987). In temporal terms, the nation is “Janus-faced” (Nairn, 1977) in that it looks to the past to gain legitimacy as a timeless community, as it looks forward to promote the common destiny assumed by that timelessness. It peers both ways simultaneously in an effort to create ‘common-sense’ solidarities between people otherwise fractured through race, class, gender and other relationships.

This memory/nation nexus has been well-established:

Since at least the nineteenth century, scholars and politicians alike have recognized the fundamental connection between memory and the nation. While political elites invented and propagated legitimating traditions, historians objectified the nation as a unitary entity with a linear descent (Olick: 2003, p.10)

The importance of what has become known as “collective memory” to nationalism has been elucidated for more than one hundred years coinciding with the efforts of European nationalists to entrench national solidarities over all others. The memory/nation nexus is regarded as central to the production and reproduction of the idea of the nation as the horizon through which political power is broadcast globally, as well as the idea of a nationalized identity that supersedes all others as the pivot around which human solidarity is forged.

The debate between the perennialists and the constructivists over the origins of the nation as the organizing principle of statehood and belonging resolves for a moment in the discussion on the
importance of history to nation-building. \(^5\) In respect of national identity formation and belonging, the past and, specifically, the construction of a ‘usable past’ is key. The epic battle between Ernest Gellner (1996) and Anthony D. Smith (1996) as to whether nations have navels or not ultimately reached agreement that the past matters in the forging of national identity. Indeed, “national collective memory and national identity… are mutually constitutive” (Muller, 2002, p. 3). Whether the nation has a navel or not is less important than the nationalist ideal of generating a navel that is meaningful and provides legitimacy for the nation-building project. At the very least, nationalists provide the content for an imagined navel that revises, revisits and reflects upon the narratives of imaginary navels that have come before. In other words, the forging of the myths of collectivities are not exercises in pure voluntarism, but demand, for their believability and penetration, a succession of prior myths and material circumstances that make the connectedness between groups of people tangible. This involves a process of “reconstitut[ing] particularism” – a process that became universal in the world dominated by the principle and form of nation-states, and its manifestations continue to be contingent – tied to the particular junctures within which they are constituted and reconstituted. What this means is that forging a past of nationness that builds present and future national solidarities is a political act of culture where, at once, pasts are interpreted in particular ways and hegemony is built through mass consent to that interpretation.

Central to the idea of a “collective memory” is a “collective amnesia” or an agreed upon and hegemonic laying to rest of many aspects of the past. As Ernst Renan (1994 [1882], p. 17-18) muses in his classic, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?* “… the essence of a nation is that all its people have a great deal in common, and also that they have forgotten a great deal”. But what is remembered and forgotten, how it is recalled and buried and why certain choices are made historically cannot be taken for granted and are subject to the contexts of their constructions. To borrow from and slightly distort Karl Marx: “nationalists make memory, but not in circumstances of their choosing.”

Suffice to say, it is assumed that, from the late 19\(^{th}\) century onwards, making pasts usable for constructing national identity and solidarity is the task of nationalists and nation-state builders

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\(^5\) This debate echoes the debate about ‘collective memory’: whether it is ‘presentist’ or embedded in an “actual past” (see the later discussion on memory in this introduction.)
everywhere. As Olick (2003, p. 1) correctly asserts in summary of the scholarly assumption, “…political elites invented and propagated legitimating traditions”, while “historians objectified the nation as a unitary entity with a linear descent”. As such, “methodological nationalism” (Goswami, 2002, p. 4) and the reification of categories of analysis (cf. Brubaker, 1996) remains a challenge to scholars.

But what is more difficult to unravel and what is rather absent in much of the literature about this relationship is how and why nationalists produce the particular national story, and, in turn, how or why the story is internalized. In general, scholars of memorialization analyze the products of commemorative practices, such as museums, memorials, history textbooks and, recently, place-naming practices. But largely absent from the analysis are the processes through which this commemorative edifice is constructed. Neglecting the process for a retrospective analysis of the results imposes a coherence to a nationalist strategy that does not necessarily exist. It also assumes the authorial and authoritarian character of statist memory-making as it pertains to national identity. In doing so, the analyses often misrecognize the dynamics of power in defining the cultural identity of nationness, as well as the relationship between winning elections and winning power – especially in the “regimes of becoming” that are the postcolonies and reify “the state” as a singular entity that is guided by a singular and hegemonic logic.⁶

The South African case study permits us to observe, “thickly describe” and thus produce an “analytical narrative” of the efforts at nation-building as they unfold since Africa’s “two epochal phases” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001, p. 632) of decolonization in the 1960s and democratization in the 1990s are here wrapped up together. The multiple imperatives that confronted African states in these two moments demand simultaneous attention in the South African case, including the transition from authoritarian states to a democratic one, the decolonization of social and economic life and the building of national solidarity between people who were deliberately divided (through strategies of racism and ethnicization). This is not to suggest that there is a moment in which nation-building ceases – this dissertation adheres to the perspectives articulated by social scientists such as Brubaker (1996) and Olick (2003, 2011) who

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⁶ For example, in South Africa, there are 284 municipalities, and, given the average number of directorates and departments in each directorate, there are about 6,000 departments at the level of the local state alone. By way of illustration too, after 1994, the new South African national department of education had to incorporate 19 different education departments (including the racialized departments as well as the Bantustan departments) in the context of “Sunset Clauses” which rejected the sacking of Apartheid functionaries.
suggest a “processual” character of nation-making – that it is built and reinforced in the everyday actions and being of bureaucrats, newspapers, work etc. Nation-making in this sense is more banal, “an endemic condition” (Billig, 1995, p. 6) rather than a spectacular set of occurrences. However, the critical juncture that pertains to South Africa in 1990, opens up an opportunity for telescoping these processes as they become naturalized.

This introduction will proceed by offering a perspective on the National Question at South Africa’s critical juncture, consider what collective memory means and present a framework within which the memory/nation nexus in South Africa can be read.

**The National Question Reframed**

Is there a national question in post-Apartheid South Africa? The easy answer is: not in the form in which it was conventionally understood! Yet no-one can pretend that South Africans share a common patriotism let alone a common vision for the future. Ours is still a highly racialized society and, since the 1970s, racism has been amplified with a sharpening of ethnic attitudes. (Jordan, Z.P. 1997)

Commemorative strategies as they pertain to nation-building in South Africa stand on four uneven and often contradictory pillars. Firstly, the nationalist movement at the helm of government seeks to unite an African population that would otherwise be segregated ethnically and continue to provide commonality and solidarity in opposition to both a pre-colonial past that was not unitary and a colonial past that sought to condition tribalism into unchanging, conflictual and hardened states. The ANC was formed in 1912 with a mandate to unite African (men) in the battle against colonialism. This unity was envisaged as anathema to the ‘demon of tribalism’.

Secondly, nation-builders adhere to an imperative of reconstituting a pre-colonial past and ‘heritage’ in opposition to a colonial compulsion to dehistoricize African life. They do this by using a language of diversity and multi-culturalism rather than the colonial moniker of tribalism.

Thirdly, indentured labourers from Indonesia, Malaysia and India, who were at once exploited by the colonizers at the same time as they were granted some status within a racial hierarchy, would

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7 This section explicitly alludes to the title of Rogers Brubaker’s “Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe” which is infused with the understanding that, “Nationalism can and should be understood without invoking “nations” as substantial entities. Instead of focusing on nations as real groups, we should focus on nationhood and nationness, on “nation” as practical category, institutionalized form, and contingent event. “Nation” is a category of practice…” (1996, p. 7).
need to be unified with the African masses. Fourthly, and at the same time as the previous three imperatives encounter and contradict each other, the nationalists need to construct commonality and solidarity between former oppressors and the oppressed where a national past can be ‘owned’ and ‘shared’ by all. This needs to be achieved through ensuring that it renders an acknowledgement of the wrongs perpetrated against the majority at the same time as nation-building demands that past injustices are rectified. The contradictory character of these pillars translates into a battle between historical claims and historical connectedness between the nationalized people.

For the ANC (cf. 1997), understanding the National Question in South Africa serves to inform the National Democratic Revolution (NDR), which seeks to achieve a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and united South Africa. The essence of the National Question emerges from a colonial dispensation that: produced ethnic enclaves in the later form of Bantustans as a means of domination; imported indentured labour from Indonesia, Malaysia and India, who were inserted into a racial hierarchy between Europeans at the top and Africans at the bottom; and produced what the ANC theorizes as Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) – a situation where the oppressor and oppressed share a single country (see Chapter Four for further elaboration). In 1997, the National Question is elaborated in 10 theses that pivot around these four issues. This document is itself a “forgetting” in the revisionist sense in that it displaces the idea of the ANC having a bias or leaning towards the working class and the poor (a perspective of the ANC that emerged from its Kabwe Consultative Conference of 1986). Instead, the 1997 document asserts only that the conditions of life of the poor, who are overwhelmingly African, should be improved in order to resolve the National Question. The fundamental contradiction in the document is the characterization of the National Question as at once being epiphenomenal (“the national question is … a superstructural phenomenon at the level of consciousness”) and can thus only be resolved through fundamental social and economic transformation, at the same time as “it is not merely a material question” (ANC, National Question, 1997), which leaves the tactical door open for a national struggle divorced from a socialist one.8

8 As far as material transformation is concerned, unemployment remains high: the 2011 unemployment rate was 28.9% and the expanded unemployment rate was 40%. Unemployment and labour participation rates are still deeply gendered and racialized (in the official unemployment rate, 34.6% of women are unemployed and 25.6% of men; 80% of white men work compared with 58.7% of African men). Numerous studies suggest that between group inequality is falling steadily while within group inequality is rising (Nattrass and Seekings, 2005; Terreblanche, 2002 and 2012; Handley, 2016). In other words, the imperative of deracializing the bourgeoisie is taking some effect
While the National Question has been debated with rigor over the decades within the ANC-led Alliance, it remains cast in Marxist terms. Marx (in the Communist Manifesto) at once regards the National Question as reflective of the colonial and capitalist constructions of working class divisions through the elevation of national identity over class solidarity. At the same time he regards national liberation struggles against colonialism as central to the ultimate attainment of socialism (articulated as Two-Stage Theory of Struggle in the Black Republic Thesis of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1929). While the post-1994 ANC has shed any connection with Marxism as political practice, it retains Marxist tools of analysis for understanding society. What this means is that the National Question can only be resolved through the deracialization of capital: of the bourgeoisie and the working class and, which, for the Alliance partners, registers the first stage in a two-stage struggle for socialism (in classical Marxist-Leninist fashion, the creation of conditions for sharpening the contradictions of capitalism is a necessary precursor to socialist revolution).

**The Critical Juncture**

For the dominant view in the ANC, the conjunctural conditions of “transition” meant that outright victory was not attained and compromise was necessary. In discussion documents leading up to the 50th national congress of the ANC, it is stated that,

…national liberation movements have, in many cases, been compelled to postpone aspects of their program in the light of an intractable tactical conjuncture. The retreat, in other words, is undertaken in order to prepare for a more coherent and better planned advance. (Jordan, 1997)

This view is common in scholarship too with the suggestion that the National Party (NP) conceded defeat at the very moment that the ANC could not claim victory (cf. Ndebele, N. 1990; Eglin, C. 1992; Welsh, D. 2009). Following this perspective, Thembinkosi Goniwe (in Gqola, (see latest census data). In addition, social assistance payments have expanded enormously, making South Africa a welfare state (see Handley, 2016; Seekings, 2007). In Social Services Minister Nene’s budget speech in 2015, he stated that social assistance beneficiaries numbered 16.4 million people. This figure constitutes about 30% of the population. James Ferguson (2015) identifies this as a new welfarism in that it is not a safety net, but a long-term pro-poor strategy that assumes jobless growth. Following from Jonny Steinberg, he advocates for a social wage for unemployed young men who are likely to never work. If this is the case, the state would need to produce a consensus among the deracialized middle class to provide taxes for the vast number of South Africans who are superfluous in respect of the economy and for those rendered superfluous, that they will be satisfied with a social wage.
2010, p. 2) contends that “apartheid and post-apartheid are simultaneously connected and oppositional”. In other words, South Africa’s critical juncture which is signified as transition is inflected with the capacity for both continuity and rupture. Critiques of “transitology” posit that rather than the seamlessness evoked by this democratization paradigm, transition evokes crisis, and often violence, as the promise of the new and the threat of the old contend for dominance. The “critical juncture” according to historical institutionalism (see Collier and Collier, 1991; Kohli, 2004; Mahoney and Thelen, 2009) is a moment that produces possibility for profound change in the context of otherwise steadfast reproduction of statist institutions. Endogenous and exogenous factors colluded in the late 1980s and early 1990s that supported institutional transformation in South Africa. These same global and domestic factors constrained and limited the possibilities for change.

In this context, the scholarship on institutional change as it relates to critical junctures, often over-states the potential for change where new institutions elaborate mechanisms of feedback through which transformations occur (cf. Kingston, 2013). The scholarly exaggeration of the critical juncture is profoundly felt in African countries at the moment of decolonization in the 1960s and in the moment of democratization in the 1990s. This will be elaborated below. Suffice to say for now that the scholarly emphasis on possibilities for change at the critical juncture are nurtured by an emphasis on the national as a unit for analysis. When the national is read in its historical entanglements with the global/local, the trend towards transformations as suggested by the literature on critical junctures is much less obvious. In recognition of the complexity of the continuity/change possibilities of particular moments in time as well as the complex interaction between agency and institutions, I borrow the notion of “partial critical juncture” as elucidated by Carmen Geha (2016).

In her study on political reform in Lebanon and Libya, Geha (2016, p. 2) reveals “the limitations on reform and shows how events that might have been ‘critical junctures’ in the political order failed to result in critical change because of particular institutional constraints”. Similarly, transition in South Africa has not upset the order of economic and social power in the country derived from historical colonial relations. The post-Apartheid trajectory thus displays a path dependence; a resilience of political institutions that resemble Apartheid institutions albeit with some significant changes.
It would be foolhardy to claim that nothing has changed. South Africa’s transition displays a polity that is both continuous with colonial institutionalization as well as some elements of change. In many ways, it can be argued that those changes, or rather accommodations, have been necessary for those continuities to persist. In this sense, it is important to understand institutional reproduction, always, and especially in moments of heightened possibility for change. In other words, when there is an objective critical juncture, where the possibilities are ripe for quite fundamental change, historical institutionalists need to recognize the objective and subjective limitations to that change. Commemorative strategies are both subject to those limitations at the same time as they produce them or challenge them (by legitimating the framework within which change can and cannot happen, or by imposing constraints on legitimate and legitimating discourses). In this sense, political change tends to be incremental, at best, and, as Lindblom (1959) so aptly describes it, as a process “of muddling through”. 9

South Africa’s transition is thus not dissimilar from Geha’s study on Lebanon and Libya in transition, where “political institutions could not overcome historical traditions” in the case of South Africa, of bantustanized and racialized state systems “which limited the agency preferences of the political actors who rose to power during transition” (Geha, 2016, p.3) Her cases show that “political actors evaded institutional and political reform and brought back historical features that prevailed before the critical juncture” (p. 3). It is the contention of this thesis that historical institutionalism overstates “critical junctures” as opportunities for institutional change and understates the reproduction of discursive practices and ways of being, or of ‘culture’ as it refers to the taken-for-grantedness of everyday life. The mechanisms of institutional reproduction and change reside primarily on the terrain of ideas (as social, cultural and political practices). Institutions, in other words, do not just persist or change through mechanical reproduction, but are made to do so through active or passive (in the banal sense) human agents.

Critical moments are therefore not necessarily critical junctures.

The negotiated South African transition produced compromises that have been evident in numerous post-Apartheid policies and were embraced by all parties (with greater or lesser

9 With thanks to Elinor Bray-Collins for alerting me to Geha and Lindblom.
commitments) such as: the Sunset Clauses (which promised a Government of National Unity for five years and a restructuring of public institutions while preserving the jobs of bureaucrats associated with Apartheid-era public service fair); the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic policy document.

In other words, institutions of state, practices of collective memorialization and economic policy have all contained elements of both continuities with and change from Apartheid pre-occupations. For Amilcar Cabral (in Young, 1994, p. 1), in order to “make everything possible for our people,” the institutions of colonial statehood would need to be destroyed, reduced to ‘ash’. But this was never the thinking of the national liberation movement in South Africa given the balance of forces of the critical juncture. Rather, a more tentative ANC negotiated change with the Apartheid regime and part of that hesitance is evident in the decisions around memorialization as it pertains to nation-building.

**Contours of South Africa’s Transition**

South Africa’s transition to democracy (marked first and foremost by the unbanning of liberation organizations and the freeing of political prisoners in 1990) was prompted by the confluence of multiple endogenous and exogenous factors: mass mobilization against Apartheid, increased military insurgency, a stagnating national economy, increased international mobilization against Apartheid, the decolonization of Namibia and the collapse of the Soviet bloc.

Internally, the Apartheid regime faced significant pressure from a mobilized opposition. From 1973, labour organized the Durban Strikes which awakened a movement silenced by the mass arrests and slaughters of the early 1960s, the banning of liberation organizations and the imprisonment and exile of their leaders. The 1976 youth uprisings and the vicious response of the state further mobilized masses in the country as well as the international community against Apartheid. The underground armies’ ranks swelled with the arrival of new youth recruits eager to fight the system. The state responded with a mix of aggression and appeasement such that in the 1980s, the Wiehahn Commission created space for the legal organization of black labour which saw the birth of the mighty National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in 1983 and the launch of the union umbrella, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in 1985. The introduction of the tricameral parliament (which gave formal legislative representation in South
Africa to Coloureds and Indians) was met with opposition from progressive forces which mobilized under the banner of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The UDF was an umbrella organization with affiliates from women’s groups, youth groups, progressive student organizations, sports and church bodies (among others). Although independent, the UDF was closely associated with the banned ANC and typically its rallies and marches proceeded with the colours of the organizations flying high – the black, green and gold – and calls for the release of Mandela. The principles and strategic objectives of its affiliates aligned with those of the ANC – to build a non-racial, non-sexist and united South Africa. When P.W. Botha, then Prime Minister of Apartheid South Africa, declared a state of emergency as a response to increased insurgency, the UDF heeded the call of the ANC in exile to render the country ungovernable. In the meantime, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the underground army of the ANC, increased its recruitment and its attacks against the state. Added to this, by the late 1980s, the Apartheid economy was stagnating. The combined pressures of sanctions and inefficient state expenditures propping up white employment through state-owned enterprises and the billions of dollars spent on the Bantustan system rendered the economy increasingly unviable.

On the international front, the collapse of the Soviet Union produced a new global politics that rejected authoritarianism as a legitimate technology of governance. The third wave of democratization that began in 1975 with the collapse of fascism in Spain and Portugal and the subsequent liberation of Portuguese colonies reached its zenith after the collapse of the Soviet Union. As the balance of forces shifted globally, authoritarian regimes could no longer rely on the support of the USSR or the USA as a buffer to contending ideologies. Coupled with the rise of democratization, the era of both communism and Keynesian economics had come to an end. Market-led growth gained legitimacy against the spectacular failures of state-led development in

10 MK was relatively unsuccessful in respect of its military attacks, but fueled the imagination of people in anti-Apartheid organizations across the country. In other words, it was an important morale booster. The ANC understood that military insurgency against the most well-equipped army on the continent would not produce a successful outcome for the anti-Apartheid movement, hence, its adoption of four pillars of struggle in 1969, including, mass mobilization, an organized underground, military insurgency and international mobilization.

11 As an indication of this general trend, we can see that in 1974, 27.5% of the world’s countries could be considered electoral democracies; by 1996, 63% held elections to choose their leaders (Handelman, 2013, p. 29). In Africa before 1989 – Botswana and Mauritius, Zimbabwe held regular multi-party elections. In the early 1990s more than half of sub-Saharan Africa’s then 47 states undertook reforms leading to competitive, pluralistic systems – for largely conjunctural reasons. There were 38 regime changes and 29 paved the road for end to authoritarianism. By 2003, 44 out of 48 sub-Saharan African states held founding elections.
the USSR and across Africa. Bretton Woods Institutions had conditioned loans to deal with the debt crisis on the structural transformation of African economies including the liberalization of trade, the privatization of state-owned enterprises and the privatization of services (or the rolling back of the state from the economy). These global transformations at once delegitimized white minority rule in South Africa at the same time as they discredited statist, and in particular, socialist, economics. In addition, the global appetite for decolonization was evident in the Angola/Namibia Accords, signed in 1988 in New York. By the time of the last Apartheid president De Klerk’s address to parliament in February 1990, the constituent assembly in Windhoek had produced a liberal democratic constitution that paved the way for a peaceful withdrawal of South African troops from the country and quelled the nerves of white South Africa. The confluence of these factors signaled an impasse for the combatants in the struggle against Apartheid. Neither side could claim an outright victory. The settlement that would transition South Africa from Apartheid to a democratic state would have to be a negotiated one.

Negotiations began in earnest in 1991 and culminated in the first democratic elections in April 1994. The negotiations proceeded in fits and starts, primarily owing to increased violence across the country that either directly involved the state (such as, the Boipatong and Bhisho Massacres) or there was evidence of indirect involvement of the state in fomenting violence (specifically in KwaZulu-Natal and on the Reef). This violence resulted in the ANC withdrawing from negotiations at the same time as it reminded the ANC of the superior military power of the Apartheid state (and the capacity of the ethno-nationalist Inkatha to mobilize against the civic project).

While negotiations were on-going, the Apartheid State was readying itself for change: Ravi Naidoo illustrates the extent to which the state was plundered by Apartheid leaders and civil servants who were awarded golden handshakes and huge pension payouts between 1990 and 1994. The deficit stood at seven percent by the time the ANC won political power. In addition, parliament effectively privatized what would become known as the “heritage” sector, which would serve to hamstring any attempts to transform the monumental complex in the post-Apartheid dispensation (see Chapter Two).

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12 The successful development states of the 1960s and early 1970s in East Asia in particular had already transitioned from import substitution industrialization to export-led growth strategies.
While formal negotiations were proceeding at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) 1 and 2, big business set its sights on the ANC. Emboldened by the collapse of Communism and triumphant neo-liberalism, South African corporates invited ANC leaders to multiple scenario planning sessions¹³. Hein Marais (1998) contends that combined with the influence of Bretton Woods Institutions, these planning exercises served to influence the ANC and resulted in the rejection of economic policy direction suggested by the Macro-Economic Research Group (MERG) – an ANC-directed think-tank. What became increasingly clear during this period of negotiation was that the ANC itself was split both ideologically and organizationally.

By its own characterization, the ANC is a “broad church” that brought together a variety of different groups and interests under the common banner of defeating Apartheid. In addition, power in the ANC was fractured along the numerous fronts on which it had fought: there were the exiles, the prisoners, the internal legal organization (represented by the UDF), the underground internally and the military wing. These were not clearly divided nor aligned demarcations, but point to the organizational difficulties and constraints attached to legalizing a formerly clandestine organization. In addition to this, the ANC was (and remains) in a strategic alliance with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and Cosatu.

In respect of institutional change at the level of the state, negotiations produced a significant change and also important nodes of continuity. The Apartheid state created homelands, or ethnic enclaves that sat at the heart of the institutional landscape of the Apartheid project¹⁴. Colonialism, as a system and process of land dispossession and forced labour removed African people from their land – the 1913 Land Acts gave almost 90% of South Africa to white settlers and allocated a remaining 13% percent to African inhabitants. This process of dispossession reached its peak in the bantustanization of this territory – the forced ethnicization or tribalization of the African population. The quasi-states of these Bantustans were incorporated into the new

¹³ These exercises include Nedcor/Old Mutual’s intervention for a successful transition, which began in 1990 and was completed in 1993; Sanlam’s “Platform for Investment”; the “Mont Fleur Scenarios”; interventions like the South African Chamber of Business’s (SACOB) “Economic Options for South Africa” document.

¹⁴ Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Gazankulu, Kangwane, Lebowa, KwaNdebele, Qwaqwa, Transkei, Venda, KwaZulu
South Africa. This meant that a collection of despotic bureaucracies were amalgamated into a unified South African statehood. The enormity of this project cannot be over-emphasized. But what made it even more challenging was the compromise that needed to be reached in order to facilitate this amalgamation: in 1992, the ANC proposed the ‘Sunset Clauses’ which assured Apartheid bureaucrats that they would not lose their jobs under the new regime. Unlike lustration laws and, indeed, the experience of most other earlier decolonising African states, the bureaucracy changed in South Africa, but the bureaucrats did not. This had implications for questions of continuity rather than change, questions of influence and reproducing “institutional memory” and, of course, the public service wage bill.

The imperative of accommodating the old bureaucracy and also the power-brokering within the ANC itself, led to the institutionalization of provinces in the state. The nine provinces tend to follow the ethnic map of Apartheid homeland boundaries. In part, this accommodation signalled the ANC’s accommodation with ethnicity, even though this departed from its historical mandate. This accommodation was a function of the organization’s establishment and on-going relationship with the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa) forged in 1988 in opposition to a conservative brand of ethnicity, the deep concern with Inkatha and its capacity for violence, and the need for political employment/deployment of especially middle tier leadership of the ANC.\(^{15}\) This provincialization has enormous implications for the continuities evident with the colonial/Apartheid state (see Chapter Five).

By 1994, CODESA 1 and 2 had negotiated a compromise between former antagonists resulting in the country’s first democratic election and the institution of the Government of National Unity (GNU).\(^{16}\) This so-called democratic breakthrough had been produced despite violent attempts to stop it (especially white right-wing attacks against negotiators at the World Trade Centre in Kempton Park and an attempted coup in the former Bophuthatswana), and the low-intensity violence that directed its course (especially in KwaZulu-Natal and on the Reef, and the state-sanctioned massacres in Boipatong and Bhisho). Far from a breakthrough though, the combined

\(^{15}\) Mac Maharaj, personal communication, December 2009

\(^{16}\) Despite the ANC’s overwhelming victory in the 1994 election, the Interim Constitution made allowances for any party with at least 20 seats in the National Assembly to participate in Cabinet. The first government thus comprised ANC, National Party (NP) and Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) ministers. Significantly, the NP was awarded the finance portfolio and the IFP was given arts and culture.
threat of violence and capital flight led the ANC to accept what its former National Executive Committee member, Ronnie Kasrils, calls a “Faustian pact”. He contends that by 1996, the central tenets of compromise had been achieved with the new government’s adoption of GEAR, the Growth, Employment and Redistribution macro-economic strategy, considered to be a home-grown structural adjustment program. For Kasrils, this strategy sentenced most black South Africans to perpetual poverty and joblessness. This is only part of the story – South Africa has witnessed rising inequality, the fast growth of a black middle class, and decreasing poverty levels with the massive expansion of welfare, at the same time as substantial ownership of the economy remains in the hands of whites. Kasrils story is only partial though in that it focuses primarily on the so-called economic base and neglects what he would refer to as superstructural issues.\footnote{Numerous personal interviews pointed to the ANC’s neglect of questions of culture as being secondary to the economy. See, especially, Chapter Two.}

A significant compromise emerged alongside the macro-economic concession; to organize a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to “lay to rest the divisions of the past”. No doubt, the idea of the TRC enabled the Apartheid State to pursue a negotiated settlement with liberation forces. Paige Arthur (2009) describes the historical context of the emerging international consensus around transitional justice. South Africa was the only African country involved in discussions in 1988, together with a host of Latin American countries, which considered questions of justice in countries moving from authoritarianism to democracy. The history and practice of coloniality that produced the country and the specific demands this would place on questions of justice, were not considered there. In this sense, South Africa is internationally determined as a country in transition during democratization’s third wave which has implications for its decolonization. In particular, its participation in a global forum that produced an international conceptualization of transitional justice normalized the Apartheid State as an authoritarian regime. Mamdani (2002) levels a trenchant critique of the TRC as an exercise in “impunity” for human rights abusers and colonizers. While this may be true, the TRC also offered the new democratic government an opportunity for nation-building, for publicizing historical abuses and the remorse of Apartheid operatives, and for establishing its international credentials as a “nation at peace with itself and the world”. The TRC could provide the context for reconciliation as the cornerstone of the nation-building project, as well as circumvent the real
institutional deficiencies and constraints of the as yet untransformed judiciary and security apparatus.

The TRC was established under the Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act of 1995. It was mandated to investigate human rights abuses committed between 1960 and 1994. In other words, it was authorized to deal with matters from the time of the formal adoption of Apartheid until its formal end. While this was, at its heart, a practical matter, it produced an effect of bracketing off that period from the lengthy colonization of what would become South Africa. The first European settlers arrived in the Cape in 1652 and between then and 1960 history is peppered with, among others, the near annihilation of the Khoi and San, slavery in the Cape, indentured labour migrations from the east, the land disposessions of the Great Trek and the 1820 British settlement, major anti-colonial wars, the violations and violences of the mining industry of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and the major land disposessions of the 1913 Land Acts. What the date limits of the TRC do is to normalize the period leading up to Apartheid. Apartheid was effectively an extension of colonial governmentality, but is isolated in this process as anomalous.

In addition to the short historical mandate of the TRC, was the decision by the ANC to participate fully in its workings, not only as representative of victims of Apartheid, but also as applicants for amnesty. In other words, liberation organizations agreed, in the interests of national unity, reconciliation and producing legitimacy for their rule, to take responsibility for what may be deemed abuses in the execution of their struggle against Apartheid. For those in the ANC opposed to this logic, the argument was that taking responsibility would renew the organization and urge ‘the other side’ to come to the table. However, close to half the amnesty applicants were from the ANC, suggesting, in the historical record, that the Apartheid State and its adversaries were combatants with equal responsibility in a battle for power. In addition to this limitation of the TRC was the decision about what cases it would hear. Again, a matter of practicality meant that the worst violations of Apartheid were heard. Its everydayness, its ordinary violence and disruption of the lives of millions of people, was not part of the process. What this meant for most white South Africans was the capacity to distance themselves from

Apartheid. Quite rightly, they did not see themselves as morally depraved and ethically compromised murderers. In this way, Apartheid’s excesses were regarded as problematic and not its every dayness. This mentality is evidenced in F.W. de Klerk’s formal apology at the end of the process for the abuses of Apartheid, but not for Apartheid itself. Indeed, in an interview on CNN with Christiane Amanpour (10 May 2012) De Klerk maintains that he hasn’t apologized “for the original concept” of Apartheid which he regards as an important policy and programmatic intervention in the attainment of national sovereignty for all. The underlying sentiment in these views, inadvertently enabled by the TRC, has found traction in the post-Apartheid memorial complex that legitimates the pre-Apartheid colonial dispensation and regards Apartheid as “part of our heritage” (see the following three chapters in particular as well as the chapter on renaming strategies for towns and streets).

While the TRC can be challenged on numerous fronts, the profundity of a liberation organization encouraging the scrutiny of its own tactics has legitimately been celebrated. The outcome of the TRC was shocking to most in the ANC and the organization took the TRC to court to attempt to halt the publication of its final report that accused the ANC of committing crimes against humanity. The ANC lost the court battle and through the historical record, the ANC and the perpetrators of Apartheid have the same vocabulary of culpability used to describe their pasts. What this does is to fashion some sort of historical equity in respect of past failures and distorts the line between victims and perpetrators. In this way, the TRC was the key event through which the approach to commemoration was institutionalized. It reflects the power of the international moment and the exigent conditions of the local space.

Why did the ANC lose sight of the importance of the battle over memory? Mandla Langa, a former head of the ANC Culture Desk, suggests that the ANC’s move from viewing memory as a weapon of struggle to memory for the purposes of reconciliation between former antagonists is a display of an organization that is “not confident of itself” as having assumed the position of “governing though compromise”. Sifiso Ndlovu, the historian and curator of the Hector Peterson Memorial, believes it projects an organization that is not only sure of itself, but is deeply committed to the imperatives of reconciliation and democratization. The battles over the past that have come to define the terrain of memorial practice in the last decade are a reflection

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19 Mandla Langa, personal communication, November 2009
of this commitment. Pallo Jordan, the former arts and culture minister, and Joel Netshitendzhe, the former head of Government Communications and Information Systems, contend that the ANC has not taken public memory that seriously, but for different reasons. Jordan suggests that “history will take care of itself” in the sense that battles over the past are a waste – in time, when connections to it are not so raw, it will settle itself. For Netshitendzhe, the ANC hardly engaged on the terrain of memory production since the imperatives of governance and massive backlogs in essential services took up the energy of the democratic government. Indeed, the two ministries whose operations define the contours of the nation – the identity of its citizens in material and in discursive terms – were held by the Inkatha Freedom Party for two consecutive terms of government. Ben Ngubane led Arts and Culture while Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the leader of the IFP, was responsible for Home Affairs. The fundamentals of the commemorative framework were established in the first 10 years of governance, driven by the IFP.

The IFP transitioned from a narrow cultural nationalist organization to a narrow ethno-nationalist political party just prior to the 1994 democratic elections. It was unclear until the 11th hour whether it would even stand in the first democratic elections. Violence during the 1980s in KwaZulu, which spilled over onto the East Rand and Johannesburg townships in the early 1990s claimed the lives of thousands and was provoked by Inkatha, aided by the apartheid regime in their battle against the ANC and communism. (The memory and memorialization of this period is analyzed in Chapter Five). The first government, a Government of National Unity, gave any party with 20 seats or more at least one Cabinet portfolio. While the Interim Constitutional Clause lapsed in 1999, the IFP remained in government. Ngubane’s deputy, an ANC member, contended that the organization’s approach to history reflects a disavowal of authoritarian knowledge production and a democratic approach to dealing with questions of the past. This contention is supported by the openness to the production of history in schools post-1994, or

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20 Sipho Ndlovu, personal communication, November 2010
21 Pallo Jordan, personal communication, December 2010
22 Joel Netshitendzhe, personal communication, November 2010
23 See Interim Constitution, Clause 88
24 Bridgette Mabandla, personal communication, April 2013
could be construed as neglect where “the study of history in South Africa has… experienced serious decline” (Stolten: 2006, p. 6).

The Ministry of Home Affairs was responsible for the legislation that ushered in the new public holidays. Commemorative landscapes typically involve the management of time and space that provides a context for the building and reinforcement of identity. Geographies and calendars provide the physical apparatus for the telling and retelling of stories that become, through repetition, the stories of the nation. The rhetorical effort of the government does not always accord with the spatial and commemorative contours that are its construct by design or default.

With guidance from the ANC culture department, through to the portfolio committee on Arts and Culture in parliament, the slew of new public holidays was passed through with little fuss. The public holidays reflect some of the important days in the history of African Nationalist struggle, Afrikaner ethno-nationalism and Zulu ethno-nationalism. But each holiday is diluted of its historical context and given new meaning. The days are appropriated – but their meaning is transformed. The days are either de-ethnicized or de-revolutionized. Religious groups have historically appropriated days that are special to people and given them new meaning. Besides for the religious statutory holidays like Christmas and Easter, South Africa’s political public days are numerous. Seven days mark the political calendar throughout the year. March 21 is Human Rights Day. The liberation movement commemorated this day as Sharpeville Day, the day in 1961 when police opened fire on protestors demanding an end to carrying the notorious “dompas” or special identity document called a “pass” that would legitimate Africans entry and residence in South Africa as opposed to one of the “bantustans” or homelands. Sixty-nine people were shot, mostly in the back as they fled the Sharpeville police station. It was a gruesome massacre that ushered in violence and bloodshed as far afield as the Western Cape. The massacre was condemned internationally and it spurred the liberation organizations, the ANC and PAC to form military wings and advance a military strategy against the regime.

In turn, the state responded with growing brutality, the banning of liberation movements and the arrests of its leadership. The post-Rivonia Treason Trial period was marked by a silencing of resistance. April 27 is Freedom Day. This commemorates the day in 1994 where all adult South Africans voted for the first time. With this day, the ‘new’ South Africa is fashioned in relation to
Benedict Anderson’s (1991) “genealogical inversion” (p.) where the originary present becomes antecedent to the past. ‘The nation’ is thus read retrospectively.

May 1 is Worker’s Day. This too was a day celebrated by workers and liberation formations during the course of struggle against Apartheid. It is an international holiday that has been nationalized. In the post-Apartheid period it is a day where workers can mobilize around the issues of the day. For the state, workers are regarded as a constituency rather than a revolutionary class and May 1 is their day. June 16 is Youth Day, which was also commemorated by the ANC in exile and the United Democratic Front (UDF). It reminds the country of the day in 1976 when the Apartheid police opened fire on students protesting “bantu education” in general, and the introduction of Afrikaans to schools in particular. The vicious response to protesting school children is regarded as the turning point in the fight against Apartheid. Thousands of young people left the country to swell the ranks of the liberation armies and schools became increasingly ungovernable.

Like the workers, in the new dispensation, youth are seen as a constituency with issues to be addressed by the state rather than a radical force for change. Likewise, August 9 is National Women’s Day, commemorating the 1956 women’s march to Pretoria against the Pass Laws. September 24 is Heritage Day which used to be commemorated as Shaka Day by Inkatha. By transmuting the day into one that celebrates “heritage” projects the state’s multiple perspective on nation-building: social cohesion, premised on multi-culturalism by articulating historically and ethnically charged remembrance days to a new meaning. It is not an uncommon tactic in the achievement of consent for a social project. It is atypical to the extent that the victors are unclear – in other words, whose hegemony is this anyway? The public days are not evidence of a revolutionary organization claiming and proclaiming its right to rule, but is rather evidence of an attempt to reconstitute the meaning of those days in the image of a reconciled nation. December 16 is the Day of Reconciliation – formerly commemorated by whites as The Day of the Vow, a key anniversary in the colonization of what became South Africa, and commemorated by the ANC as the day that the underground army, UmKhonto we Sizwe (MK) was launched (it was launched on that day in 1961 in defiance of the Apartheid holiday). The former Republic Day
and Kruger Day, among others, have obviously been dropped from the commemorative calendar.  

The first decade of freedom in respect of the past was marked by a rush to preserve Afrikaner history and icons of nationalism, with the enactment of heritage legislation, with the TRC and with the institutionalization of new public holidays for a new nation. From the turn of the century, the focus has been on renaming places and streets as well as the construction of new memorial sites. It is characterized by the elevation of “heritage” over “memory”, which has implications for social transformation and future possibilities. The first 20 years of change have also been characterized by the transformation and continuity of the legislative framework with regard to questions of memorialization and the bureaucratization of processes.  

The latter part of this decade has witnessed the elevation of battles over history – not the detail of the grand narrative, but who the rightful heirs are. Tributes to past heroes, election campaigning, freedom songs and even the naming of a new political party have been the subject of intense battles over the ownership of historical heroism and contemporary legitimacy. For the governing party, the effort has been on nation-building without disrupting the institutions of capitalism, and producing a rights based political domain that is premised upon equal voice for all citizens. The ANC has been blind-sided by the attempt to decenter it from the mantle of liberators.  

The moment of South Africa’s transition as well as the notion of internal colonialism demanded a response to nation-building that differs from the enterprises of other Southern African late decolonisers, such as Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia. All respond to the conditions of neo-liberal globalization, but in peculiar ways. They all may prove the contention that memory is a product or process of present consciousness. But all also suggest that understanding memory as excessively voluntaristic misses much of the story. The approaches of

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25 At the time of the first democratic parliament, there were 23 public holidays in various parts of the country, celebrated or commemorated by different political entities (the Bantustans had different holidays to each other and to the formal Republic). These were whittled down to 12, including religious days and seven if only the political public days are counted (cf. Hansard, 1994, p4286).

26 A slew of legislation remained on the books. The 1996 White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage was eventually replaced by a 2014. See Appendix A and B for the laws that govern the sector and an illustration of the bureaucratic layers that govern it.

27 The 2016 local elections contested the past in a way that previous elections had not. Specifically, parties in this election made claims on the legacy of Mandela.
nationalists to nation-building in all cases builds on memory production historically, coupled with the hegemonic narratives that run counter to these. Memory thus gains historicity. It cannot exist only in the moment of production.

Throughout the 1990s and well into the 2000s, the ANC’s priority has been a process and program of reconciliation that is articulated through its electoral slogans that consciously call for a better life for all. The “for all” was a conscious articulation of the idea that Apartheid’s demise must register the betterment of society for all South Africa’s citizens, black and white. It drew its lineage directly from the Freedom Charter of 1955 that insisted that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it – black and white”. In 1955, that statement was revolutionary to the extent that black people were excluded from the domain of South Africanness. But it was also consciously inclusionary – that the ANC had no intention of replacing a white republic with a black one. In 1994, the other slogan that resonated for the ANC leadership was “Sekunjalo ke nako” or “Now is the time”. But advisers believed that it came across as too triumphalist and could be read by whites as an expression of dominance of one group over the other – that it was your time previously, and now the turn for exploitation and wealth is ours. The ANC from the start of the transition, was cognizant of the meaning of its speech, slogans and perspectives on the domestic domain and on international perspectives.

The National Question thus remains contested and unresolved, and, perhaps, given the current global political-economy, unresolvable; or, in the parlance of the ANC (2005), “the national question will always be with us”. Indeed, the ANC in its 2005 document departs from the idea that contradictions can ever fully be resolved since history is not rigid, and historical processes by their very nature can never be static. In this sense, the National Question will throw up different problems at different moments in time. However, it will remain wedded to the declaration that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it” (a radical notion of belonging that is post-citizenship), that “All National Groups shall have equal rights” (a reversion to Stalinist notions of ‘the national’) (Freedom Charter, 1955), and that while the content of the question will change, the nation-state form will remain – a naturalized category.

**Nationalism as such**

While the ANC shies away from reifying the nation of the nation-state, it remains fixated on the reification on the national groups’ that make up the nation-state. These national groups are the
‘race’ categories established by Apartheid state-makers – Africans, Coloureds, Indians and whites – and remain the prism through which the ANC understands the National Question. This perspective also derives from the Stalinist definition of the nation: A nation is a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture (Stalin, in Hutchinson and Smith, 1994, p. 20).

However, Stalin reminds us that, “a nation, like every historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end” (Stalin, in Hutchinson and Smith, 1994, p. 20). In other words, the idea of ‘the nation’ itself is a contingent phenomenon, universalized through a series of dependent conditions. But there is contingency within the universal too. Nation-building in particular moments in time should thus be read in respect of the dynamics of that moment (or series of moments).

Considering the amount of time the ANC has spent thinking about the National Question, there has been relatively little academic work on nationalism as such in South Africa (more recent exceptions include Hart, 2002; Chipkin, 2007; and Johnston, 2013). As is evident from the continent as a whole, post-independence nation-building has been particularly neglected as an academic pre-occupation. Partly, this is likely informed by scholarship that deems the boundaries of Africa “inauthentic” since they were colonially produced thus rendering the fragmented communities within them un-nationalizable (which prompts Chipkin’s question in 2007, “Do South Africans Exist”).

In his inversion of Europe’s civilizing mission, Basil Davidson (1992) most directly makes the claim that the European imposition of the nation-state in Africa is “the black man’s burden”. Indeed, for Davidson, it is a curse. In both popular and scholarly discourse, the burden of the nation-state, in both form and content, is responsible for anemic development and persistent conflict (cf. Collier 2009 Soyinka 1994 Michalopoulos et al., 2011; Widstrandt, 1969; Engelbert, 2002; Ikome, 2012). The abiding argument is that European colonial imperatives obtaining from either the will to dominate (cf. Mamdani, 1996) or the need to deflect potential European conflict (cf. Herbst, 1996) arbitrarily drew boundaries through the continent, creating political communities which had not existed before. For Christopher Clapham (1999, p. 54), the differences between European and African nation-states is that in the former, states defined their
boundaries over time, while in the latter states were constructed within certain boundaries. This makes boundary-maintenance central to the existence of the state. In Europe, according to this analysis, nations made states whereas in Africa, states made nations.

Robert Jackson and Carl Rosberg (1982) suggest that the result of this inversion of the process of nation-state formation is that African states have no empirical legitimacy within the borders of the state, only a juridical legitimacy that derives from an international hegemony that undergirds the idea of sovereign states. Anthony Smith (1986, p. 55) suggests that the African nationalisms were “territorial nationalisms” rather than the people-centred nationalisms of Europe. “It was the colonial state,” he posits, “that became the mould as well as the target of African nationalisms…” (p. 56). The communities of culture, language and memory that define the imaginary of European nations was absent from African nationalist thought (Pan-Africanism and Negritude were not regarded as nationalizing in the same sense). Smith’s argument lies in contention with the historical work of Herbst (2000), who suggests that pre-colonial African statehood was unterritorialized, but this did not negate ideas of belonging to a political community.

A sustained critique of the universalization of the European nation-state is that the conditions of its original formation could not exist in the colonized world, and hence its institutional and bureaucratic building blocks could not be replicated. A deformed version of itself is thus its global legacy institutionalized as an instrument of extraction and coercion (cf. Young, 1994; Mamdani, 1996).

The effects of this critique of the colonial and post-colonial state in Africa is a consistent negative analysis of its becoming. In other words, it is theorized according to what it is not able to accomplish in relation to its (European) source; to its “lacks, absences, failing and problems” (Ferguson, 2006). In addition, taken-for-granted in these analyses is the fixity and stability of pre-colonial identities. These become reified categories of authenticity as against the false and inauthentic post-colonial national identity.

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28 Wars over borders are considered to have built the coercive bureaucracy of European states, an institutional lack in colonial states (cf. Corrigan and Sayer 1985; Tilly, C. 1975 and 1985; Mann, M. 1993; Centeno, M. 2002). The emerging bourgeoisie was also key to the evolving institutional capacity of European states, which again was an absent or significantly underdeveloped class in the colonized world.
At best, African nationalism is encountered as a “derivative discourse” (in Partha Chatterjee’s, 1993 terms) or as a derivative of Chatterjee’s derivative discourse. Chatterjee’s conception of the ‘derivative discourse’ is a critique of Anderson’s modular form of nationalism. Chatterjee maintains that Anderson’s “imagined communities” is limited in its imagination to the expressions of nationalism that emerged in the Americas and Europe. This limitation restricts its generalizability in respect of anti-colonial nationalisms that have quite distinct nationalist constructions of belonging. Chatterjee (1993, p. 216) argues, “If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain modular forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?”

The perspectives that African nationalisms are merely copies, and weak ones at that, of American and European nationalisms and the challenge of particularity are both limited in that the former neglect the contributions of specific nationalisms to the project of imagining community and the latter fail to recognize the implications of capitalist hegemony and modernity as more than European particularisms. It is against these dichotomized readings of nationalism where Goswami (2002) produces a socio-historical account of nationalism.

Goswami (2002) presents a seminal revision of Anderson’s ground-breaking constructivist analysis of the production of the nation-form. In her reconsiderations, Goswami posits a “socio-historical conception of the nation form.” What this means is that she produces a framework for reading as “methodologically inseparable the objective and subjective dimensions of nationalism as a modern social form” (p. 771). In other words, “the nation”, according to Goswami, should be analyzed through a combination of structuralist and materialist analyses and an approach that stresses the “meanings and effects of a ‘sense of nationality’ and intimate connections between personhood and belonging to a nation” (Eley and Suny in Goswami, 2002, p. 773). This approach reveals nationalism as, simultaneously, a universal and particular form of social organization, or as “one of the most enduring and pervasive forms of modern particularism” (Goswami, 2002, p. 775). With these insights in mind, this dissertation attempts to deepen our understanding of the ways in which larger socio-political and institutional structures that drive the logic of a global embrace of capitalism and nation-statism relate to local constructions of national belonging as they pertain to a collective sense of nationalized memorialization.
Drawing from Goswami (2002), this thesis argues that the memory/nation is produced historically: both as a generalized project for the organization of power, and in its multiple specificities that separate one memory/nation from another. In its particular manifestations, nationalists identify and interpret objective conditions and assess the horizons of possibility at an historical conjuncture.

In this sense then, memorialization serves to cement the idea of a nation as the central way in which power is organized and broadcast globally; and to position the particularity of a group of people as nationally defined. Both of these processes are ideological, which suggests that memorialization itself is deeply implicated in the justification or delegitimization of a variety of class, race, gender and other projects. In other words, why certain events from the past are rendered eventful while others are not, the interpretation that is imposed on those eventful events and their nationalization are evidence of power relations in society: that is, they are both reflective and productive of social power. It is thus argued that memorialization is a mechanism through which the juridical nation is transformed into the empirical nation.

It is also posited that the interpretations and meanings accorded to historical events do not occur in a vacuum. They are rather assembled and re-assembled from antecedent productions. In this, they are both constructed and thus concerned with the politics of the present, and they are path dependent, limited and enabled by the politics of the past. As such, the predictive capacity of theory is limited by contingent conditions. Those conditions are objective, while the meaning that we attach to them is not. In other words, normative conceptualizations of both social actors and academics emerge from an empirical context, and our/their empiricism is normatively informed.

In the immediate decolonizing period of the 1960s, political and academic concerns pivoted on questions of modernization and development analyzed through the prism of the state. Anti-colonial and independence movements were studied in greater detail in the period leading up to independence, but after independence were assumed to no longer enjoy a unifying antagonist and thus became expressions of ethnic cleavage, mobilization and patronage. The ushering in of democratization after 1989 is seen to have further eroded the possibilities of nationness. Indeed, the dual assault on the African nation-state by neo-liberalism from above and democratic demands from below spawned a large literature on state failure.
The collapse of the Soviet Union triggered thinking on the demise of the nation-state form globally. The end was celebrated or mourned and Habermasian notions of post-nationalism became the normative prism of analysis. However, the world of the early 1990s trumped the predictive capacity of social science. The former Soviet Union erupted in ethno-nationalist fury leading scholars, like Brubaker, to “reframe nationalism” (1996).

Similarly, the nationalisms of Africa are in a process of reframing themselves, either through the formation of new nation-states (such as Eritrea, South Sudan and Somaliland), through the federation of relatively autonomous ethnic regions in multi-ethnic nation-states (such as Ethiopia) or through the deracialization and nationalization of late decolonizers (such as South Africa and Namibia). These efforts at (re)nationalization have assumed multiple forms and expressions, such as xenophobia and autochthonous claims to a de-emphasis of ethnic division. But, unlike Europe, African states, in the main, remain multi-national nation-states and have avoided the irredentism of European nationalisms.

The lack of scholarship on this phenomenon is a pity. For, at some point, lines drawn on a map take on meaning and material reality for the people who live within them. How these have become meaningful and substantive practices, how “marks on a map take on lived significance” (Levin 2001) could add significantly to the understanding of social practices and processes of solidarity building. Villalon (1998) states that:

The persistence of colonial divisions is not just a function of the fact that there’s no obvious alternative. Rather, over the course of several decades, colonial boundaries have developed a reality of their own; weak or incapacitated though they may be, African states have left their mark on their populations, giving a measure of reality to their artificial existence. (p. 24)

In-keeping with his thesis of “extraversion”, Jean-Francois Bayart (1993, p.260) elaborates Villalon’s perspective and posits that, “The state in Africa rests upon… a process of reappropriation of institutions of colonial origin which give it its own historicity; it can no longer be taken as a purely exogenous structure”. Partly, the nationalization of institutions of statehood is co-terminous with the nationalization of the people in whose name it exists. To further reinforce this point, Bayart (1993, p15) applies Georges Balandier’s perspective when he asserts that:
African social and cultural fabric has never been inert: it has constantly been producing black societies and cultures, with internal dynamics as well as those resulting from their relations with the ‘environment’… It becomes impossible to ignore the fact that African societies have stood up to the test of history.

An engagement with those endogenous and exogenous dynamics is all but absent in the literature on nation-building in Africa. The nation-state is thus regarded as an historical actor, as a process and a practice. They are products of “the repeated performances which seek to impress the tangibility of states on subject populations” (Sidaway and Gibb, 1998, p. 179) through a combination of coercion and consent. Statist commemorative strategies form a cornerstone in the construction of such consent.

**The Return of the Repressed in Memory Studies**

The past 30-40 years has seen a proliferation of studies alluding to ‘the politics of memory’ relating to collective or public memory. However, in general, these studies are limited in two important respects. Firstly, they often struggle to define what collective/public memory is and, secondly, while memory is regarded as political in that it is contested, there is no clear political science approach to the study of memory in politics. For Andreas Huyssen (2003, p. 3), “[M]emory is one of those elusive topics we all think we have a handle on. But as soon as we try to define it, it starts slipping and sliding, eluding attempts to grasp it either culturally, sociologically, or scientifically.” Kansteiner (2002) further cautions that “the idea of memory is, at best, a metaphor” and that its uses often obscure more than clarify social processes of nation-building. V.Y. Mudimbe and B Jewsiewicki (1993, p. 10) assert that “it is difficult to define collective memory. Collective memory is not that of an organic group whose faculty of recall would be similar to the personal memory of an individual; rather, collective memory is a means of producing meanings which belong to the political field”.

In elucidating the memory/nation nexus in post-Apartheid South Africa, this study attempts to clarify the meaning of memory and offer a political science approach to explaining its relationship with nation-building. In doing this, it assumes a processual stance (cf. Brubaker, 1996) that refuses the scholarly tendency to reify categories and, thus, participate in the
constitution of its taken-for-grantedness. This understanding will partly be used to critique the idea of “memory” and its apprehension as “collective”. On the basis of this critique, the study utilizes the terms “memorialization”, “commemorative practices” or “commemorative strategies” interchangeably. They all signify the idea of process and agency rather than “memory” as an already intact repository or storehouse of an already constituted entity.

The parent of collective memory studies, Maurice Halbwachs (1992), draws attention to the presentist contours of memory-making. He argues that collective memory is a product and process of present political concerns. In other words, the idea of collective memory is about the justification and legitimacy of particular political communities. More implicit in Halbwach’s formulation is the notion that collective memory cultivation is deeply ideological, in that it permits an historical justification for the relative power of different groups that are nationalized, such as the bourgeoisie over the proletariat or men over women. More implicit still in Halbwach’s rendition of collective memory as a presentist exercise, is an investigation into the relationship between collective memory formation and power.

In making explicit Halbwach’s nuances, I maintain that collective memory, as an act of culture, refracts the political context of its on-going formulation. Drawing from Stuart Hall, collective memory neither simply reflects material reality nor does it plainly construct it. Collective memory processes both mirror social power and influence its reinforcement or subversion. In other words, it is a site of struggle and a reflection of conjunctural or contingent realities. In the sense that memory practices are involved in the representation of pastness rather than a reflection of it, they are involved in the “active labour of making things mean” rather than “transmitting an already-existing meaning” (Hall, 1982, p. 64). This understanding then calls for an analysis of the “ideological structuration” (p. 64) of memory work, or invoking an “ideological model of power” (p. 65). Winning the so-called ‘battle of ideas’ that at once constitutes community and naturalizes it (as continuous not just territorially but historically, and bounded together with normative sets of assumptions that signal its differences from others) is central to the (ambiguous) ideological project of memorialization. Memorialization as characteristic of ‘the

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29 Brubaker thus does not use the term or category “nation” in thinking about nationalism in parts of the former Soviet Union. Rather, he uses the idea of “nationhood” to denote the notion of process and constitution, of becoming, of communities in the making. Drawing from both Eyoh (1998) and Appadurai (1996), this study locates the South African nation-state as incipient, in an unrealized state of becoming.
ideological’ seeks to win “a universal validity and legitimacy for accounts of the world which are partial and particular, and towards the grounding of these particular constructions in the taken-for-grantedness of ‘the real’…” (Hall, p. 65).

Commemorative practices are ideologized processes; processes and practices that seek to build legitimacy for social realities out of the social conditions within which they find themselves. This dissertation holds that there is nothing pure about an event that happens in the sense of understanding its causes, its meaning, its consequences. In the same sense, there is nothing impure about the elevation and interpretation of events. Commemorative practices therefore are both an expression of already formed interests and of unfolding interests in the making. What this means is that there are multiple agents of memory and that those “agents” are not too easily captured in the separate social interest containers. For, after all, as Michel-Rolf Trouillot (1995) asserts, collectivities are forged through narratives of the past at the same time as those collectivities are constitutive of them. Paying attention to the mechanisms through which memory is shaped alerts us to struggles for/over power and dominance within social formations.

Commemoration and collective memory practices are ideological. Agents of memory are involved in struggles to advance a hegemonic version of the nation’s past in order to legitimize and naturalize the state, the nation and its practices (whether these are capitalist, socialist, communist, welfarist, patriarchal, religious etc.). Collective memory is thus the achievement of collective consent for the interpretations of what is relevant from the past and how or why it is relevant. Meaning does not inhere in historical processes. Indeed, “[T]he world,” according to Hall (1982, p. 67) “has to be made to mean”. ‘Collective memory’ is therefore not a thing, an object that is retrievable and available for analysis as such. Rather, it is an unfolding and always unfinished process through which the dynamics of power can be read. Hall (1982) again:

Because meaning was not given but produced, it followed that different kinds of meaning could be ascribed to the same events. Thus, in order for one meaning to be regularly produced, it had to win a kind of credibility, legitimacy or taken-for-grantedness for itself. That involved marginalizing, down-grading or de-legitimating alternative constructions. (p. 67)

This perspective finds later resonance in Trouillot’s (1995) proposition that necessary to historical articulations are its kindred silences. What is spoken depends as much on what is said
as on what is actively silenced. This active silencing is intimately tied to the production of hegemony, of an embrace of the common-sense assumptions about social conditions in social formations. The naturalization of social relations and its associated dehistoricization of historical conditions is what Marx has referred to as “a forgetting” (cf. Grundrisse). Reading it as such permits an identification of power configurations at particular historical moments. A close reading of the ways in which the past is made or given meaning, how “this active work of privileging or giving preference” (Hall, 1982 p. 68) in practice unfolds, is what this study is concerned with. What is possible then is not only an opportunity to gain understanding of the dynamics of power, but also to understand the possibilities for contestation and for mobilizing alternative consensual paradigms.

Constructions of a/the past are contingent on power configurations of particular social formations at particular historical junctures. So too is the scholarly fascination with collective memory as a field of enquiry. Pierre Nora (1992) suggests that we talk so much about collective memory into this 21st century precisely because there is so little evidence of it any longer. He argues that for social formations whose everyday life is steeped in memory, its identification is not necessary. In that, the emergence of memory as a field of enquiry and obsession of nation-states is a symptom of late modernity with its associated collapse of social cohesion and national belongingness. But this perspective assumes or embraces the logic of “the end of history”. Francis Fukuyama’s (1992) perspective is not dissimilar from Daniel Bell’s (1960) proclamation of “The End of Ideology”. It is within the context of the apparent triumph of neo-liberal capitalist democracy that this perspective emerges. It is an expression of neoliberalism’s version of the victor’s history. A focus of memory studies is another way of not speaking about ideology and power in the context where there is supposedly none. Nora’s project, “Le Lieux de Memoire” (1996-1998) has been critiqued as an articulation of a nationalist fantasy and nationalizing myth-making and, as such, an invigoration of a hegemonic idea of Frenchness and, more generally, of the idea of “the nation”.

In the African context, Richard Werbner (1998) suggests that memory is deployed because of the crisis of the African state in the midst of the dual assaults against it from above and below: respectively from neo-liberal globalization that challenges its sovereignty and from democratizing impulses of its citizens, who challenge its legitimacy. He posits that a “crisis of
memory” (p. 1) pervades the continent. This crisis refers to the “increasing uncertainty of memory’s status as a moral force in its critique of power” as we witness a “boom in colonial nostalgia, state-driven memorial practices and counter memories that all contest for space and dominance” (p. 1). Werbner asserts that states in Africa produce politicized memories in order to “bury tyranny” while the masses try to remember “for future accountability” (p. 1). This perspective may be valid, but its suggestions that 1) the state is a unified quantity that acts in the interests of its own power; 2) the masses are unified and act against state power; and 3) memory is at times pure and not politicized are all problematic assumptions, particularly in the postcolony where neo-colonial or neo-Apartheid configurations of power persist.

The ideological character of collective memory practices is not only too often missed by scholars of collective memory, but it is actively conceived of as a practice existing outside of ideology. In a recent collection on memory in Africa, Mamadou Diawara, Bernard Lategan and Jörn Rüsen (2010) posit that Africa is an important site of analysis for memory studies in that it provides a wide spectrum of cases “ranging from the most destructive use of historical memory to remarkable examples of constructive reassessment of the past” (p. 1). The “constructive” examples are delineated by their capacity to avert crisis and conflict. The “destructive” cases are those, like Zimbabwe, that advance an historical narrative that justifies its statist redistribution of land or land grabs (depending on perspective), thereby using the past for the egregious agenda of fomenting conflict. This is opposed to the cases that, quite frankly, make the world, or the nation in particular, safe for foreign direct investment (FDI), safe for capitalism. They remain constructive and conflict free only for as long as the poor remain relatively powerless in respect of capital and state machinery.

Partly, Werbner’s over-emphasis of a politics of memory and its opposite, a non-political memory, is a reaction to the excessive constructivism of the perspective that ‘collective memory’ is a presentist construction and thus argues that ‘the past’ is not simply a functionalist fabrication. Like Olick (2003, p. 14), this study argues for the analysis of memorialization as “path dependent as well as instrumental and meaningful”. It argues that statist nation-builders as ‘memory’-makers themselves are not always a coherent and cohesive group. In addition, it identifies the ways in which institutional powers circumscribe what is and isn’t possible; memory-makers don’t start from scratch even though their narratives will assert an originary moment. In that, they do not have an unfettered capacity to produce “the past”. These agents of
memory are, after all themselves constituted by the social formations within which they live. They do not transcend them.

Much of the literature on memorialization analyze the products of memory, such as museums, monuments, speeches, national days or national symbols. These analyses are important in understanding the constitutive effects of the realm of symbolism. Intentionality of the author/s is read through the representational outcome of the nationalizing effort. This thesis does not make assumptions about intent through a retrospective reading of already existing edifices of national memorial practices. Rather, it considers the mechanisms through which decisions are taken and pays close attention to the institutional arrangements through which decisions are made. This permits a theorization of the practice of community-building in the post-colony, which pays attention to questions of power and the bureaucratizing effects of the international system of nation-states that remains predominant into the 21st century. This thesis is thus predominantly about the problem of power in the post-colony.

Stuart Hall (1982, p. 59) critiqued the field of media studies in the US as asserting that “pluralism works” rather than asking whether it does in fact work and considering how it works. Similarly, theorists of nationalism assume the importance of the past in nation-building practices and the centrality of nationalists in the process of making pasts usable. As well, scholars of collective or public memory assert that states produce memory products, be they narratives of the national past or various edifices of memorialization. Inspired by Hall, this thesis is concerned with how the past is indeed produced, or how the decision-making process unfurls itself and what are the processes of and institutions through which it is produced and what is at stake in its production, particularly in the South African postcolony. In the absence of such an approach, studies of memorial practices in South Africa become, at best, unwitting co-conspirators in the reproduction of the powers and power relations they fail to unmask and analyze.

For Trouillot (1995, p. 22), “theories of history rarely examine in detail the concrete production of specific narratives”. Similarly, memory studies, especially as they pertain to nation-building endeavours, assume state authorship of narratives, as well as the authoring of history by the victorious in battle. For this study, attention is paid to the unfolding process (including the dynamic of power that becomes evident) of the production of a national past rather than assuming a singular statist authoring and imposition of this past. In that, it follows Trouillot’s
postulation that “[W]hat matters most are the process and conditions of production of … narratives…” which allows for the discovery of “the differential exercise of power that makes some narratives possible and silences others” (p. 25).

“Constructivism’s dilemma,” according to Trouillot (1995, p. 13) “is that while it can point to hundreds of stories that illustrate its general claim that narratives are produced, it cannot give a full account of the production of any single narrative.” Part of this dilemma is that the collectivity that constructs the past is itself constituted by it (see Trouillot, 1995, p. 16). Since the collectivity was not alive to remember the events they claim to recall, “their constitution as subjects goes hand in hand with the continuous creation of the past. As such, they do not succeed such a past: they are its contemporaries”.

For Halbwachs, collective memory is a function of present concerns, of the politics of the moment. Trouillot understands the relationship between past and present in a less discrete way. For Trouillot (1995, p. 15), the past rather “does not exist independently from the present. Indeed, the past is only past because there is a present, just as I can point to something over there only because I am here. But nothing is inherently over there or here. In that sense, the past has no content. The past – or, more accurately, pastness – is a position. Thus, in no way can we identify past as past”.

Particularly in the post-colony, as scholars we must pay attention to the ways in which colonial social relations are reproduced. These are reconfigured in the realm of the economy, where whites continue to reap the rewards of democracy and blacks largely remain impoverished (see footnote 3 above) and in the realm of discursive practices that claim whites deserved meritocratic status and the normalized position of blacks in poverty. Also evident in analyses on the construction of the national past in South Africa is the dual assumption about where power is located (firmly in the governing party) and that that power is exercised in a coherent fashion – a coherence that suggests a deep agency and voluntarism of the scribes of the past. Trouillot (1995, p. 106) reminds us though in his analysis of silences of the past that “effective silencing [and historical inclusions which he regards as equal parts in the construction of history] does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural”. In the post-Apartheid world, this structural derivation emerges from both Apartheid institutionalization and the institutionalization of the anti-Apartheid movement. In this we identify the interplay between
what Trouillot (1995) calls “historicity 1” and “historicity 2” or “between what happened and that which is said to have happened” (pg. 106).

The power to articulate specific responses to pastness, those “accredited voices” which have the power to define is “ideological power: the power to signify events in a particular way” (Hall, 1983, p. 69). That power is not confined only to those operating within the territorial domain of the nation-state. It is a power of modernity, of the idea that the nation-state remains the primary constituent of identity as well as the formal structuring of pastness itself that thinks commemoration in terms of “events”, of moments that are self-contained and thus dehistoricised, connected only in terms of their linear progression. This structuring mechanism of memorial practices sustains the attempts at closure that is characteristic of the hegemonic impulse.

In this sense then, commemoration or the field of collective memory practices is a site of struggle and contest, and is thus an ideological process. I have argued that it is not a reflection of reality, but is constitutive of reality. This formulation implies that it is also not a dependent variable or super-structural in relation to the economic base. Commemorative practices rather, are co-dependent “on the balance of forces in a particular historical conjuncture” (Hall, 1983, p. 70). In other words, attention needs to be paid to the ways in which commemorative strategies as expressions of ideology theoretically relate to the political economy. In this sense, the thesis applies a new materialist analysis to the production of nationhood via the commemorative mechanism in that it eschews the dualism of mind and matter or ideas and materiality. Instead, it views the relationship between commemorative practices as ideological practices and the political economy of race, gender and capitalism in South Africa as “entangled”. A new institutionalist reading of the unfolding drama of nation-building in South Africa will enable us to comb through the entanglements.

In Disabling Globalization: Places of Power in Post-Apartheid South Africa, Gillian Hart (2002) illuminates the role and place of the local state in the facilitation of neo-liberal economic practices. She states:

30 This is not to say that it is unreal; that something happened may or may not be in dispute. What is in dispute is the meaning that we attach to it and that meaning will have real consequences for current politics as it is produced by it. In other words, there are stakes in meaning-production.
The coincidence of neoliberal orthodoxy in the form of GEAR with the reconstitution of the local state in mid-1996 was also deeply significant. As in many parts of the world, fiscal austerity and the nation state’s pulling back from direct welfare provision has been accompanied by a wide array of functions and responsibilities being devolved to what has been dubbed ‘developmental local government’. In the name of both democracy and efficiency, local councilors and bureaucrats have been called upon to confront massive redistributive pressures with minimal resources. Simultaneously, they have been assigned major responsibility for securing the conditions of accumulation under the aegis of ‘local economic development’. The local state, in short, has become a key site of contradictions on the neo-liberal post-apartheid order. (p. 7)

Later on, in *Rethinking the South African Crisis* (2013), Hart sees the eviscerated national state as being responsible for the discursive production of nationness, while the responsibilities of economic development are devolved to the local state. However, it is evident from the research conducted for this project that there is a more colonic relationship between what are called the different “spheres” of state. In the domain of commemorative practices the local state is often imbued with the responsibility to re-orient the local environment and cement the relationship of local citizens into national subjects. This occurs with a financial burden that municipalities can ill-afford and at a political cost that they are frequently ill-equipped to deal with. In many instances, it is not even the local state that initiates programs and processes, but groups acting on behalf of local communities that attempt to define the meaning of the past and, in turn, influence the cultural identity of the nation. In these instances, there may be multiple forms of commemoration that substantially contradict one the other and undermine any effort at narrating the national story.

To further complicate the relationship, there are many commentators that reify the local and those that were born or lived there become localized rather than national figures. In addition, there is a significant international dimension to nationalist politics that assumes the national entity and regulates even the most intimate endeavours of nationalism – that is, the images through which national identities are refracted. This is especially evident in restorative justice approaches to managing memories, (geographical) naming practices, and the protection of so-called minorities in heritage practices.
The African National Congress (ANC)\textsuperscript{31} obviously recognized the imperative of transforming the Apartheid state into a democratic one and promoting its perspective through the document, “The State, Capitalism and Social Transformation” (1996). The perspective was contested in the tripartite alliance\textsuperscript{32} for emphasizing the importance of evolving a “patriotic bourgeoisie” as a result of change and also as a motive force of change. Historically, the ANC’s “strategy and tactics” regarding itself as a “broad church” and hence multi-class formation, but with a “leaning towards the working class and the poor”.\textsuperscript{33}

In this new iteration, the ANC regarded the role of the state as classically developmental in the sense that it would regulate capitalism, rein in its excesses and produce a local capitalist class. The document was produced in a moment when the ANC became more assertive about a non-socialist growth path for the country, with an activist state that would direct capital in the interests of the country as a whole. It was the political document to accompany the economic policy referred to as GEAR (Growth, Employment and Redistribution), which was derided from the left as a home-grown structural adjustment program. Ultimately though, the communists in the Alliance acceded to the idea or justified its logic in classical Marxist-Leninist terms (that is, an economy that has achieved industrial capitalism can produce the contradictions necessary for its own demise). However, conditions where ideas about classical developmental statism and classical Marxism and the relationship between revolution and the industrial working class could no longer find traction is the era of ascendant neo-liberal capitalism and the prerogatives of good governance. This makes the Alliance assertions anachronistic at best. The critical juncture that made democratization possible, also closed off opportunities for decolonization.

I was then part of a small group of young communists, members of the South African Communist Party (SACP) who sought to infuse the broad liberation movement with a socialist politics. It was a vocal group that was unabashedly antagonistic to the neoliberal direction that we saw the ANC taking. I was also working for the ANC national office at the time. The zero

\textsuperscript{31} The ANC is the liberation movement that became the first democratically elected organization in South Africa’s history in 1994 with over 60% of the vote. It continues to dominate at the polls.

\textsuperscript{32} The Tripartite Alliance is the historic alliance between the ANC, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The ANC has been regarded as the leader of the alliance.

\textsuperscript{33} See Morogoro Strategy and Tactics (1969) and the Kabwe document (1986)
influence I had on fashioning the intellectual parameters of “The state, capitalism and social transformation” was not through lack of trying. In a discussion with one of the central thinkers of the movement and a key crafter of the document, I had mentioned how fortunate we were to be in this moment, a moment that presented us with the opportunity to transform the Apartheid state into a democratic one, a state that served the interests of the majority of people. His response, as always, was deadeningly intimidating and thought-provoking: “Let’s hope,” he said with his wry chuckle, “let’s hope that we can transform the state before the state transforms us.” This pithiness captures well the dynamic of the critical juncture that reminds us of possibility, but also of institutional resilience. This resilience has often been cast in the language of institutional memory. Institutional memory invokes the idea that institutions evolve a “life of their own”. According to Richard Lebow et al (2006 p. 13): “Institutional memory describes efforts by political elites, their supporters, and their opponents to construct meaning of the past and propagate them more widely or impose them on other members of society.”

This suggests that institutional change is difficult to achieve. Paul Kingston (2013) suggests that most scholars of institutional change agree that political life tends to path dependency. This suggests that institutional change derives from its antecedents and makes unraveling institutions particularly difficult. Those moments of potential transformation seldom occur and have been referred to by Ira Katznelson (2003, p. 277; p. 283) as, “elephantine moments of change”, “moments of uncommon choice” and “great institutional plasticity”. Collier and Collier (1991, p. 29) advise that these moments are significant in that they potentially promote substantial changes in institutional life, which, in turn, produce their own institutional legacies.

There has been much scholarly research conducted on the manner in which the colonial state is reproduced in the post-colony. There has been comparatively little conducted on the manner in which the institutionalization of a national imaginary of the national liberation or anti-colonial movements has affected nation-state making in the postcolony. This thesis argues that post-Apartheid memorial practices reveal evidence of the resilience of Apartheid institutions and the impact of the discourses of nationalism institutionalized in the national liberation movement. The epochal phase or critical juncture in South Africa emerges from conditions that both limit and enlarge prospects for change, a moment in the processes of state formation that promote discontinuity in opposition to relatively long periods of institutional continuity (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009, p. 7).
This dissertation uses empirical research to engage with contemporary theoretical debates about the memory/nation nexus, especially as they pertain to constructivism, power and post-colonial governmentality. This approach borrows from Hart’s (2002) “relational concept of comparison” (p. 13). This approach,

refuses to measure ‘cases’ against a universal yardstick. Instead of taking as given pre-existing objects, events, places and identities, I start with the question of how they are formed in relation to one another and to a larger whole. In this conception, particularities or specificities arise through interrelations between objects, events, places and identities; and it is through clarifying how these relations are produced and changed in practice that close study of a particular part can illuminate the whole (p. 15).

In other words, the particularities of cases help identify the intersections between the objectivist and subjectivist versions of “the nation” that generally do not coincide in the literature.

The study uses a number of cases to elaborate the thesis of institutional resilience and change. The following three chapters detail a series of processes in the national state. They detail three key nationalizing processes in three central national institutions: the national heritage infrastructure, the national assembly and the national liberation movement. Chapter Two considers the ways in which the negotiated settlement with its implications for the transformation of dynamics of power creates conditions for the refashioning of monuments to Apartheid and new monuments to freedom. The third chapter analyzes the parliamentary debate on the Anglo-Boer/South African War and demonstrates how national unity or social cohesion trumps questions of coloniality. This is reinforced in Chapter Four which analyses the way in which the liberation movement “nativizes” Afrikaner identity for the new polity. The next two chapters consider the role of the local state. Chapter Five analyses the memory of violence in respect of local communities and the contestations and compromises that evolve at that level regarding memorial practices, suggesting that nationalist narratives are necessarily ambiguous. Chapter Six provides an overview of the bureaucracy that defines the manner in which transformation can occur at the local level in respect of street and place name changes. The chapter considers the different experiences of three ANC-run cities that have chosen different routes to change, their successes dependent on a host of local factors and the relationship of the local to the national.
The dissertation concludes with an analysis of and support for the ethics and politics of post-national memorialization strategies. It derives its logic from the idea that memorialization strategies take for granted or reify the universal/particular that is the nation-state, and thus render forgotten its capitalist and imperialist origins. Perhaps this is another way of arguing for a new internationalism…
CHAPTER TWO

Between Reconciliation and Decolonization: Freedom Park and Voortrekker Monument

*Tshware thebe e tiye wa Rasenate. O ya bona fatshe lenole ya ya* (General Makoanyane)

To be colonized was a fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair results, especially after national independence has been achieved... Around the colonized there has grown a whole vocabulary of phrases, each in its own way reinforcing the dreadful secondariness of people... (Said, 1989, p. 207)

*Memories are made of stone* (Trouillot, 1995, p. 32)

The production of the Freedom Park is to date the largest and most ambitious of South Africa’s new legacy projects that seek to represent the historicity of the nation and thus the country’s nationness itself. Observing the processes through which the Freedom Park has evolved and its relationship with the already existing monument to Afrikaner nationness, the Voortrekker Monument, reveals the following: firstly, the ANC displays little homogeneity when it comes to commemorative strategies, deep fissures persist in the organization in respect of these strategies, and rather than a centralized directive for the production of memorials, decisions rely on the people on the ground (or those directly involved in the day to day activities of memorial-building); secondly, intellectuals play a significant role in both nationalizing the polity through the use of a discourse that takes its nationness for granted, and in granting an authority in the realm of ideas to the ANC that does not exist, the effect of which is the reinforcement of institutional stasis as regards relative powers in post-Apartheid South Africa; thirdly, the imperative of reconciliation as definitive of a national narrative obscures the potential for decolonizing the polity as the Voortrekker Monument is denuded of its coloniality; and finally, and implied in the points above, the debates around the Freedom Park and Voortrekker Monuments assume the existence of a South African nation and thus serve a nationalizing...
purpose – while the cultural identity of this nation remains unsettled, its categorical existence is not.

The 1996 documentary, “Disgraced Monuments,” by Mark Lewis and Laura Mulvey, tells the story of the seismic ideological shifts of the late 20th century by considering what becomes of the monuments that once proudly served, in this case, the Communist regime of the USSR. For the Russian art critic, Victor Misiano, interviewed in the documentary, “All successful revolutions end with statues coming down”. This is a compelling idea in that the dismantling of monuments to the prior regime is a powerful symbol of that regime’s destruction and the effort to begin afresh. However, according to the documentary, the removal of statues “may represent not the beginning of a new era, but the repetition of a familiar pattern”. In this sense, to borrow from Marx, the compulsion to repeat history manifests itself as farce.

The documentary adds another layer to the complex relationship of the new to the old when interviewee, the architect Andrei Rodionov, suggests that far from signaling a revolutionary impulse, pulling down monuments elides the real task of transformation from one system to another. “It is easier to struggle with monuments,” Rodionov contends, “than with concrete reality.” However, sometimes the relationship between monuments and material realities is more complex. Sometimes, the unmovability of monuments is intimately tied to entrenched social hierarchies, the existence of each reinforcing and even reproducing the other. The South African case is instructive in this regard. This case suggests that there is a close bond between the naturalized presence of colonial monuments across the country and the naturalization of the colonial legacy (most notably in the ubiquity of black poverty).

At the same time as the USSR collapsed along with its extensive population of now disgraced monuments, South Africa was transforming itself from an Apartheid polity to a decolonized and democratic one. But, unlike the Soviet case, two decades after its official demise, Apartheid’s presence remains ubiquitous across South Africa. It is visible in the still racialized gulf between rich and poor, in the spatial geography that still segregates the country, and in the statues of colonial heroes and monuments to colonization that still stand tall and proud across the land. This ubiquity has only recently been challenged from below by university students who initiated the #Rhodesmustfall campaign in 2015. As is evidenced in street and place name changes (see Chapter Six for analysis on these) there is an unstated practice where statues of Apartheid leaders
have been removed without controversy, but statues of pre-Apartheid colonial leaders remain standing as evidence of national heritage. Indeed, the post-Apartheid state has gone as far as to protect the place of these statues in the public realm from anti-colonial activists. In April 2015, after the Paul Kruger statue in Pretoria was targeted, the ANC-led municipal government cordoned it off with special fencing. Later, when activists managed to hack through some of the fencing, they were arrested by municipal police (cf. SABC, 2015; Khoza, 2015; Keppler, 2016). Prior to 2015, the only significant challenges to South Africa’s statues came from right-wing whites against some new memorials (such as the Steve Biko statue in the Eastern Cape)\(^{35}\).

Central to the transformative agenda of the new state is the undoing of the colonial legacy and eliminating persistent social divisions. However, while the reversal of historical injustices discursively informs all statist policy, the reckoning with history as a site of struggle and transformation is, at worst, neglected, and at best aspires to an insubstantial version of reconciliation that retains unequal social relations within the context of theoretical equality. This view runs contrary to the perspective posited by Stephen Ellis in an op-ed for the Mail and Guardian (2014). In it he suggests that the ANC “suppresses real history to boost its claim to legitimacy.” Ellis quotes Orwell to begin – “He who controls the past controls the future. He who controls the present controls the past.” He references Orwell because of his insights into the “methods of totalitarian governments.” The idea that the ANC performs the method of authoritarian narrativisation of the past is widely articulated in academia generally (cf. Mare, 2007; Marschall, 2010; Labuschagne, 2010; Baines, 2009; Dlamini, 2009)

Stephen Ellis (and others listed above) present their perspective as a counter-narrative for South Africa. However, a closer consideration of the unfolding terrain of memorial practices suggests that theirs is the dominant narrative to which the ANC has an increasingly muted response. That narrative suggests that the ANC has cultivated a dominant and domineering commemorative complex that needs unraveling in order to salvage democracy, in order that “real” history is narrated. This may be a deliberate strategy to retain discursive power for a minority in the country or it may be a knee-jerk response to an over-determined post-independence trajectory of African nation-statehood. Whatever the reasons for this sentiment, it masks the untransformed

\(^{35}\) See Ndletyana and Webb (2016, pp. 97-98) for more detail on desecration, vandalism and protest against new memorials.
character of commemorative strategies that tend to gesture towards a notion of social cohesion
denuded of the historically more radical content of ANC aspirations. A critical analysis of the
terrain of memorialisation is suggestive of a much more nuanced and often messy engagement
with power and the attempt to mold and fix the nation in respect of its cultural identity. The idea
that the ANC has authoritarian command over the past neglects the fissures in the
party/organization itself, the politics of the so-called transition and after, as well as a global
political-economy that regards the past as a domain of heritage that may articulate a country’s
“comparative advantage” in a marketized milieu.

Indeed, the transformation of the symbolic landscape in South Africa reflects what Bogumil
Jewsiewicki (2010, p. 55) terms a “post-revolutionary era”. This moment is about both the
dominance of a particular set of conjunctural forces and a new politics in the making that
attempts to facilitate the naturalization of this dominance. In this sense, symbolic landscapes and
commemorative strategies are deeply ideological: the meaning that is attached to elevated events
of the past justify or disrupt political and social claims in the present. Some of these conjunctural
factors in respect of a battle of ideas will be discussed in this chapter by paying attention to the
relationship between Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument.

The ANC’s 1992 “Ready to Govern” document was a blueprint for a liberation movement on the
cusp of attaining state power. It was a document drafted to calm the nerves of an international
dispensation concerned with the capacity of what Reaganite and Thatcherite regimes deemed a
terrorist organization to govern a sophisticated capitalist economy. It was also a document that
aimed to assure its supporters that the ANC would not capitulate to the imperatives of bourgeois
governance at the expense of the people. The document commits to private property whilst at the
same time suggesting land appropriation in the public interest. It talks about public ownership of
mineral wealth whilst insisting that the generation of such wealth be negotiated between the
state, workers and employers. Memory, in this document, is equally agile in its capacity to
appeal to all sections of the South African populace. It promotes the idea of replacing symbols
of Apartheid with symbols of national unity while committing itself to “non-sectarian” state-
funded cultural institutions.

In this sense, memory is no longer taken-for-granted as a weapon in the continuing struggle for
freedom and equality in South Africa. The idea of memory as a weapon was promoted by the
ANC’s section on Arts and Culture in exile. Memory was used in the service of unity, for the elevation of African identity in particular and South African identity more generally over the Apartheid designations of static and calcified ethnicities. Indeed, the ANC’s founding fathers sought to build a movement that unified Africans in opposition to the “demon of tribalism” (Seme, 1906). The ANC underground, and in exile through its Arts and Culture department, took this mission quite seriously. For example, at the start of its programming on Radio Freedom which was broadcast from Lusaka, the various anti-colonial fighters from the past were drawn into a praise song that linked the ANC to this continuous struggle for South African freedom. The centenary of the battle of Isandlwana in 1979 was commemorated by the ANC in exile with, amongst others, the performance of a play written by Mandla Langa. The play is called “Marumo” (shield or bullets in Setswana). The naming of the play thus was a deliberate attempt to ‘nationalize’ Isandlwana and transform it from a battle between Zulu and British soldiers into a battle that has meaning for all South Africans, that illustrates the heroism of African (and not just Zulu people) in the fight against colonialism. Isandlwana today is no longer part of the commemorative landscape, but does form part of the trail of heritage in KwaZulu-Natal.

Unity remains an objective for nationalists, but unity during the transition came to mean “unity in diversity”, which acknowledged and brought back different “cultures” that were to be afforded equal voice under the new dispensation. The detribalization effort of the ANC since its founding has been all but dispensed with, but without resorting to the conceptual approach of Apartheid that elevated static and calcified cultures inscribed with racialized dominance and subordination. Rather, the international vocabulary du jour was embraced and has reimagined the polity as multi-cultural, positing static and calcified cultures that are equal one to the other and deprived of the impulse towards power.

The 1994 ANC National Cultural Policy sustains the stance of multi-culturalism and localization of public memory, and begins to advance some practical ideas about the memorial context. As far as public memory is concerned, the ANC policy suggests that local meaning and context are paramount in the evolution of a memorial landscape and should hence be denationalized. The nation-state would advance the commemoration of those struggles that apply to the nation as a whole. In this regard, a Heroes Acre would be established where heroes would be buried. In addition, “Existing memorials will be re-assessed to ensure that they foster reconstruction and
reconciliation. A national memorial commemorating the liberation struggle will be erected” (ANC, 1994, p. 2).

Existing memorials, in the main, have remained intact, presiding over some of the most important power centers in the country. Louis Botha rides proudly at the front gates of parliament, “Soldier, Farmer, Statesman”. At the flank is Jan Smuts, across the street from his statue is Jan Hofmeyr. The library gardens in Cape Town are home to Queen Victoria. And those gardens are actually the Company Gardens, the Company being the Dutch East India Company that began the process of colonization in the south of Africa. The garden has been stripped of history though, except for its name – there is no sense of symbolic import of the magnificent garden as young and old lovers stroll by, kids play and homeless sleep. Perhaps that is the greatest revenge the living can have on history. Or perhaps it is history’s revenge – to decontextualise, and naturalise, like foliage in a garden, the predicament that social formations find themselves in.

In respect of policy and legislation, the new democratic government first adopted a White Paper on Arts, Culture and Heritage, “All Our Legacies, Our Common Future” in 1996. One of the institutions that it produced, the National Heritage Council (NHC) conducted a review of the memorial landscape between 2013 and 2014 and concluded that after 20 years since the first democratic government was elected in South Africa, there is no clear framework for the place of colonial and Apartheid memorials and for the erection of new memorials in South Africa. Significantly, this is related to the understanding of heritage posited by the White Paper that does not distinguish between “wildlife and scenic parks,” “literature and music” and “national monuments” to name a few of the institutions and practices that are collapsed under its broad rubric. Indeed, the NHC itself, which was established through the National Heritage Council Act (Act No. 11 of 1999) was reined in by the establishment of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) established in terms of the National Heritage Resources Act, 1999 (Act No. 25 of 1999). Through SAHRA, provinces are designated a special responsibility for memorials, statues and monuments. From an administrative perspective, the NHC and SAHRA would often act in competition one with the other and erode the possibilities of a coherent national and

36 See photos of these statues in Appendix One
nationalist strategy.\textsuperscript{37} A number of reviews of policy and legislation have been conducted over the last decade with the most comprehensive emerging from a report, “Review of Heritage Legislation” (DAC, n.d.) conducted between 2006 and 2007.\textsuperscript{38} The NHC review (conducted between six and seven years later) emerges from a recommendation from this report, as does the review of the White Paper (which also emerges as a response to the #Rhodesmustfall campaign). Its second draft is currently circulating for discussion. In other words, the bureaucratic hurdles that the new state has set in place, has the effect of denuding the state of the capacity for revolutionary politics and for authoritarian practices in respect of the monumental and commemorative domains.

It is no wonder then that the new government did not build a Heroes Acre. Rather, within five years of the 1994 ANC Culture Policy document, Thabo Mbeki had posited a vision for the elaboration of a Freedom Park, as a living monument to South African’s freedom. This project is one of the crowning icons in the National Legacy infrastructure produced by the “new” South African state.

\textbf{Freedom/Reconciliation Park}\textsuperscript{39}  

South Africa’s legacy projects are aimed at erecting monuments that are more reflective of South Africans as a whole, that democratize the past by ensuring an inclusive ownership of its memory, and nationalize it by encouraging a broad and all-embracing narrative frame that is demographically representative. That frame has re-read the past as an Andersonian exercise in “reassuring fratricide” (Anderson, 1991, p. 201) and its logical culmination in the reconciliation of adversarial siblings. Perhaps the grandest of these projects has been the Freedom Park that emerged from a call by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC 2003) for a memorial space that could unite South Africans and help heal the wounds of the past. It is conceptualized in contrast to the ANC’s prior desire for a Heroes’ Acre, a monument to those who lived and died for freedom. Heroes’ Acres have tended to elevate the role of armed insurrection, of the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{37} Ciraj Rassool, personal communication, District Six Museum, Cape Town, November 2, 2010
  \item \textsuperscript{38} See Appendix Three for a list of the numerous national and international laws, regulations and policies that govern the ‘heritage’ domain in South Africa and render radical re-ordering of this domain, difficult, at best.
  \item \textsuperscript{39} See photos of Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument in Appendix Two
\end{itemize}
uniformed and disciplined armed insurgent with the inevitable unreconstructed phallic symbolism of automatic weapons and towering monuments to male liberation heroes. The venues in Namibia and Zimbabwe come to mind here. It is this image that Mudimbe and Jewsiewicki (1993) contend is the approach to history-making of post-colonial African regimes by the early 1990s which assert:

a forcefully-shared vision of the nation’s ‘collective memory’ [is] drafted in government offices by state intellectuals in order to settle accounts with the country’s troubled past… The ensuing result is the moulding of state-driven policies of memory aimed at rewriting the national script by enhancing unwritten norms of exclusion.

Sabine Marschall (2010) suggests that the South African version of commemorative practices follows this same logic. She speaks about the teleological “struggle” narrative that is at the core of heritage architecture and memorial sites in the post-colony:

…today, the school history curriculum, the media and the heritage sector entrench the popular notion of “the Struggle”, a teleological narrative, implying coherence and unity, a more or less concerted effort towards liberation, led by the ANC and supported by its armed wing… In this context, the memory of some victims is more opportune than others, and the process of memorialization is accompanied by significant silences, the forgetting of uncomfortable memories, and the hierarchical ordering of victims, which continues to divide survivors and communities to the present day. (pg. 14-15)

This is not evidenced in the processes and outcomes of the Freedom Park experience and is also challenged by scholars such as Sifiso Ndlovu (1998) when he states,

What has become apparent is that the ANC has shifted its position, as it no longer uses these commemorations to emphasize resistance put up by black societies during the apartheid years. Their focus now is on national reconciliation and nation-building. (pg. 53)

The processes for producing the Freedom Park and its outcome partly confirm Ndlovu’s perspective about a shift in the ANC’s position. However, it remains unclear that the repositioning has been driven from uniform decisions by the ANC at a national level that are often rather about a decided lack of interest in (re)producing history, the predilections of
individuals at the helm of particular organizations at particular times and the character of power relations that defined South Africa’s ‘transition’.

Freedom Park, in contrast to the image of a phallocentric Heroes Acre, represents a different kind of memorialism. Its key features: a Garden of Remembrance and the //hapo - Freedom Park Museum are more subtle and potentially inclusive arenas for contemplating the past. //hapo, the Khoi word for “dream” is a museum that structures a national narrative in seven episodes, beginning 3.5 million years ago. In keeping with nationalisms everywhere, the museum asserts the existence of South Africa prior to its establishment as a territorialized and nationalized entity and, in so doing, assumes or takes for granted its existence. The new nation is fashioned in relation to Benedict Anderson’s classic genealogical inversion, where the originary present becomes antecedent to the past (Anderson, 1991, p. 205). The nation is thus read retrospectively. Freedom Day (April 27, 1994) marks the birth of the new South Africa, and prior history – and indeed, in respect of Freedom Park, pre-history – become commemorated as markers of national continuity. They become the inheritors or descendants of this later historical moment and are thus thoroughly transformed by it (even to the point of historicizing pre-history).

The Garden of Remembrance includes, S’khumbuto, Isivivane and Uitspanplek. S’khumbuto commemorates those who died in the various conflicts on behalf of or in the place now known as South Africa. The 697m long “Wall of Names” is located in this area. Decisions about who is and is not included on this wall is illustrative of an aspiration to a project of reconciliation that, in terms of battles over history and its meaning, may be regarded as a problematic substitute for decolonization and the freedom implied in this process. Contrary to this view is a burgeoning scholarship that argues that the Freedom Park narrates a victor’s history and does not adequately consider the political task of reconciliation. As illustration, Pieter Labuschagne (2010, p. 113) suggests that the ANC has a “highly charged political agenda” that seeks a “re-creation of history”. In an act of his own historical revisionism, Labuschagne (2010, p. 114) invokes the colonial idea of “black tribes” of South Africa (in antagonism with the deliberate agenda of the liberation formations). In addition, he questions the colonial character of the Apartheid state by referring to statues commemorating Afrikaner heroes as “colonial” statues’ (2010, p. 120). Estelle Mare (2007) echoes this perspective suggesting that the Freedom Park skews towards “the ANC’s twisted version of recent history” (p. 10).
A more subtle engagement with the battle for history as it relates to monuments and memorials emerges through the work of Gary Baines. Baines has written productively and prolifically on the discursive battles that persist regarding South Africa’s “Border War/Liberation Struggle” (cf. 2009; 2013; 2014). His analyses carefully untangle the interests that are in contention as different groups vie for a place in South Africa’s post-Apartheid polity. Yet, like most studies on commemorative practices in which scholars tend towards a reification of an already-existing community of people, Baines elevates South African nationness to a given quantity. He compellingly argues that “Every war is fought twice: militarily and then discursively” (Baines, 2013, p. 188). He goes on to claim that “The war of words or discursive struggle tends to be particularly acrimonious following civil wars” (p. 188). Baines thus immediately establishes his contention that South Africa’s battle was “civil” rather than a battle between multiple contending forces (such as colonial and anti-colonial), who may or may not regard themselves in national terms. Anderson (1991, p. 201) refers to this semantic choice as deliberate for nationalists who seek to articulate a “reassuring fratricide” that works to produce the idea of a deep historical nation even (or especially) in its historical absence. He cites the misnomer of the “American Civil War” as an indicator of this phenomenon. In his unproblematic use of the idea of the so-called Border Wars or Liberation Struggle as “civil war,” Baines either wittingly or inadvertently establishes the character of South Africa’s major 20th century battles as expressions of the fractures of a single community of people. His analysis then serves, amongst other things, the productive enterprise of nationalizing the polity. This is accomplished through naturalizing its continual and historical existence.

In relation to these wars, Baines examines the debates that ensued after the Freedom Park’s trustees omitted the names of fallen South African Defence Force soldiers from its Wall of Names. According to Baines (2013, p. 188), this debate “exemplifies the functioning of memory politics in transitional societies”. Baines argues that South Africa’s memorial complex has been “divisive” suggesting that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) led to many (presumably whites) believing that it “vindicated the conduct of the liberation armies at the expense of the security forces” (p. 190). Counter-memorials that have been erected in response to Freedom Park offer evidence of this post-apartheid fracture.

Baines proceeds with laying the blame for the schism at the feet of the new dispensation. He describes the outcome of a workshop that included delegates from various state departments and
Afrikaner organizations as “apparently [doing] little to resolve the differences of opinion and the issue became polarized and racialised” (p. 198). He quotes a newspaper report from the meeting that it was “split between those intent on reconciliation and others dead against displaying oppressors names in the same place as those of freedom fighters” (p. 198). By presenting the report unproblematically, Baines suggests that Afrikaners were attempting to insert themselves into the rainbow narrative of South Africa while the new dispensation lacks such magnanimity.

Explicit in Baines’ argument is the contention that the representatives of the new state have an obligation to not only take seriously, but accommodate the perspectives of Afrikaner groups. In the absence of such accommodation, commemorative practices that are sanctioned by the state at best reinforce the idea that there are “two mutually exclusive versions of South Africa’s past” (p. 198). For Baines, the contestations over the Freedom Park are evidence of the “irreconcilable memory regimes” that inhere in the current polity (p. 199). He goes on to present some slim arguments for why names of fallen SADF soldiers should or should not be included. In addition, he contends that the criteria for inclusion are not clear and there is “slippage” (p. 203) between those regarded as heroes of the struggle (for example, Solomon Mahlangu) and the victims of Apartheid (such as the massacred of Sharpeville).

But this “slippage” or confusion is not analyzed further. There are multiple political battles that are being fought within the ANC itself as well as between the multiple liberation formations that have existed in South Africa’s history. To assume that the primary focus of nation-building is the black/white schism is to uncritically embrace the dominant local and global narrative of the character of the South Africa nation.

The Freedom Park makes explicit its claims to a unified African heritage that is timeless and available as a resource for post-colonial identity formation. In much the same way as Mandla Langa’s play nationalized Isandlwana, so Freedom Park attempts to nationalise multiple languages and various pre-colonial institutions, such as “lekgotla” (a traditional assembly or meeting) into a unified identity. However, in the anti-Apartheid struggle, unity was forged as a challenge to the governing strategies of colonialism that sought to divide and rule subjugated peoples. In this instance, however, that which is African is presented as timeless and essential deriving from a spiritual authenticity, rather than a material claim. This positioning has much to
do with the vision of the second CEO of Freedom Park, Wally Serote (Personal Interview, December 2009).

In addition to the importance of specific personalities in defining the contours of Freedom Park, the place has also emerged from a series of position papers and frameworks that have been driven primarily through the state, in particular through the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) and through panels of “experts”. In this sense, the process is more bureaucratized than politicized, located in the domain of international best practice rather than local politics. For many in the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ANC, what was expected to be a memorial to freedom, has instead become a tribute to reconciliation. This is evidenced in two ways in particular: the debates about the Wall of Remembrance and, in some respects tied to that, the relationship between the Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument.

Serote (2009) contends that when identifying names for the Wall of Remembrance, the only Afrikaner name there was Braam Fischer. The Board of the Freedom Park Trust then deliberately went searching for other Afrikaner heroes and found Generals De Wet and De La Rey, both formidable characters in the evolution of battle strategies against the British and the fomentation of Afrikaner nationalism. In this way, the memorial ceases to be one that only honours the heroes of the anti-Apartheid struggle. It defers to inclusivity rather than to the kind of victor’s history many scholars (mentioned above) accuse the ANC of propagating.

The inclination to inclusivity and reconciliation as being primary features of the approach to the past weakens the historical claim to coloniality and the present need to extricate the polity from colonial social relations rather than simply the expansion of de jure civil rights. The complication in the call, by Afrikaner social movements, reiterated by Baines, Labuschagne and Mare, that all those who fell in South Africa’s wars, including those fighting on the side of the Apartheid state should appear on the Wall of Remembrance, flattens the historical fight in South Africa into “two contending memorial perspectives” with equal validity. But the fight to subjugate people and the struggle for emancipation are not the same. Making claims to equivalence is as normative and political as making the opposite claims. Partly, this position is a

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40 Position paper of 2000; Freedom Park, “Conceptual Framework” and “A vision for the design brief”

41 Kgalema Motlanthe, Joel Netshitendzhe, Saki Macozoma, personal communications, Pretoria and Johannesburg, November 2010.
remnant of the TRC which problematically aligned the perpetrators of Apartheid with its antagonists.\textsuperscript{42}

In practical terms, this perspective of reconciliation absent of a perspective of decolonization, caused significant headaches for some leadership in the ANC. Indeed, when the debate about SADF casualties on the Wall of Remembrance opened up, the then Secretary General (SG) of the ANC, Kgalema Motlanthe, was fielding calls and visits from families of dead askaris claiming that their children too deserved to be honoured and inscribed on the Wall.\textsuperscript{43} When reports came to the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) about Freedom Park, members recall some complaints that the country should be building a monument to freedom and not to reconciliation. Some on the NEC derisively dubbed the project, “Reconciliation Park”.\textsuperscript{44} The conversation about the memorial at the national level of the ANC did not occupy much time. A multiplicity of other concerns took precedence.\textsuperscript{45}

One of the ways in which Mongane Serote sought to further reconciliation during his tenure as CEO of the Freedom Park was to appeal to amalgamate Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument into a single precinct. Freedom Park is strategically and deliberately located on Salvokop, the hillock overlooking Pretoria, the capital city, that stands opposite, and perhaps for a moment, in opposition to, the edifice to colonial settlement, the Voortrekker Monument.\textsuperscript{46} But the Board of the Voortrekker Monument rejected the idea of a unified memorial complex. The Board has ultimate decision-making capacity because between 1991 and 1993\textsuperscript{47}, the national assembly amended the Monuments Act which essentially and effectively privatized the colonial Apartheid memorial landscape. In an effort to make them safe from the inevitability of black

\textsuperscript{42} For an excellent discussion about this, see Mamdani, 2002
\textsuperscript{43} Kgalema Motlanthe, personal communication, OR Tambo House, Pretoria, November 2010
\textsuperscript{44} Joel Netshitendzhe, personal communication, December 2010
\textsuperscript{45} Personal communications with Kgalema Motlanthe, Mongane Serote, Brigitte Mabandla, Joel Netshitendzhe, Saki Macozoma, Pallo Jordan all confirm this. I have not been able to access NEC minutes.
\textsuperscript{46} Sabine Marschall (2010) identifies numerous instances where new memorials explicitly engage with the old memorial that remains standing.
\textsuperscript{47} In 1991, Parliament moved to create greater autonomy to the Monuments’ Council and in 1993 had transferred monuments to a Section 21, not-for-profit company.
rule, monuments and memorial sites were handed over to community based organisations to govern. Indeed, the aim of the amendments were to provide “functional autonomy” (P.R.E. De Gama in Hansard 1991, p. 1188) for the governance of monuments in order to ensure, “that which happened in Africa never happen in South Africa. May national monuments never be knocked down or demolished here. Cultural possessions are always treasured possessions for any state and its people” (P.H. van Rhijn in Hansard 1991, pp. 1189-1190). The state continued to fund national monuments at the same time as they began establishing alternative funding mechanisms. This has meant that, in the words of Serote (2009), “an empire of memorials dedicated to Afrikaners”\(^{48}\) continues to mark South Africa’s landscape. Indeed, by the time of South Africa’s transition, the National Monuments Council (NMC) had registered almost 3500 national monuments (the vast majority being British colonial and Afrikaner nationalist sites).

**From Memorials of Conquest to National Heritage**

The Voortrekker Monument is one amongst many Afrikaner symbols that remains unmoved since the end of Apartheid. Apartheid’s fall was not symbolically evident through the simultaneous collapse of its key commemorative sites and edifices. Albert Grundlingh (2001) suggests, though, that its symbolic import has indeed collapsed. In his view, the Monument no longer acts as a key site for the mobilization of Afrikaner nationalism and, instead, has been transformed into a heritage site, another depoliticized tourist attraction. Grundlingh highlights the dehistoricizing effects of the heritage industry in its commodification of history and simplification of politics. Memorials and monuments “seek to freeze ideas, sentiments, and ideologies in time and space” (Murray, 2013, p. 85). But changing contexts change the meaning of the memorial (cf. Murray, 2013; Grundlingh, 2001). The meanings attached to memorials and monuments are never static over time and are re-interpreted in relation to changing presents. But what Murray and Grundlingh should more explicitly grapple with is the way in which the relationship between monuments and historical moments are forged. The analysis, for now, suggests that the meaning of monuments reflects the changes of the current dispensation. However, the relationship could be viewed as more of a refraction (in Stuart Hall’s sense, 2013). In other words, the monuments engage with the new reality and their continued presence affects

\(^{48}\) Mongane Serote, personal communication, Pretoria, November 2009
this new reality as much as it is affected by them. This is evident in the rhetoric and actions of some state officials and institutions.

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is one among many new institutions and transformed old institutions that in a direct way deal with the country’s past. Its CEO, Sonwabile Mancotywa, has argued for integrating Apartheid into the framework of South Africa’s heritage. In an article, “Apartheid is also our heritage” (2009), Mancotywa argues for the retention of Apartheid statues and memorials as a reminder of the past:

The National Heritage Council (NHC) is of the view that all statues that embody our apartheid past, ghastly as it was, should remain where they are. Their sight does indeed invoke unpleasant memories amongst Black people. But, removing such statues from our public space smacks of an attempt to erase the Apartheid chapter out of our history. This would be disingenuous. It would demand of us to pretend that apartheid never happened. Such pretense would never bring us any consolation. Memories of apartheid are irrepressible even in the absence of apartheid monuments. One does need a Verwoerdian statue to be reminded of apartheid. Everything around us is a reminder of our apartheid past, from the continuing residential segregation to income inequalities and the sheer poverty of black people. All these have their origin in the racial policies of apartheid.

Mancotywa suggests that the perpetual presence of these monuments and statues helps us ensure that we never forget Apartheid and that it never again occurs on our soil. However, meaning is not essential or intrinsic to any monument or statue. Meaning shifts over time according to interpretive frameworks that dialogue with the artifice and its historical context. The existence of monuments outside a municipal office or outside parliament does not, on its own, remind us of Apartheid. Neither does the existence of black poverty. They can be reminders in being made to remind us. That involves an active and consistent interpretive framework within which people read the reality. Indeed, the visit by then deputy minister of arts and culture, Paul Mashatile, to the Voortrekker Monument in 2009 was presented as a reconciliation opportunity. It was promoted as a sign of the multicultural pluralism of the “new” South Africa. Under the heading, “Acknowledging Afrikaner Culture as Part of our Diverse Heritage”, Mashatile (2009) states:

As part of recognizing South Africa’s diverse cultural heritage and in particular the Afrikaner Heritage, and giving practical meaning to our long held belief that South Africa belongs to all
who live in it; black and white, last week I visited the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria.
The Voortrekker Monument is a national icon for Afrikaners in South Africa. On December 16, the anniversary of the battle at the Blood River, Afrikaners from all over the country stream to the Voortrekker Monument to commemorate what is to them the most important event in the history of South Africa. The Monument is supposed to be a reminder of the courage, determination and persistence of the Voortrekkers. The visit demonstrated our government’s commitment to promote reconciliation and build a truly united South Africa, where the cultural heritage of all who live in it is acknowledged.

Mashatile’s message serves to depoliticize events of the past and drains the Monument of its deeply colonial residue. The Monument, for him, no longer stands as a sign of repression and of the incursion of those who became known as internal colonizers into South Africa. The ground for the Voortrekker Monument was turned in 1938 and the first stone laid to mark the centenary of the sojourn of the Great Trek from the Cape to the interior of what was to become South Africa. It is through this trek that the identity of Afrikaners was forged at the time and in memory. Along the way, the Voortrekkers collided with the numerous social formations that populated these lands, subjugated them and stole their land. The Monument, however, served to narrate a story of bravery, of Afrikaner suffering and of destiny. It was opened officially on December 16, 1949, the year after the National Party (NP), the party of Apartheid, came to power. On this ‘Monument Hill,’ the newly elected prime minister declared the triumph of Christianity over the backwardness of the black population; iterated the imperatives of racial purity; and presented the monument as a symbol of the Afrikaner’s heavenly right to rule this savage land. On December 16, 2012, now the public holiday of Reconciliation, President Jacob Zuma cut a ribbon opening the road between the Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument.

Sabine Marschall has produced compelling work that considers the ways in which new monuments dialogue with old ones. The conversation between Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument, however, results less in a critique of settler colonialism than in its forgetting. This perhaps reflects the signal contradiction within ANC liberation movement ideas of “colonialism of a special type”, which ultimately “nativizes” the colonizer and thus erodes the historical claims of the colonized.49

49 See Chapter Four for an elaboration of “Colonialism of a Special Type”
This rapprochement or dialogue between the new and the old registers a significant departure from the imaginings of freedom fighters in the pre-1994 period. According to Autry (2012, p. 153) activists had contemplated three proposals regarding the future of the Voortrekker Monument: “(1) demolition and abandonment of the site; (2) recycling bricks to build houses for the poor; and (3) refashioning the memorial into a public urinal for the black population”. Quite obviously, not all these were serious considerations. However, they indicate an irreverence for the object of colonial conquest and the desire to reject its politics in the act of physical removal. This appetite for demolition was not realized. In its stead is a nationalist appropriation of the Monument as a cultural object, and, according to Macotywa and Mashatile, an object of “heritage” that reminds us of multi-culturalism rather than colonization and conquest. The notion of heritage acts to strip the critical faculties of historicization and instead objectifies the past. The majority of people of South Africa did not fight for apartheid; they fought against it. In other words, in the present it is not heritage that ought to be embraced, but a legacy that ought to be eradicated. The uncontested prominence of the Voortrekker Monument thus serves as a forgetting, as a kind of historical erasure.

The rather large distance between these two perspectives of the ANC regarding the Voortrekker Monument in a relatively short space in time is perplexing. Those at the helm of cultural work in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the ANC found it confusing too, as their voices became marginalized in the rush to political power.  

Certainly a combination of exogenous and endogenous balance of forces, the imperatives of achieving political power and economic change and the need to find a place in the new nation for all who resided in South Africa informed the choices made by African nationalists. The cultural terrain was simply not foregrounded as an important enough domain for intervention and conflict. For Pallo Jordan, a former minister of arts and culture, “history would resolve itself” and was not worth battling in such an emotional terrain. Joel Netshitenzhe contended that the ANC at the moment of democracy was consumed with what it regarded as the more important

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50 For a more extensive conversation of the “heritage industry” see Hewison (1987)
51 Omar Badsha, personal communication, Cape Town, November 2009; Mandla Langa, personal communication, Johannesburg, October 2009; Pallo Jordan, personal communication, Cape Town, November 2010
domain of political economy.\textsuperscript{52} Indeed, the very ministries that are responsible for cultivating the identity of the nation – Home Affairs and Arts and Culture – were led by the ethno-nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party in the Government of National Unity (GNU)\textsuperscript{53} and the subsequent government. These ministries were responsible for identifying new public holidays as well as forging the legislative environment for new cultural policy. Both Ministries were directed by the ideals of reconciliation, social cohesion and “unity in diversity” that became a new state motto.\textsuperscript{54}

In transforming the legislative environment, Minister Ngubane, then Mtshali, drew heavily on international best practice, learning from the experience of other developing countries and from UNESCO. In addition, the ministry opened up a process of broad public consultation which eventually produced the new legislation. Experts organized into the Arts and Culture Task Group (ACTAG) “cautioned against a process of large-scale deproclamation or re-evaluation of existing national monuments as ‘counter-productive’ and recommended that rather than ‘denuding the cultural landscape’ controversial monuments should be re-interpreted by stressing an inclusive reading of the historical facts” (Marshall, p. 28).

The National Monuments Act (No. 28 of 1969) was replaced in 1999 by the National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), thus transforming the monumental landscape into a landscape of heritage, with all its implications of stasis and of ownership. Central to the new legislation was the decentralization of the memorial terrain. Partly, this was a response to the enactment in 1995 of legislation relating to the memorial landscape in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). KwaZulu-Natal was one of two provinces not won by the ANC in the 1994 election. It was the domain of the ethno-nationalist IFP and the Western Cape was dominated by the former party of Apartheid, the NP. In an effort to ensure the continued participation and accommodation in the new nationalist project by the IFP and the NP in particular, South Africa’s Cabinet suggested decentralization.

\textsuperscript{52} Pallo Jordan, personal communication, Cape Town, November 2010; Joel Netshitendzhe, personal communication, November 2010
\textsuperscript{53} The GNU was a negotiated arrangement of the interim South African Constitution that stipulated that each party winning 20 seats or more in the national election would gain at least one position in Cabinet. Both the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party won the requisite number of seats and hence were included with the majority party, the ANC, in the GNU. Then-president Mandela included other representatives of smaller parties into the government too. The GNU ended after the final Constitution was enacted (1997).
\textsuperscript{54} Pallo Jordan, personal communication, Cape Town, November 2010; Brigitte Mabandla, personal communication, Johannesburg, April 2012
This reality lies in stark contrast with the perspective that suggests a centralized and hegemonic memorial practice by the ANC.

Far from grand ANC hegemonic narratives, we saw a transformation of memory as a weapon to memory as heritage, as both an expression of commodification as well as of nation-building. Essentially, memorialisation or commemorative strategies are interpretive strategies. They give meaning to events of the past that can help make sense of both it and the present, and what is possible in the future. In this sense, memorialisation is a deeply ideological exercise, and is neither passive nor devoid of politics. Memory as heritage serves the purposes of a shallow reconciliation, at the expense of more radical historical claims and memorial complexes become venues for tourism rather than redress.

It is in this sense that I try to make the argument that two decades of memorial practices have attempted first and foremost to serve a reconciliatory purpose – both in the important way of not circumscribing claims to historical truth, but also in the neoliberal way that circumvents decolonisation in the sense of more fundamental transformative projects. Said’s (1989) attention to the post-colonial articulation of “the dreadful secondariness of people” alerts us to the sacrifice of a memorial practice steeped in an ethically imperative decolonial process on the altar of an insubstantial reconciliatory practice, a sacrifice that does the relatively easy work of extracting concessions from the formerly colonized.

The current student-led protests against the symbols of colonialism and their continued material significance in the present, suggest that South Africa’s battles over the past and the cultural identity of the nation are far from settled.
CHAPTER THREE

Retrospectively Nationalizing and Deracializing the Colony: The South African War Debate

As alluded to in the first two chapters, much of the theory and empirical analysis of statist constructions of the past tell a tale of very deliberate, strategic and determined inclusions and erasures of historical moments. In addition to this, the critique of the governing party in South Africa, the ANC, as it pertains to memory and commemoration suggests an organization that also seeks to imprint its version of the past as it constructs the post-Apartheid nation-state. However, the evidence does not bear out the counter-critiques. In many ways, it is the narrative that claims to be counter that is constitutive of a dominant narrative. It is the counter-narrative that makes claims for what is supposed to be the authorial statist voice in South Africa. This perspective has been demonstrated in relation to South Africa’s legacy projects (in Chapter Two). It elucidates a legislative framework that governs renditions of the past and collective memorialization, including the perspectives and policies of notions of heritage and national museums and monuments as attempting to denude the polity of colonial divisions. It will be demonstrated in the coming chapters on the divergent processes of renaming places and streets as an act of historical and political claims to culture and space.

In this chapter, the last-minute choice of the ANC in the National Assembly to focus on and rename the Anglo-Boer War, the “South African War,” and the content of the parliamentary debate will highlight a governing party that is relatively disorganized in the realm of the ‘battle of ideas’ in general and in terms of ‘the past’ in particular; and an organization/party that defers to both a dominant international view of the form of national belonging and a dominant local/international view that elevates a politics of conciliation over that of confrontation. This serves to retain the principle institutional edifices of colonial power. The ensuing analysis will show the assumptions pertaining to the memory/nation nexus as problematically generalized. It will suggest that the way in which nationalists think about the past is radically context dependent. That context refers to the particular historical juncture within which the nation-builders think about the past, as well as the ideas and perspectives that inform the particular
nation-builders. The context refers to the institutional domain that supports or undermines the agentic capacity of decision-makers, a domain in which institutions reproduce themselves more often than they transform.

For South Africa, the juncture that marked the change from minority rule to democracy can be described as ‘partial’ at best (see chapter one). While exogenous forces at the time lost their appetite for authoritarianism, they reproduced the centrality of national belonging in international politics (cf Brubaker, 1996) and elided the coloniality of the present (cf. Derek Gregory, 2004; Glen Coulthard, 2014). Settler colonialism and capitalism, according to Coulthard (2014, p. 11) are not objects or events, but enduring “social relations”. Echoing Edward Said (see Chapter Two) and drawing on the work of Frantz Fanon, Coulthard (2014, p. 16) directs attention to the “specific modes of colonial thought, desire and behavior that implicitly or explicitly commit the colonized to the types of practices and subject positions that are required for their continued domination”. The political exigencies of the moment and the global and local institutional paradigms within which those imperatives emerge are enormously meaningful in understanding the relationship between nation-building and memory and the (in)capacity to fundamentally alter social relations.

The South African case reveals a polity that sees the past as both central and peripheral. This may seem like a huge contradiction and in some ways it is. But the past is central in that every policy perspective is geared towards overcoming its legacy. It is peripheral in the sense that the ANC, steeped in materialist analysis, views narrative as super-structural, as something that will respond to the political economy of the present and future that is being built. It is peripheral, too, in the sense that compromises were made at the moment of transition that locked the ANC into a notion of governance that is policy oriented, devoid of politics as such. What this has meant for the past is that it too was compromised, and, in a similar way to the act of transformation, the processes relating to the past and memory formation have been bureaucratized or transformed into avenues for reconciliation rather than redress. The assumption that the major schisms in the South African polity is a black/white racial divide is evidenced through the major commemorative interventions that have been made since 1994: Freedom Park (see Chapter Two) and the “South African War” parliamentary debate. It is through this debate that the imperative to reconcile black and white people is elevated above the imperative to remember colonialism/capitalism and its life in the present. An analysis of the debate highlights the
approach of the post-Apartheid dispensation to a notion of national continuity over fundamental political and social change.

The paradoxes of partial critical junctures revolve around the dichotomies that inhere in institutional continuity and change. The then newly elected ANC MP, Sakumzi Macozoma, speaking during one of the first sessions of the first democratically elected South African parliament, suggested that the Parliament “dates [its] history” in the same way that the French do. He said:

I thought that perhaps it would be a good idea in this house to talk about the second republic in South Africa, because the First Republic from 1961–1994 was the other republic. When I am in a good mood I will talk about it as the First Republic, but when I am not, it will be the Apartheid Regime.

This parliamentary statement reveals an enormous amount about the ambiguous position of the ANC when it comes to matters of the past. Firstly, the statement suggests that there is some continuity between the “First and Second Republics”. The narrative of the liberation formations historically was that of revolution and the fundamental transformation of South African state and society. The nature of the transition, however, as a negotiated settlement, reined in notions of a revolutionary break and instead replaced this with the idea of a continuous state that differs in the extent to which it broadens notions of citizenship. In this sense, the South African struggle is re-characterised as a civil rights struggle as opposed to a revolutionary one. In other words, South Africa’s transition is considered alongside other “third wave” transitions that involve the move from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones. In this regard, South Africa’s transition is not registered as a decolonizing one. This perspective both informs and is informed by the manner in which the past is constructed and has implications for the transformational possibilities of the state. It is not simply a semantic or narrative omission, but speaks directly to the nature of change and is where material reality and ideological perspectives intersect and find meaning.

Macozoma, however, alerts the House to the fact that the accommodationist rendition of history, of a continuous single state once caught up in segregationist policy, is an option, among others, for the construction of memory and giving meaning to the past. It implies that there is a possibility of altering the narrative that could result from Macozoma being in “a bad mood”, an affective state that would likely emerge from the opposition not making its own compromises in
the transformation of South African society. This ambiguity is consistently articulated through the peculiarities of naming and re-naming practices of the state and decisions about what is actively remembered and how it is remembered, and what is passively or quietly forgotten.

As far as nation-building exercises are concerned, the founding moment for post-Apartheid “new” South Africa is Freedom Day that commemorates the official day of the first democratic vote in the country in 1994. This day is read retrospectively to reinforce the fact of the nation of all South Africans, black and white. Benedict Anderson posits the construction of diachronic and/or synchronic renderings of the title “new” to place names. “New” either operates as a signifier of inheritance of some place passed, some place in the past or as an “idiom of sibling competition rather than of inheritance” (Anderson, 1991, p. 187). The name of the country, “South Africa” did not change at the moment of ‘liberation’. At most, South Africa is referred to colloquially and in government speeches as the “new” South Africa. The “new” in this sense operates as both a diachronic and synchronic device in Anderson’s terms. It, at once, replaces the “old” Apartheid state at the same time as it continues to function in relation to it, as some kind of contentious sibling. Macozoma’s contribution in Parliament confirms this ambiguous positioning between continuity and change.

This ambiguity is not uncommon in anti-colonial and national liberation struggles of Africa in the 20th century. As a symbol of a revolutionary break from the past and the Africanization of the state tied up with the revolutionary capacity to name, define and classify, some sub-Saharan African countries were born anew into freedom. Thus, Southern Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, Northern Rhodesia, Zambia, Zaire became Congo, South West Africa became Namibia, and so forth. No such re-naming occurred in South Africa which is a reflection of the manner in which the state, colonialism and the struggle against Apartheid were understood by the dominant liberation formation.

The ANC embraced the name “South Africa” throughout its struggle for liberation unlike the Africanist and Black Consciousness organizations that had chosen “Azania”. The ANC’s choice to retain “South Africa” at once signals the continuity of the state and society and reinforces its perspective of the character of South African colonialism as “colonialism of a special type” (see Chapter Four for an elucidation of this idea); while it also renegotiates its meaning as being emptied of its racist character and rebranded as a symbol of a post-racist, reconciled state. In this
way, South Africa is an old/new state bringing along all the ambiguities this formulation encourages.

The (re)generation of a past has been significant in post-colonial Africa not only as a project of nationalism, but also as an on-going battle against colonialism. For a continent defined by Eurocentricity as being outside of history, “unhistorical” in Hegelian terms, the production of a past and a sense of pastness was simultaneously about the erection of national boundaries and the production of a pre-colonial past, in both the material and discursive senses. If human identity and progress of human societies were tied to notions of teleological time, then resurrecting narratives of the past were necessary assertions of African humanity. Indeed, “[A]s European colonialism crumbled, the recovery of the African past emerged as an integral part of the recovery of African sovereignty” (John Parker et al., 2007, p. 135). From the outset of independence in the 1960s, “the project of rebuilding the African past was linked to imagining a new African future” (Parker et al., p. 115). However, Parker et al caution that:

the notion of a ‘usable’ or ‘legitimate’ past… should not be exaggerated… [since] nationalist politicians sought not to resuscitate the political structures of the past but to inherit the territorial entities forged by European conquest. Nkrumah’s struggle to integrate the Asante kingdom into the new nation state of Ghana and the equally uncomfortable incorporation of the Sokoto Caliphate into Nigeria and of Buganda into Uganda suggest the very real limits to the political function of historical knowledge” (pp. 125-126).

In other words, the past is a problem for African nationalists, including those in South Africa, in the independence era. Unlike nationalists in other parts of the world, African nationalists have engaged in a kind of “triple invention” of community: a pre-colonial, pre-national invention, a national invention and a continental invention. Nationalists across the continent have been regarded as African nationalists, which elevates struggle beyond the conformity to national boundaries (which mainly follow colonial inscriptions and scripts). But, within that they have steadfastly maintained the boundaries of colonialism and defended the sovereignty of nation-states, a defense that demands a narrative of territorialized inclusion and belonging. Finally,

55 Note how Parker et al. assume Africa as a singular entity with a collective past
precolonial identities contradict the institutional paradigm of nation-stateness and contend with colonial constructions of traditional (or “tribal”) Africans. Memorialization in this sense has demanded the multiple and often contradictory establishment of a continental/modern/traditional national subjectivity.

Probably the most profound nation-building maneuver emanating from the more than 100-year history of the ANC was to naturalize the borders and contours of the South African state and naturalize the idea of its future citizenry. By the time of transition, the idea of South Africa nationness was firmly entrenched in the consciousness of the majority of people living within its borders. From its inception on January 8, 1912, the ANC sought to produce a de-ethnicized African solidarity that was antagonistic to the system of Bantustans that “tribalized” Africans and segregation that racialized the polity as characteristic of the colonial state. It took for granted the territorial form of the South African state, amalgamated into the Union of South Africa in 1910, as the parameters of the future deracialized state. The Union of South Africa was enabled by the ‘Anglo-Boer War’ (1899-1902) that was fought between Britain and the then two Boer republics of the Free State and the Transvaal. Its aftermath resulted in the mineral wealth of the new country owned by imperial companies and the political unification of the territory under settler rule.

But the war itself was devastating. British scorched earth policies and its system of concentration camps decimated the Boer Republics and their people. Thousands of Boer women and children, as well as African people perished in the camps. The memory of the war has been significant in the reproduction of Afrikaner identity over time. By the time of its centenary, South Africa was a democracy and it was unclear if and how the war would be commemorated. According to Albert Grundlingh (2004, p. 360), this uncertainty owed to the war being regarded “as a seminal event in Afrikaner history, [and] had a long association with sectarian nationalist politics. Moreover, it was not a war that loomed large in the memory of black oppositional groupings under apartheid.”

However, the history of the war suggests that its centenary offered an opportunity ripe for new nationalist imaginaries. Indeed, the war itself was a key moment in the production of multiple national imaginaries. India, Australia, New Zealand and Canada all used their participation in the war on the side of British imperialism as an opportunity to assert their national identity (cf. Omissi, Buckner and Trainor in Omissi and Thompson, 2002). The South Africa War marked the
beginnings of globalized warfare, and illustrated the deep connection between war and nation-building.\footnote{Memorials and graves of Canadian soldiers who fell in the South Africa War pepper the South African landscape. South Africa War memorials are ubiquitous across Canadian towns and cities. Indeed, some of the British heroes of the war are commemorated in the names of streets, towns, cities and schools. Prominently, is the city, Kitchener, names for Lord Kitchener who played a key role in the production of concentration camps in South Africa, the death camps of thousands of mostly Afrikaner women and children as well as Africans antagonistic to Britain. Kitchener was also responsible for British colonialism in Sudan.} The apparently contradictory outcome of the South Africa War, where nationalism is cemented in the context of support for imperialism, is echoed in the seemingly contradictory outcome of the ascendance white South African identity beyond the contentions of Boer and British identity. Saul Dubow (2002) contends that the war was important in that it ideologically, culturally and politically cemented the idea of white South African identity as separate from and transcendent of Boer or Imperial identity. Dubow considers the emerging “white South African patriotism” (p. 98) that permits Boer generals Smuts and Botha to participate in World War 1 (and World War 2) on the side of the British. At the same time, the war ushered in the possibility of an emergent African nationalism that transcended ethnic and class identity among black people. In this way the war was a “South African War”. These scholarly interpretations found traction in the “new” South Africa and were translated in the current circumstances in the renaming of the Anglo-Boer War or the Boer War into the “South African War”.

In an opinion piece in South Africa’s Sunday Times newspaper, Peter Delmar (2009) laments that there is no hype about the impending centenary of the Union of South Africa. Prior to 1910, he argues, South Africa existed only in a geographic sense, but emerged as a political entity in 1910. He concedes that the union did not usher in good things for the majority of people conglomerated in that geographic space, but draws a continuous line from the formation of the union, to the rebellion against it and finally to the extension of rights to all the people living there. In other words, 1910 may not symbolize the auspicious in the history of the country, but it is a foundational moment nonetheless.

The FW de Klerk Foundation also waded into the discussion. Its executive director, Dave Steward, contended that “For better or worse, May 31, 1910 was the birth date of South Africa and should be celebrated as such”. But there was no celebration of the Union’s centenary. South Africans’ festive 2010 derived from being host to the soccer World Cup and the 1910 anniversary was indeed a “forgotten centenary”. The National Executive Committee (NEC) of
the ANC met in May 2010 where there was no mention of the Union. The NEC discussed the upcoming soccer World Cup at length and its possibilities for building “social cohesion and unity”. It further reported on the preparations for the 2012 centenary of the formation of the ANC, Africa’s oldest liberation movement. The proclamation of the Union two years prior to the formation of the ANC was not coincidental and created the possibility for various ethnic groups to imagine themselves as a single community disenfranchised collectively by the governing regime of the time.

This non-event sits in stark contrast with the memorialization of the war that enabled union in the first place. The war can be reinterpreted and recast as one affecting all who lived in the geographic space that would unite as a Union. The Union, however, is clearly marked as the moment of political ascendancy of colonizers and the subjugation of the majority. Any potential nation-building power of a Union commemoration would also, quite frankly, be overshadowed by the much more potent symbolism that a successful World Cup would enable.

The 1999 parliamentary discussion commemorating what was re-baptized as the “Anglo-Boer/South African War” (ABSAW) is a seminal moment in the politics of commemoration in South Africa. It represents the consolidation of the approach to the past that has informed and is informed by the governing organization’s nation-building impulse, centered on deracialization and reconciliation. This perspective is antagonistic to a dominant view that regards the ANC as pursuing a more robust Africanist commemorative strategy.

The parliamentary debate on the centenary of the “South African War” is a central moment in the articulation of this ambiguity – re-reading of the past with an eye firmly directed at present concerns. This discussion reinforces the compromises made through the TRC about historical claims. Compromise does not necessarily suggest a compromised outcome, but there is a deep tension between the imperatives of redress and of reconciliation. Bill Nansson, (2002, p. 10) fears that a danger of a new rendition of the South African War will inhabit post-Apartheid South Africa. This version will become “everyone’s war against some military maypole” where the concentration camps act as a “leveler for Afrikaners and Africans”. He critiques the state’s version of the war as fitting into a idea of a “broader new South Africanism” and becoming “a model illustration of how a populist public agenda may seek to recreate or reinvent the place of armed conflict in modern nationalist identity”. And this is precisely what it is.
In 1998, the New National Party (NNP) saw the upcoming centenary of the Anglo-Boer or Boer War as it was commonly known in South Africa as an important “opportunity for reconciliation” (Hansard 1999, p. 1969). The Party drafted a strategy document and submitted it to Cabinet and the then Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) for discussion and consideration. According to MP A. van Wyk, that document gave direction to the state’s commemorative activity in 1999 (Hansard, 1999, p. 1969). The document drew on rich scholarship of the 20 years prior that elaborates on the effect of the war on black South Africans. This scholarship was used in an effort to “non-racialize” the War.\(^{57}\) This approach is echoed by the ANC in both the parliamentary discussion on the War and the commemoration events that focus on African victims of the War, specifically those who perished in British concentration camps alongside Afrikaners. Almost equal numbers of African women and children died as Afrikaners and this fact is used as both evidence of what the Afrikaner nationalist narrative excluded and of the common suffering of a single people who are united in their historical suffering at the hands of imperialists.

To achieve this, the DACST elevated the commemorations surrounding the centenary to a “legacy project” (Hansard, 1999 p. 1970; Grundlingh, 2001; Xingwana, 2010). The National Legacy Project of the Department of Arts and Culture was approved by Cabinet in 1998. It gives the department the necessary financial and other support to build and maintain or upgrade various monuments and museums in an act of ‘symbolic reparation’ for past exclusions. The central objective of these projects is to nation-build through fostering the dual and often contradictory acts and processes of reconciliation and redressing past imbalances (Xingwana, 2010, p. 4). The former minister of arts and culture made it clear then that it is not just the freedom struggle against Apartheid that would be embraced and resourced as a legacy for the nation in perpetuity. Rather, “other struggles and wars for liberation, such as the Anglo-Boer/South African War” would also find their place in the public memory (Xingwana, 2010, p. 4).

\(^{57}\) The document has been read by the candidate from the personal collection of one of the interviewees.
The DACST/DAC since 1998 has completed eight projects under the “Legacy” banner including the commemoration of the Anglo-Boer/South African War.\textsuperscript{58} It is critical to note that the minister of arts and culture in 2010 recognizes the ABSAW as a “war of liberation”. This echoes the view of the former minister who suggested that the War was a “South African happening” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1968) and can be regarded as a “civil war; a war for independence and freedom” (p. 1970). This operates to recast Afrikaner identity from a narrow ethnic one to part of a South African national identity that is non-racial. But it does not assert itself from nowhere. It emerges out of a long history of ANC debates about the character of colonialism in South Africa. According to the ANC perspective, adopted at its 1969 Kabwe Conference, South African colonialism is an example of “colonialism of a special type (CST)” (ANC, 1987).

This means that the typical center/periphery of colonial being located in the metropolitan area and the colonized country respectively does not pertain to South Africa. In this country, the center/periphery occupies the same territory and is denoted by racialized categories. The colonizer in this instance identifies with the country it has occupied and not a European metropole as in other colonialisms. Liberation, according to this perspective, would not involve the retreat of the colonizer to Europe but would require her accommodation within the liberated nation. In this way, the Boer battle against the British can be regarded as a struggle against imperialism and 1910 as an effective decolonization of South Africa.

The parliamentary discussions on the war’s centenary a decade earlier also helped establish the groundwork for iterating the war as such. It has also paved the way for a reconceptualization of historical conquest and transformed the way in which the ANC itself accommodates this view. During his tenure as minister of arts and culture, Pallo Jordan would not accept an invitation to visit the Voortrekker Monument, which he considered to be a monument to colonialism, albeit of a special type. This contrasts with the visit by the then deputy minister of arts and culture and current Minister, Paul Mashatile, to the Monument in 2009. Not only did he tour the monument, but he released a statement following his visit that praises the monument as an important artifact in the history of Afrikanerdom (see previous chapter). While this may be an attempt to produce a new national identity it has grave implications for redress, the understanding of massive and

\textsuperscript{58} Others include: the Ncome Museum; the Nelson Mandela Museum, the Luthuli Museum, the Samora Machel Monument, the Women’s Monument, the Freedom Park and the hosting of the Albert Luthuli Memorial Lecture
racialized inequality coupled with (mostly black) poverty. It has implications for an “ethics of memory” (see James Booth, 2006) that is both about ethical responsibility to the dead as well as to their descendants. It also opens the door to debates about what and who is remembered in the Freedom Park (see Chapter Two), as well as to stalling the project of renaming South Africa’s cityscapes (see Chapter Six).

Rhyming with this approach to history, in 1999, to mark the centenary of the start of the Anglo-Boer War, South Africa’s parliament took a decision to discuss the “Anglo-Boer/South African War and Lessons Learnt from it” (Hansard, 1999) The discussion presented an opportunity for nation-builders to recast the war in the image of the “new” South Africa. The New National Party (NNP) – the reconstructed incarnation of the Apartheid-era political party, the National Party – introduced the discussion through the relevant parliamentary committee and hence opened the discussion. Marthinus van Schalkwyk, then leader of the NNP, carefully reconstructed the war’s meaning in a manner that conveys the cruelest interpretation of Halbwachs seminal idea that collective memory is an act of present political consciousness. In his presentation, Van Schalkwyk deployed the language of rights to conjoin the struggle of Afrikaners against colonialism and the struggle of Africans against Apartheid. In his construction, Afrikaner and African struggles are part of the same broad process with the same moral logic. For Van Schalkwyk, the subjugation and gross exploitation of black people in the southern African region was not part of a strategic political-economic program of accumulation and power, but the reflection of a “mistake” inflicted by victims of historical processes on other victims: “Afrikaners repeated many of the mistakes of which we ourselves were victims. In our rightful quest for the recognition of our language, for justice and for socio-economic upliftment, the rights of many other South Africans were not recognized” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1918).

Van Schalkwyk’s use of political terms associated with the latter part of the 20th century and the turn of the millennium is anachronistic, but deliberately sets up a continuity of struggle that unites Afrikaners and black South Africans. In addition, he employs the designation “South Africans” to refer to people who inhabited the geography of what was only later to become South Africa. And, indeed, when the country did become South Africa, black people in general were excluded from the political community ultimately through the creation of Bantustans. This deliberate disavowal of the historical record is delivered for the purposes of “reconciliation” where, at once, white South Africans generally and Afrikaners in particular are encouraged to
relate their suffering to that inflicted later on black people, at the same time as this formulation encourages black people to regard the Afrikaner struggle as a uniquely South African event against an external enemy that was British colonialism.

Van Schalkwyk revealed his central concern in his recasting of the South African War, when he implores South Africans to move on from the past. While the war itself and the brutality of the concentration camps resided at the heart of Afrikaner nationalist mobilization throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the New National Party reoriented the historical record in an attempt to tame the demands of the present on the basis of Apartheid political and economic disenfranchisement.

One hundred years after the war, Van Schalkwyk proclaimed that: “It is always better to conclude conflicts and not to allow the past to continue to draw its shadow over a new beginning. One cannot allow the ghosts of the past to continue to determine present actions and decisions” (Hansard, 1999, 1918).

The NNP brought the discussion of the centenary to parliament in a strategic effort to protect its constituents from potential reparations for the past. As will be seen in the chapters on municipal street and place renaming, the past has been the most contentious arena of change. This is true for multiple reasons: in terms of identity, the past that informs the narratives about the group are central; the past, the way we interpret it, the meanings we attach to it are central in justifications of present policies and politics. At both a discursive and material level, there is much at stake in terms of what perspectives dominate the meaning of the past. The NNP, through this seminal parliamentary discussion, presents its attempt to “make apartheid history” in the sense of construing it as “something that happened then” the traces of which are no longer evident now except as a problematic haunting. Less elegantly, the IFP’s J.H. van der Merwe insists that “… we simply have to forget about the monsters of the past and concentrate on the monsters threatening our existence today” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1932). In this elaboration, the monsters are in no way connected.

For the ANC, the past ought to be remembered as a justification for its redistributive effort at the same time as it must be fashioned according to the imperative for a national unity that supersedes all other identities. This refashioning demands a recasting of history that is consistent with an active endeavour to forget. Mongane Serote, the then chairperson of the standing committee on arts and culture in parliament and ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) member, captured
the difficulty of the ANC’s position as he opened the discussion on the organization’s behalf following Van Schalkwyk’s input.

Serote chose to speak in his first language, Setswana, which is one of 11 official South African languages. This is not an obvious choice as it may seem at first glance. Much of dominant political, media, commercial and other public conversation occur in English (which is also an official language). The choice to speak in Setswana is quite deliberate for Serote, whose post-Apartheid work is concerned with re-installing a pre-colonial life in the lived memory of the majority of South Africans. This can be best seen in his work at the Freedom Park (see Chapter Two). Language usage here operates as an act of memorialisation. There is nothing one-dimensional and simple about its usage, for the ANC has to, at once, re-call a time prior to colonialism without undermining the “naturalness” of a South African state that exists only because of it. The organization has to consciously identify language groups that are not to be confused with ethnic groups. In ANC discourse, one might be a Zulu-speaker rather than a Zulu person.

Serote uses his input to speak about historical lessons learned from the war; specifically, he regards the war’s lesson as one of unity and that “… all the things that used to divide us are behind us” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1924). The rhetorical assumption here is that South Africans have continuously been nationalized even though the nation was at war with itself. This perspective is reinforced in Serote’s claim that “we should also bear in mind that those who died were South Africans – Boers and English-speaking, blacks and whites” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1922). This is historically incorrect on a number of levels: firstly, no-one was South African then. South Africa denoted a geographic location rather than a political entity, and the war was fought between the two Boer Republics and the British Empire. Secondly, not all the people who died in the war actually lived in that geographic space that was yet to be named, bounded, instated and politicized as South Africa. As Empire, Britain enlisted the support of subjects from around the globe and the Boers derived support from Britain’s global enemies. In that way, the war was much more internationalized than it was a national war. It was nationalized retrospectively to produce the Union in 1910 and, once more, in the extension of national identity to all after 1994.

The more direct approach that speaks against “narrow nationalist ideologies that has (sic) infested the remembrance of the war” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1943) is articulated by Melanie
Verwoerd, the ANC MP and grand-daughter-in-law of the architect of Apartheid. Invoking Ricoeur, she calls for an ethical remembrance rather than one that encourages ethnic mobilization through selective memory practices. In this respect, she calls for a rewriting of the country’s history books (Hansard, 1999, p. 1943). This was met by “interjections” in the House.

There is clearly a limit to the amount of tampering that one can get away with when it comes to the past. But, for the ANC, it is quite deliberate to utilize Verwoerd with her genealogical pedigree and ethnicity to make the more direct attacks against ethnic nationalism. However, her statement is still located within the boundaries of the ANC approach to the war, which is one of nation-building, the evolution of “social cohesion” and the appropriation of the most potent symbols of ethnic nationalism to the cause of promoting its civic variant. Verwoerd ends her input with a call to “never again abuse history for our own narrow ethnic agendas” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1944). This acts as both a confession about and admission of the way in which Afrikaners have used the past, as well as a commitment that the ANC will not do the same. The centenary parliamentary discussion then is less about history and the war itself and more about the way in which social relations are currently being forged.

It is on this basis that ANC MP, Ella Gandhi can speak against using history as an incendiary device to fuel conflict by reliving it (Hansard, 1999, p. 1949). This perspective frames ANC commemorative activities that are not revivifications of the historical moment, but project strategic objectives for the country and focus on lessons learned (see comments on Public Holidays in particular). Gandhi is also the ANC MP who talks about Indian participation in the war, further elaborating the war’s non-racial credentials. It was her forebear, Mahatma Gandhi who was conscientised as to the place of black people under colonialism during his volunteer work in the Indian medical corps during the ABSAW. The Johannesburg City Council chose as its theme for the 2010 wreath-laying ceremony for Remembrance Day the role of the Indian Ambulance Corps in the ABSAW. This was the municipality’s attempt to combine Remembrance Day with the celebrations of 150 years of Indians in South Africa that animated commemorative activities throughout 2010.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) cultivated a more nuanced approach than the NNP to historical lessons of the war as its speaker, A.J. Botha narrated a story of continuity, similarity and singularity of the various communities that have resided in South Africa. He connects the
leadership of Boer president Steyn with that of Mandela decades later; leaders who were prepared to die for their ideals and their antagonism to “injustices that were very similar” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1926). Not only are these leaders united in their experiences of injustice and their bravery in standing up against it, but the resolution of the war finds itself reflected almost a hundred years later in the resolution of Apartheid.

For DA MP J.T. Delport, “… as the wounds of the concentration camp have healed, so the wounds of apartheid must also heal” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1966). A continuous thread runs through the history of South Africa, according to Botha and Delport and our equal suffering and subsequent conciliation unite the threads. Similarly, the FA brackets the two centuries in South Africa with the anguish of war and the romance of reconciliation (Hansard, 1999, p. 1949). In an undisguised appeal to the current majority, Botha iterates that the most profound lesson of the South African War is the shortsightedness of the Boers as they “visited upon their neighbours the very evils of intolerance that had been visited upon themselves” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1926). Later, Delport considers the protection of minorities to be a key lesson from the war (p. 1966). In this way, the DA echoes the anxieties expressed by the NNP and buttresses a narrative that attempts to defend the position of white people generally in the post-Apartheid polity.

If there was a bad cop in the invocation of present-day anxieties on readings of the past, J.H. van der Merwe of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) would be the embodiment. Van der Merwe’s input is full of memory, anger and bitterness of past loss at the hands of the British as he traces his personal heritage to the “Boer War” and speaks of himself explicitly as its victim (Hansard, 1930). Indeed, he goes so far as to claim that the war was “the supreme injustice of the 20th Century”. With all that memory in place, intact and definitive of his present ethnic identity, Van der Merwe suggests that the central lesson of the war is that “the Boers… had to simply put the injustice behind us” and now “all South Africans, have to put all atrocities behind us. We have to take our eye off the monsters of the past, be these monsters the Boer War, the Second World War of Hitler, communism, Apartheid – whatever the monsters were” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1931). The IFP’s approach is clearly not co-ordinated in respect of message. The minister of arts and culture at the time, Ben Ngubane, was a leading figure in the IFP and his message at this discussion was aligned with the ANC’s and out of sync with his own party.
The counter-narrative to the more accommodationist and reconciliatory is not just various versions of forgetting and recasting *a la* the ANC, IFP, NNP and DA. For smaller political factions, the opposing war narrative ranges from bringing ethnicity back in, to bringing G-d back in, to a vulgar post-modernist version of truth and history, to questioning the very decision to discuss this war in the first instance (Hansard, 1999, pp. 1945-49; 1961). For the UCDP, the focus is on the Barolong people who form a core part of their constituency. The UCDP may not intend this, but they remind the House that black people did not exist as “South Africans” at the turn of the century and that different black groups supported different entities in the war depending on their strategic evaluation. The UCDP attempts to “denationalize” the war in a different way. The party’s appeal is to a higher power rather than nationalism. The third counter-narrative resists the temptation of constructing a single story about the war and calls for an acknowledgement of diversity in interpreting and commemorating it (see Aucamp in Hansard, 1999, p. 1957). According to this view, reconciliation is achievable only when this diversity is recognized and accommodated. It is a call for multiple truths and is another articulation of a decentered and denationalized approach to “national” history.

For the PAC and Azapo, African history is replete with various wars of resistance and it is unclear to them why these are not commemorated and the ABSAW is elevated to a central war in defining the history of the people (Hansard, 1999, pp. 1948-49; 1961-62). This is precisely the approach to history employed by the ANC during Apartheid when nation-building was focused primarily on “detribalizing” Africans and building a common post-colonial identity amongst Africans. Indeed, the beginning of Radio Freedom broadcasts from the ANC in exile began with the chanting of the continuous lineage of heroic leadership including Shaka, Moshoeshoe, Hinsta, Sekhukhune and others as an ode to united African heroism blurring any ethnic identification of those leaders.

Additionally, the parties correctly point out that South Africa did not exist at the time of the war so calling it a “South African War” is a “mutilation of history” (Hansard, 1999, p. 1948). According to Dr. Pheko of the PAC: “Only brainwashed leaders suffering from an incurable, pathological, colonial mentality can see merit in the commemoration of their masters’ war and ignore those of their ancestors whose bodies were ripped apart by the bullets of foreign invaders.” (p. 1949)
Does the ANC suffer from a “colonial mentality”? Various interviewees have claimed either that the ANC’s approach to history in the post-Apartheid period has been deliberately reconciliatory eschewing the dichotomy of victor’s vs. vanquished history; deliberately neglectful in the belief that ‘history will take care of itself’ in both the Marxist sense (the inevitability of change) and the sense that material change must precede any tinkering with the past; or inadvertently neglectful in not recognizing the importance of reframing history for the sake of social transformation. In respect of this commemoration and the renaming of the Anglo-Boer War, the ANC’s input is entirely deliberate even if its consequences were not clearly thought through.

The discussion about the centenary was taken to a National Working Committee (NWC) where the approach was broadly discussed. The centenary was seen as a moment for reconciliation as per the NNP framing as well as for a historical corrective in respect of acknowledging the place and suffering of black people in the war. In this respect, the NWC recognized the importance of voices such as Melanie Verwoerd providing the more hard-line position as being an Afrikaner ANC member, and Serote appealing to a pre-colonial agenda and to the imperatives of reconciliation. Ella Gandhi would speak to the place of Indians in the War and Ronnie Kasrils could speak as a descendent of a “Boerejood” (a Jew who fought on behalf of the Boers) and theorize the war as an anti-colonial one.

By 1999, there had been about two decades worth of revisionist scholarship that illuminated the position of black people in the war (see Warwick, 1983; Denoon, 1972 and 1983; Nasson, 1991). However, this scholarship had not penetrated the popular imagination. Following the NWC discussion, a handful of ANC leaders finalized the approach (including Serote, Kasrils and Mabandla) and reported this to the ANC caucus in parliament (Interview, Mentor). It is unlikely that this discussion went to the political committee of the ANC in parliament since it meets haphazardly and is often dysfunctional. Since 1999, most public commentators refer unquestioningly to the ABSAW as the “South African War” and, according to Shula Marks (2003):

59 F. Potgieter and S. Speed, Personal communication, 2011
60 S. Speed, Personal communication, 2011
The shift in the nomenclature from the ‘Boer War’ to the ‘South African’ war is perhaps a pointer to the most important change in our understanding of the South African War over the past two decades. Quite simply it is no longer possible to conceive of it as a ‘white man’s war’.

It is less clear, though, that the nationalist endeavour to create a phantom country, a country that was yet to exist, was a deliberate fabrication. Generations of ANC historiography have created the conditions for assumptions to be made about the naturalness of the nation and its borders. By the time the ANC NWC met in 1998, the South African nation-state was a given and what occurred on its soil was taken as part of a national history available for national memorialization despite the non-existence at the time of formal statehood. The ABSAW, in this instance, becomes part of a global context of “reassuring fratricide” (Anderson, 1991) where wars are read retrospectively to involve the battles of intimates rather than of strangers and would be read very differently had Apartheid not resolved itself in the way that it did. This invention of both the content and formal existence of a state that dates back beyond itself serves to dispel the notion that the South African state is a colonial construct. It is with this perspective that the ANC speaks about Van Riebeek’s landing in the Cape as the beginning of the colonization of South Africa as opposed to a formative moment in the construction of the very idea of South Africa. In other words, South Africa is imagined to exist as far back as 1652.

Grundlingh (2004), evokes Ian Buruma’s point that “memory is not the same as history and memorialization is different from writing history” (p. 375). This may or may not be obvious to the scholar or layperson, but what is less of a distinction between the two and of greater significance is that both memorialization that is historicized and historically based, and history and history writing, have enormous implications for the present. There is much at stake in the way in which events are commemorated or if they are commemorated at all. There are times when it is clearly understood what is at stake, other times when the result is quite different from the intention, and yet other times where there is little thought given to consequences of remembering or forgetting. In casting the ABSAW as it has, the ANC has opened the door to the debate about the place of Boer soldiers in the anti-colonial battle and their place in Freedom Park.
CHAPTER FOUR

Natives of a Special Type? CST, Autochthony and Nation-Building

…the white population in South Africa has severed ties with their respective metropoles, that they recognise South Africa as their homeland. (ANC, 1977, Statement of the Lisbon Conference)

We must not regard the white group as monolithic. It is becoming clearer and clearer that white Afrikaners have a different emotional, psychological and material relationship to Africa and South Africa compared to other whites… And Afrikaners ask the valid question: how many hundreds of years more do they need to live here before they can be called Africans? (ANC, 2005)

The idea of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) was appropriated from the South African Communist Party (SACP) by the ANC at its 1969 Morogoro Conference and defines what it regards as the character of colonialism in South Africa. The SACP regards it more explicitly as a “variant of capitalism” (SACP, Path to Power) whereas the ANC foregrounds the national dimensions of exploitation in CST.

The ANC has historically defined the character of minority domination in South Africa as “Colonialism of a Special Type” or “internal colonialism” (cf. ANC, 1987). This characterization generates from an understanding that the features of South African society are colonial in essence (that is, national sovereignty has been denied, land dispossessed and the majority exploited and rendered exploitable by the intersection of white domination and capitalist brutality), while, at the same time, the colonizer has shorn ties to an external metropole. In other words, the colonizer and colonized owe their allegiance to the same territory and take for granted the same national boundaries. It is on this basis that the Freedom Charter declares that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white”. This characterization of colonialism has implications for post-colonial citizenship and for the project of nation formation: it has the potential to either articulate a radical perspective of post-national solidarity or elaborate a neo-colonial version of citizenship. In the post-Apartheid era, it is suggestive of the latter and is tied to a re-ethnicization of African people. This neo-colonization was prompted by the exigent
conditions of the critical juncture that ushered in South Africa’s transition. At once, the ANC’s unfolding positions strained against the contradictions that inhered in their historic formulations and in the tactics of the time, at the same time as the global terrain within which the transition emerged was increasingly marked as a “conjuncture of belonging” to which ANC perspectives responded. The imperative of reconciliation of both Afrikaner and Zulu ethno-nationalist organizations informed the logic of elevated autochthonous belongingness over civic citizenship.

In 1987, the ANC responded to the query, “what is the National Question” in the following way:

In the first place, it is about the liberation of blacks in general and Africans in particular. Secondly, it is the struggle to create a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and united South Africa. Thirdly, it is the quest for a single united South African nation with a common overriding identity. Fourthly, it is about resolving the antagonistic contradictions between black and white. And, fifthly, it is about combating tribalism, racialism or any other form of ethnic chauvinism.

The National Question in South Africa demands the resolution of a complex basket of issues that require a thorough-going decolonization of the polity. Where colonialism created a political-economy of white supremacy, liberation would require its dismantling. Where colonialism created the ‘demon of tribalism’, the obligation to freedom is its demise. In many senses, this is easier theorized than done. The national liberation movement thus becomes the blueprint through which the new nation must be envisaged. There is no other template. And that template derives from the lessons of former colonized that struggled to articulate a decolonized polity or a democratic one.

South Africa is not immune to what Peter Geschiere (2009) has dubbed “the Perils of Belonging”. Geschiere locates the peril at the end of the 20th century as a coincident condition of globalization. Building from Tania Li, Geschiere elucidates the troubling elevation of autochthonous identities that compete with their cosmopolitan counter-parts. Questions as to who belongs to the South African polity extend deeply into the various colonial imaginaries that evolved over time and prior to the formation of the state itself. Those imaginaries were racialized and racist relying on an edifice of tribalized identities to assert its dominance. The liberation forces in South Africa, specifically those heralded by the African National Congress (ANC) countered this imaginary with a detribalized and deracialized version of belonging. The theory
and practice of evolving South African belonging was never straightforward and always complicated by its own contradictions. Those contradictions have reached a head with one of its possible logical conclusions: the reinvention of ethnicity as it relates to ideas of autochthony, of belonging defined by blood and soil.

The claim to being born of the soil affirms the deepest connection of belonging that has a “naturalizing capacity” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001, p. 658) in that it evokes an image of the most authentic and essentialized connection – like native flora and fauna, so are the people of the soil. Claims to indigeneity have historically worked to challenge colonial incursions onto territory that colonizers have deemed unmarked by human presence, the terra nullus idea. It is a different assertion to the current articulation at this “global conjuncture of belonging” (Tania Li, 2000). Indeed, according to Bayart, Geschiere and Nyamnjoh (in Marshall-Fratani, 2007) renewed scripts of belonging are intimately tied to the twinned conditions of democratization and neo-liberalism. All three processes together have significant and abiding implications for the objectives of decolonization and the promises of national liberation. In particular, as far as the post-colony is concerned, far from being a challenge to colonial constructs, claims to autochthonous belonging echo colonialism and the inventions of colonial states.

The identification of autochthons and by necessity allogenes, was predominantly a phenomenon of French colonialism and is given contemporary voice in many of the formerly French colonies (see among others Marshal-Fratani 2007; Nzongola-Ntalaja 2007; Geschiere, 2009). But as Mamdani suggests, the institutionalization of colonial statehood in general followed its prescriptions.

The core of the contradiction however, as far as the theorization of the national question is concerned, is articulated by Neville Alexander (2007 in Nugent) who posits that the idea of the naturalness of nations and races as elaborated in a four nations thesis, does not sit comfortably with the adherence to a vision of non-racialism. This contradiction is further elaborated in the

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61 Ruth Marshall-Fratani (2007, p. 30) analyzes the ambitious Ivorian attempt to define citizenship in autochthonous terms which are “based on autochthonous rights and nativist identity which emerged under the colonial period”.

62 See Marshall-Fratani: The French word “allogene” that is contrasted with “autochthon” does not have a direct English equivalent. The opposite of autochthon is not a stranger per se in the sense that groups of people can attain national citizenship without having a local origin, can have lived amongst autochthons for generations, live on the land but are not “of the soil”.
duality of belonging in the “new” South Africa. At once, South Africa aspires to a version of civic belonging elucidated in its constitution, at the same time as it (both formally and informally) supports a version of autochthonous belonging. This version of citizenship places in sharp relief the contradictions that inhere in notions of belonging and the tendency for civic and ethnic versions of nationalism to intersect all too often. In addition, the peculiar formulation of the South African post-Apartheid state resembles rather a neo-Apartheid institutionalization of colonial statehood.

Mamdani (1996) elaborates on the colonial antecedents of notions of settlers and natives and their institutionalization when he characterizes the colonial state as a bifurcated one. By this he means that colonialism at once ‘racialized’ the center within a judicial framework that applied to the creation of civil society and checks on the power of the state, at the same time as it “tribalized” the periphery, a space bound by a codified and static customary law that enabled power and disabled society. The center was the place of the non-native and the periphery the domain of the native. The nationalist struggle then was a struggle to deracialize the center, to apply the rights of the center to the population as a whole.

In South Africa, the struggle too involved the attack against the tribalized identities of the periphery. The National Question that would be resolved through the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) regarded the disparate tribal enclaves as constructed and perpetuated by colonialism and Apartheid as deliberate strategies to foster disunity – a typical divide and rule approach. The NDR then would usher in a decolonized institutional framework that would dismantle Bantustan polities as a cornerstone to dismantling the Apartheid and colonial state. In Mamdani’s terms, this would effectively “de-nativize” the periphery. Instead, the ANC has retained the ethicized enclaves of customary law reinscribed as traditional authorities or what Mamdani has called, “non-racial apartheid” (2001, pg. 662).

But why did the ANC do this? What explains the dramatic shift in perspective that heavily relies on the ways in which colonialism is remembered and the struggle for liberation understood? There are a number of inter-connected answers: firstly, South Africa’s transition emerged in the context of the “re-emergence of traditional and customary authorities on the African continent” (Lungisile Ntsebeza, 2008, p. 74); secondly, it emerged in a global context that elevated identity as primary to belonging and multi-culturalism as its cosmopolitan and desired articulation;
thirdly, the reinscription of ethnicity can be regarded as an African articulation of an alternate modernity (cf. Comaroff and Comaroff, 2009); and, finally, in the context of scarcity and the triumph of neo-liberalism, ethnic belonging became an important node of solidarity in business, and for the acquisition of dispossessed lands absent the class claims that prevailed prior to this conjuncture.

The bifurcated state thus created two worlds: “the world of the native and the world of the settler” (Mamdani, 2001, p. 654). In South Africa’s case, the settler’s mythology worked in the service of indigenizing them. This effort was both contested by the perspectives of the ANC but with an important caveat: that the colonialism in South Africa was of a special type – that, overtime, the settlers became part of the fabric of the land, became an identity distinct from the original Europeans who settled in what became South Africa. Unlike French colonialism in Algeria, settlers in the immediate aftermath of independence would have nowhere to escape to; no homeland that they identified with except the place where they already resided.

This complicates the notions of ethnicity and race especially as they are translated into the late 20th century vocabulary of multi-culturalism and diversity. However, this convolution does not serve to undermine the categories as both effects and constituents of the colonial state. Instead, they are reinforced and thus have significant implications for the decolonization of the state.

The Constitution of South Africa enshrines equality amongst citizens while echoing the Freedom Charter’s (1955) clause that “South Africa belongs to all who live in it” (which implies a more expansive notion of belonging than formal citizenship). But, at the same time, the constitution seeks to remedy the historic legacy of Apartheid and colonialism. This would be an obvious obligation of a post-colonial state. However, in recognizing the legacy in group terms, the constitution provides an opening for reinforcing identities as discrete categories, as already constituted, and sacrosanct. It enables a legislative framework that reinvoked what are regarded as traditional identities, identities that are assumed to precede colonialism rather than having been (re)produced by colonial social relations and institutions. In this regard, the state has evolved legislation and shaped institutions that resemble the colonial bifurcation. Thus, the deracialized center is propped up by a tribalized periphery. This is evident in laws such as: the

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63 Courtney Jung (2008) explores the ways in which political identities shift from a vocabulary of peasant demands to one of indigenous claims in respect of the Zapatistas.
Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (No. 120, 1998); The Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (No. 41, 2003); Communal Land Rights Act (No. 11 2004); and the Pan South African Language Board Act (No. 59, 1995). These laws are buttressed by institutions such as the Section 9 Commission – the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities and the National House of Traditional Leaders (which seeks to “represent and advance the aspirations of traditional leaders and their rural communities”). They emerged from a combination of compromise in an attempt to co-opt traditional authorities into a new South African nationalism, a (deliberate?) misrecognition of the relative powerlessness of traditional authorities in relation to some other African milieus, and an appropriation of global notions of multi-culturalism that was signified or articulated, in South African terms, by race and ethnicity.

Ntsebeza (2008, p. 74) claims that “the recognition of traditional authorities in South Africa cannot be divorced from the general re-emergence of traditional and customary authorities on the African continent in particular.” This re-emergence resonates with the ‘conjuncture of belonging’ as a global phenomenon and is tied to the interconnected forces of neoliberalism, democratization and decentralization that characterized the critical juncture marking South Africa’s transition. But unlike the experiences of South Africa’s neighbouring states (especially countries like Mozambique and Zimbabwe) traditional authorities were not regarded as legitimate by the people over whom they ruled. Ntsebeza (2008, p. 75) suggests that the ANC conceded this terrain owing to the pressures of a global environment in which its allies had lost.

In addition, the ANC had been central in the creation of the Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa (Contralesa) in September 1987. Partly, this was about the ANC’s anxiety about being a predominantly urban organization (cf. Mbeki, 1996, p. 95) and significantly it was about under-cutting the power wielded by Inkatha in KwaZulu. The legislative environment of the transition, including the new constitution, sought to produce a state where traditional and democratic institutions did not contradict each other. Rather, democratic institutions would

64 The second democratic national and provincial election, held in 1999, saw the greatest percentage of votes for explicitly ‘ethnic’ parties. These results only resonated at provincial level (in-keeping with the ethnicized provincial boundaries), but were still quite small. For example, the former Transkei (then ANC) leader, Bantu Holomisa won 9 out of 63 seats in the Eastern Cape legislature (with about 13% of the vote); and Mangope (former chief of Bophuthatswana) won 3 out of 33 seats in the North West Province. The largest ethnic vote was for the IFP in KwaZulu/Natal which won 34 out of 80 seats, the (Indian) Minority Front won 2 out of 80 and the (white) Democratic Party won 7. In the Western Cape, the New National Party, then regarded as, if not Coloured and white, then certainly not African, won 17 out of 42 seats.
provide the framework within which tradition, as African culture, could bloom (cf. Oomen, 1996, p. 103). However, Contralesa, under the skillful leadership of Patekile Holomisa, was able to assert a larger role for itself particularly in respect of municipalities and power exercised in relation to land distribution.

These formative acts and institutions have been passed absent any controversy. The Traditional Courts Bill, however, has been circulating since 2008 and was rejected by most provinces in 2012 (see, amongst others, City Press June 2, 2012). This bill is much more explicit in its resurrection of Apartheid-era bantustan politics than its predecessors, which are cloaked in the liberal language of diversity or multi-culturalism (the justification that polygamy is not necessarily patriarchal or misogynist, but a pre-colonial expression of cultural difference). It returned, redrafted to parliament in 2014, was met with considerable public opposition and was rejected. In other words, while the state at a national level is attempting to legislate a “renativized” periphery, citizens fought back.

This law followed the Communal Land Rights Act which was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2010 because it attempted to place land administration in the hands of traditional leaders within their ‘tribal’ enclaves (the constitution seeks to subordinate traditionalism to democratic governance). But the national government seems determined to proceed with legislative change. Before parliament now (in 2016) is a bill that would replace the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act of 2003. The Traditional and Khoi-San Leadership Bill would have jurisdiction over about 18 million people who still live in former homeland areas. It is another attempt at legalizing chiefly authority over communal land rights. There are public hearings currently running across the country and these are deeply contested. Initial views suggest that the absence of land reform and restitution has led the land poor to support the bill in its assertion of traditional claims in some areas. In other words, claims to autochthonous belonging are regarded as an opportunity for redress in the absence of claims against historical injustices that are class-based and premised on democratic ownership. This has implications for the belongingness of the groups that would historically be designated as settlers.

65 Mac Maharaj, personal communication, Durban 2009. Saki Macozoma, personal communication, December 2010

66 Anonymous, personal electronic communication, December 2016
As far as nationalism is concerned, scholars consider the dichotomies of the civic versus the ethnic nation. The binarian debate between the two conceptions of the nation has most often been articulated through the lens of the German and the French nations. The French, it is argued, evolved a constitutional republicanism that eschews the elevation of ethnic belonging. The Germans, on the other hand, are responsible for the romantic nationalism *a la* Herder that foregrounds the ethnic origin of nations. For the French, the state constructs the nation. For the Germans, the nation precedes politics (Singer, 1996; Habermas, 1998).

According to Jurgen Habermas (1998, p. 113), “the nation… provided the cultural basis for the constitutional state.” Brian Singer (1996) elaborates the inverse theme considering the “complicity” between “cultural” and “contractual” nations. Singer argues that there is a necessary depoliticization of the idea of the nation in French post-revolutionary thought and practice in order to combat the fragility and limitations of the constitutional order. He posits that the French State needed to “find a stable anchorage for the nation in space and time… [overcome] the difficulties posed by a purely voluntarist conception of national citizenship… [and surmount] the seemingly uncontrollable conflicts borne by the identification of the nation with its political ‘constitution’”. The contractual nation thus gains legitimacy from at once achieving its sovereignty at the same time as its sovereignty is ascribed to it. This has enormous implications for the narrative construction of the past in all its linear glory, in its “homogenous, empty time”.

The power of the historical master narrative of the contractual nation is not its clarity and stringent boundedness, but rather its ambiguity. What it conjures up is a past that is nationalized and a present that is “constitutionalized”. The ambiguous national narrative of French contractual nationalism permits the neat elision of the French State of Vichy collaboration. In other words, while the Vichy regime belongs to something called a French past, it does not have implications for the French State now. The nation-state thus advances in a perpetual discontinuous continuity through history.

Gyanendra Pandey (2001) suggests that there is a third category of nationalism that promises a different kind of belonging. This nationalism is tied to the anti-colonial forces of national liberation. Pandey claims that a signal characteristic of anti-colonial nationalists is that there “is a possibility of many histories” (2001, p. 48). But this possibility is subdued by the equally
important characteristic of anti-colonial nationalists: the expectation of modernization as a neutral good to be attained by the postcolony. In this sense, colonialism’s best efforts are in the attainment of consent for many of its principles rather than through the coercive tactics of its beginnings. Central amongst these are the very idea of a nation and what it means in respect of its inclusions and exclusions; and the institutionalization of the nation-state and what it means to be African.

Mamdani (2001) too has been hopeful about the potential of a liberatory nationalism. He distinguishes between militant and more mainstream or conservative African nationalists. Both were in the business of deracializing the center. But,

[I]n contrast to militant nationalists who were determined to de-ethnicize the customary sphere… mainstream nationalists reproduced the dual legacy of colonialism. This time around, though, they hoped to privilege indigenous over non-indigenous citizens. In addition to civil rights for all citizens, those indigenous were given a bonus: customary rights (Mamdani, 2001 p. 657-8).

Mamdani’s claim is that the post-colonial state, in “privileging the indigenous over the non-indigenous… turned the colonial world upside down, but… did not change it” (Mamdani, 2001 p. 658). In particular, the possibilities of unraveling the very foundations of national unity, painstakingly built over decades of struggle, are increasingly apparent as ethnic identities flourish.

The ANC’s perspectives as represented in the 1987 Strategy and Tactics document, express a more militant nationalism. This is quite quickly diluted by shifts in its position at the helm of the post-Apartheid state. Only a decade later, a discussion document for the 50th National Congress is clearly responding to a growing trend towards ethnic modes of belonging:

Is the ANC leaving those of our people who identify ethnically to the political wolves of ethnic entrepreneurship by continuing to discourage ethnicity and favouring an inclusive nationalism?

Perhaps that question is best answered by posing others. What honour would accrue to the ANC if it were to compete with the PAC on the issue of ‘Africanism’? Or better yet, can the
ANC ever hope to outdo the IFP in the promotion of a Zulu ethnicity and chauvinism? And, if it did try to compete on such terrain, what price would the movement have to pay in order to do so? And, what price will it have to pay for having done so?

For Neocosmos (2008, p. 131) the way to understand xenophobia in South Africa is to trace a shift in nationalist discourse from a popular-emancipatory subjectivity to a state subjectivity, from an inclusive and active conception of citizenship to an exclusive and passive one. This shift in discourse was an effect of a shift in forms of politics, where emancipation was no longer to be thought as a popular process but one to be led by state power, where democracy was no longer to have a popular character, but to be of the state-liberal type.

In addition to this, the embrace of the bifurcated colonial state demands new expressions of belonging that are surprising for this national liberation movement.

The ANC’s perspective on CST suggests a polity that is colonial in character but where the colonizers and colonized live in proximity of one another. It is a colonialism in which the colonizer has detached from a European center and has become “at home” in the colony. In other words, the identity of the colonizers is no longer tied to the metropole. A unique identity has emerged in relation to the new colonized homeland. What the ANC meant by the South African state being colonial in character was that the majority of African people were exploited in and through the state, both at a national level and at the level of class. In other words, the racist and capitalist character of Apartheid and colonialism in South Africa was indivisible. Hence the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) involved a critique of capitalism and emancipation was thus incomplete without a fundamental transformation of the economy. For the ANC (1987), the end of Apartheid was intimately tied to the “seizure of economic assets”:

This is why the ANC has always considered the two economic clauses of the Freedom Charter: ‘The People Shall Share in the Country’s Wealth’ and ‘The Land Shall Be Shared Among Those Who Work It’ to be the very core of its programme. These clauses envisage the seizure of economic assets, presently owned and controlled either by individual capitalists or capitalist companies drawn exclusively from the white minority or transnational corporations.
Almost 20 years later, in a 2005 discussion document, the resolution of the National Question is devoid of class analysis or content or the radical Pan-Africanist orientation of its former self. The resolution of the National Question thus becomes about the “progress [that] has been made towards non-racialism, non-sexism and a common patriotism and nationhood” (ANC, 2005). This emptying out of the contradictions of capitalist development in the colonies and the manner in which that historical cleanse occurred elevates ideas of identity politics and fixates the polity on questions of belonging rather than, say, social justice.

Geschiere (2009, p. 6) attempts to identify variables that craft this moment that is preoccupied with “belonging”. He posits that “in Africa, democratization and decentralization, the two main issues on the neoliberal agenda, have the paradoxical effect of triggering an obsession with belonging”. South Africa’s response to this conjuncture has been contradictory. Significant work has been authored on discursive and physical violence against “makwere-kwere” (see Nyamnjoh, in Marshall-Fratani, 2007; Landau, 2006; 2007; Geschiere, 2009). The weakness of the state’s perspective on migrants from the north has been thoughtfully considered by, amongst others, Sally Peberdy (2001; 2009). Understanding the basis of exclusion requires a consideration of inclusions. It takes conscientious effort to exclude. Inclusions are no less fabricated and diligently produced and reproduced. Indeed, as mentioned above, Neocosmos (2008) identifies rising xenophobia against (ostensibly) African foreigners as tied up with post-Apartheid South African nationalism. He contends that the elaboration of a modernity that privileges urbanity over the rural translates into the idea of South Africa as urban center shining above “the rest of Africa” as a rural hinterland with all the negative backward connotations associated with it. On one level this is a compelling argument, but it needs to be pushed further.

Specifically, in the noble attempts to pursue an agenda of nation-building that assembles improbable solidarities between historically divided peoples, allusions to non-racialism are favoured. However, this has been articulated through the prism of “a rainbow nation” (by both Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela), which suggests a much more diverse polity than the problematic four-nations of the liberation movement’s National Question. Rather, it assumes a multi-ethnic nationalism or in the parlance of late 20th century democracies, multi-cultural belonging premised on a logic of civic nationalism. But the idea of multi-culturalism cannot be easily and readily translated into a circumstance of colonial divide and rule. What notions of
multi-culturalism achieve in these situations is more likely to be a neo-colonial reordering of life in a less pejorative language.

Neocosmos (2006) contends that the post-Apartheid state facilitated the eruptions of xenophobia precisely in its negation of the possibility of ethnic identity and the privileging of a singular national identity albeit with the recognition of “race” in order to redress its brutal legacies. Furthermore, he argues that the combination of new discriminatory policies on migration and an untransformed coercive state apparatus permitted a violent reaction to that which is deemed foreign. While I agree with the latter perspective, the former contention demands more deliberate scrutiny. The evidence suggests that the embrace of national unity through dispensing the idea of ethnicity is not so clear-cut with the ANC’s evolving perspective on matters of identity being much more fraught. At best, confusion abounds as to what ought to be celebrated as pre-colonial heritage and what characterizes authentic national citizenship beyond a constitutional acknowledgement.

The trouble with notions of authenticity in the context of post-colonial society is that they very often resonate with colonial constructions of identity. Neocosmos (2006) suggests that this is precisely why the new democratic dispensation officially through its constitution rejected the idea in favour of a unitary national identity. However, the ambiguities of this stance have been evident almost from the start and are evidenced in the very contradictions of the ANC’s National Questions conversations themselves. The central feature of the untransformed colonial state to which Neocosmos alludes is the bifurcated tribal/racial state. While the colonial state depended upon the ethnicized periphery in order to govern the racialized center, the post-colony retains the edifice of the ethnicized periphery to order politics in the deracialized center. What this means is that power is mediated, moderated and mobilized through discourses of differences based on essentialist notions of ethnic belonging. The deracialized center depends on the tribalized periphery to justify or legitimate political domination. The reflection of demography requires a regional distribution of essential souls. And those regions are ethnically cultivated.

The recent “return of repressed” in South African politics is not so much a return as a vocalization of that which has been silent but not silenced. The language of ethnic entrepreneurialism is evident in much social science literature in the post-Communist era which reflects both a refashioning of notions of belonging and community as well as the neo-liberal
turn of the 21st century. In the South African circumstance, Comaroff and Comaroff (2011) celebrate this phenomenon in Ethnicity Inc. as not simply a capitulation to neo-liberal social relations, but as an effort to reinscribe alternative African modernities in the postcolony. Martin Murray (2013) reads this turn differently and posits a political economy perspective that challenges the turn to ‘heritage’ exemplified through ethnic performances as a capitulation to global capitalism and a normalization of colonial social relations. In this sense, ethnicity is superstructural.

For the ANC, while tribalism was regarded as divisive, it was not challenged as a mode of social belonging. Its existence was taken for granted: the ethnic as a category to which one was born, but that struggle demanded as politics not of disavowal of ethnicity, but of foregrounding the national (also as a taken-for-granted category). At once, the ANC acknowledges the constructedness of ethnicity and acknowledges over time its normalization. But it seldom acknowledges its own complicity in that naturalization. It is no mistake, according to Mac Maharaj, that the provinces of the new South Africa shadow the bantustan configurations of the former state. The ANC more generally acknowledges the on-going importance of ethnic mobilization within its own ranks:

The call on the part of the founding fathers of the ANC to ‘bury the demon of tribalism’ has not lost its validity. Some, like the IFP, engage in this practice brazenly. Others engage in low-intensity tribal mobilization, including in order to lobby support for positions in the ANC and in government. During the debate about provincial boundaries, tribal mobilization took place among supporters of all parties, including the ANC. It was a rude reminder when even some of the most seasoned cadres of the liberation movement took positions on provincial boundaries based on tribal affiliation (ANC 2005).

In that way, the state acknowledges the power of ethnic mobilization and in attempting to contain it, naturalizes its boundaries and normalizes its content.67

67 There are nine provinces in South Africa which came into effect on February 4, 1997. Gauteng is the most multi-ethnic given its history as the center of industry and commerce. As for the others: the Eastern Cape is predominantly Xhosa speaking and draws in the former Transkei and Ciskei. KwaZulu-Natal is predominantly Zulu-speaking and accommodates the former KwaZulu territory. Mpumalanga contains the former KwaNdebele, KaNgwane, Lebowa and some of Bophuthatswana. The North West incorporates the former Bophuthatswana and is predominantly Tswana-speaking. Limpopo includes the former Lebowa, Venda and Gazankulu. Neither the Northern nor Western Cape include any homelands, but both provinces demographics are mostly Coloured.
Geschiere (2009, p. 14-16) identifies the colonial antecedents to current fixations on belonging in formerly French colonies to the early 1900s desire to contain and order identities of the colonized. “Autochthony” became the language of French colonialism as it attempted to discursively and physically tame resistance. British colonialism did not utilize the same vocabulary, but, as Mamdani reminds us, the codification of custom for the tribalized periphery sets the scene for an understanding of a timeless, fixed and static object of nature that is imagined as rural identity. South African colonialism was not the exception to this institutional rule of colonial statehood. In appropriating the logic of colonial and Apartheid institutionalization of the bifurcated state, the post-Apartheid state embraces too its logic of authentic belonging.

The rewards of indigeneity in the post-colony are manifold, according to Mamdani. In some aspects this is the case too in South Africa. But the prize depends on geographic location. The native who resides in the peripheral zones is affected differently from the native who resides in the urban centers by customary law. The native woman will be affected differently by interminable patriarchies masquerading as custom. In a similar sense, the accumulated privilege of being a settler is enhanced by a claim to autochthony. This makes Afrikaners natives of a very special type – they belong to the center of rights and freedom without the burdens of ‘decentralized despotism’ that accompany life in the zones of customary authority; they are indigenized as authentic, autochthonous subjects without being subjected to the rule of customary law.

Ironically, the hand of the state in the production of historical memory is nowhere more evident than in the fixation with Afrikaner identity in particular. The focus on post-Apartheid identity as a non-racial one has (in)advertantly foregrounded ethnicities as a basis of belonging.68 The attention paid to the production of an autochthonous identity for Afrikanerdom by the ANC highlights the ambiguities and contradictions that inhere in the project of nation-building, which seeks at once to unite disparate groups of people at the same time as it demands redress from the privileged minority. The ANC has chosen to nationalize this white minority in ways that potentially undermine the second aspiration. In making Afrikaners sons of the soil, the

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68 Elsewhere I consider the ways in which the state “forgets colonialism” in its embrace of pre-Apartheid Boer iconography as part of South African “heritage”. Autochthonous identity formation is part of the same process.
specialness of their colonialism is logically extended into an autochthonous identity and is usurped by this nativeness. In other words, natives of a place cannot be colonizers of that same place. Nationess in this sense, is uncertainly positioned as an always present category and an always elusive ambition.
CHAPTER FIVE

The Ambiguities of the National in the Local
Commemorating the Violence of Transition: A Tale of Three Monuments

Walking Down Khumalo Street

everyday life is not consciously lived through memory
if you ever travelled through the hilly majesty and lushness of the kwazulu/natal midlands
or walked through the forests of treblinka
you would know that traumas are not etched into the landscape. and someone with little historical knowledge would find these places quite magnificent, serene, calming and gentle even. one would find the tales of mass graves and panga-ed deaths difficult to comprehend in such beauty. the landscape will recall environmental degradation. but it wont recall human violence unless we force it to. treblinka has its headstones of names of villages affected by the massacres. the hustle and bustle of daily life in thokoza also doesn’t lend itself to images of violence. had i not witnessed it, read about it, spoken about it i would not be able to imagine those urban streets at war. khumalo street is a 4km stretch of road that acts as the main conduit into and out of the township. it is busy with houses and small businesses lining the street. it is also home to a memorial slab that implores us to remember. and a zulu cultural village that begs us to forget. (Personal field notes, November 3, 2010)

Central to the effort of eliminating contemporary racial or ethnic antagonisms in South Africa is the re-ordering of commemorations of violence and its meaning in the history of change. This has been illustrated in the above chapters, cases that demonstrate that the “new” South Africa either forgets colonialism (as is seen in the repositioning of the Voortrekker monument), or empties colonialism of its violent content (evidenced in the effort to “nativize” the colonizer). But nowhere is the re-ordering more evident than in the case of Kathorus, a local area constituted

69 The use of the term “transition” is descriptive and refers to a moment in history between the formal declaration of the end of white minority rule in South Africa and the first democratic election. I reject the idea of transition as it has been theorized in much of the scholarship on democratization (another flawed construct) for all the well-rehearsed reasons that have been established in the critiques and especially in its projection of unfettered and linear progress.

70 See Appendix Four for photographs of Khumalo Street, the monuments and the renamed Buthelezi Street.
by three formerly black townships within the new metropolitan area of Ekuruleni, east of Johannesburg. The commemorative strategies deployed by local leaders in Kathorus elevate violence to an agentic force in and of itself, an agent that caused disunity between people of the area. In this sense, no one or no group is responsible for the bloodiness of the early 1990s in Kathorus – the new community, resembling the new nation is collectively victimized by violence and is thus unified in the present. This local commemorative inclination resembles the national imperative to achieve reconciliation that pivots on the objective of achieving peace rather than a reconciliation that foregrounds redress and social transformation. This commemorative imperative, though focused on agentic violence, or, perhaps through its focus on violence as agentic, buttresses the international claim that South Africa’s transition was a “peaceful” one. The implication of this strategy is that the historical event that is afforded significance and foregrounded is transition rather than violence. Violence, on the other hand, is an “aberration” at worst; and, at best, an illustration of Benedict Anderson’s notion of “reassuring fratricide”.

Forgetting communal fractures is nowhere more evident than in the biography of Khumalo Street, Thokoza, which mirrors the story of the country’s contemporary political history. This four-kilometer stretch of road has played a major role in modern South Africa’s political imaginary – from an institution of Apartheid social control, to the notorious borderline demarcating warring sides in the political violence of the 1990s, to a symbol of the current project of “nation-building.” In the 1990s, it served as the boundary that signified the fracture of the Thokoza community. One side of the street housed the migrant workers’ hostels, which were recruitment grounds for the Zulu-chauvinist Inkatha fighters armed by what became known as the “Third Force”, seeking to destabilize political negotiations between the ANC and Nationalist regime. The other side was the domain of community self-defense units, or SDUs. Khumalo Street remains at the heart of the present-day Kathorus.

Kathorus is an acronym and administrative invention that draws together Katlehong, Thokoza and Vosloorus, three black townships on the East Rand of South Africa’s Gauteng Province. These townships were established between 1950 and 1963 through a series of forced removals and labour recruitment that were central to the racialized division of living space under Apartheid and its salacious need for an accessible pool of cheap black labour (first for its mines, then for the factories that fueled its manufacturing sector). Its character and history has
transformed in response to the political and economic exigencies of the day at the same time as this collective of urban townships has influenced that very history.

Kathorus is now a bureaucratic entity that mostly goes unchallenged in the everyday, but causes some degree of consternation amongst those who live there and seek to establish the uniqueness of each place. For some of my interlocutors, for example, when I mentioned my work in Kathorus they responded, “It is not Kathorus that had the biggest branch of the ANC. It is Katlehong,” or “I was born in Thokoza. Kathorus is for the municipality.”

Kathorus is home to a vast network of formerly single-sex worker hostels. The squatter camps that surround the townships are amongst the most congested in the country. The pathologies of Apartheid urban planning are often visible, but sometimes not to the naked eye. Because people can live and function in the most degraded conditions, it becomes easy to unnotice the aberrant. Equally, if one is not familiar with the place, its outward signs of deprivation are intolerable.

While the new dispensation has left Apartheid spatial geography intact (Khumalo Street remains Thokoza’s artery), it has also sought to transform Khumalo Street into a symbol of a reconciled nation. A monument, with the names of the dead inscribed on its granite, now simultaneously memorializes and sublimates this conflict into the narrative of nation building. Mshayazafe hostel on Khumalo Street is today a tourist center marketing an exoticized and nostalgic vision of Zulu culture. This “retribalization” is extended through a “multi-cultural village” that has been erected as a tourist site with funds from the local and national state on the road from Thokoza to Katlehong. The field research for this study produces a critical examination of the politics of memory, of the ways in which people and events are nationalized and the nation-state legitimized through publically commemorating particular pasts and particular versions of those pasts. In addition, the manner in which violence is denuded of its centrality and pastness commodified serves as a point of reflection on the limits of contemporary South African nationalism, limitations that inhere in aspirations to reconciliation absent of decolonization.

By now it is a well-rehearsed perspective that South Africa’s ‘transition’ from Apartheid to democracy was a peaceful one. In a New York Times article, Lydia Polgreen affirms this

\[71\text{ANC comrades in Kathorus, Personal communications, December 2010}\]
sentiment suggesting that the country’s “largely bloodless transition from white minority rule to nonracial democracy has made it a beacon of peace, tolerance and forgiveness” (Polgreen, 2012)

But in the period between 1990 and 1994 which is one version of bracketing transition (from the unbanning of anti-Apartheid organizations to the first national democratic election) “political violence claimed the lives of approximately 15 000 people” (TRC, 2003, p. 670, my emphasis). In the history of Apartheid violence in South Africa, this period is in fact, the country’s bloodiest. The East Rand (later renamed “Ekurhuleni”) was the epicenter of this violence. What accounts for the popular misreading, misrecognition or misremembering of this relatively recent time? What have been the causes of the subordination of political violence to the imperatives of an (inter)nationalist construction of a “rainbow nation, at peace with itself and the world?”

In beginning to answer these questions, this paper focuses on how violence is rendered uneventful, tracing the decision-making processes that cleanse the polity of the memory of its making, and encourage the active endeavour to forget.

Pandey (2001) considers the ways in which pasts and peoples are nationalized specifically in respect of violence, the memory of which can serve to divide incipient nations at the moment of rupture or transition that marks the end of one regime and the beginning of another. Following Pandey, this chapter analyzes the ways in which people are nationalized and the nation-state legitimized through nationalizing particular pasts and particular versions of those pasts. Specifically, this chapter asks how nationalists produce a hegemonic version of the past; what accounts for the choices that they make (or why are those choices made); and, linked to that, what is at stake in the contests that occur and the elevation of one story over another. A combination of variables result in what becomes pronounced as nationalized, authorized, dominant memory: the past itself; organizations, individuals; counter-narratives; international perspectives – hybridized interpretations that are often ambiguous and even contradictory. This chapter, like the preceding ones, is concerned with the procedures or processes of nationhood, of

72 It is by no means lost on me that the current statistics for murder in South Africa today are about 15 000 people a year. The TRC figure does not include “criminal violence” for that period. This current violence is cast as criminal (and not political) and is encountered in the public imaginary as such. It is a public display in its most grotesque form of the everyday institutionalized violence of poverty, misogyny and racism.

73 Statement of Nelson Mandela at his Inauguration as President, May 10, 1994
nationalizing imperatives as they are produced through and produce what becomes known as “collective memory”, through the terrain of the local.

According to Pandey (2001) “in the history of any society, narratives of particular experiences of violence go towards making the ‘community’ – and the subject of history” (Pandey, 2001, p. 4). Pandey suggests that the discipline of history is to assume a ‘fixed subject’ which he rejects and posits rather that “accounts of history, of shared experiences in the past, serve to constitute these [society, nation, state, community, locality], their extent and their boundaries” (Pandey, 2001, p. 4). In other words, part of the “imagined community” is the construction of a shared narrative of the past, a common interpretive framework within which the community is constituted and recalls itself as continuous. But this idea can be crudely idealized as endowing some with a powerful voluntarism that can make a past and constitute a present community. So, rather, I try to understand how communities constitute the past and how that community is, in turn, itself constituted by that past. In other words, the material and discursive conditions that we inherit from the past provide a framework within which both pasts and social formations can be nationalized or produced as nations.

Pandey (2001) asks:

how does ‘history’ work to produce the ‘truth’ – say, the truth of violence of 1947 – and to deny its force at the same time; to name an event – say, the ‘partition’ – and yet deny its eventfulness?... how can we write the moment of struggle back into history?... I am arguing that even when history is written as a history of struggle, it tends to exclude the dimensions of force, uncertainty, domination and disdain, loss and confusion, by normalizing the struggle, evacuating it of its messiness and making it part of a narrative of assured advance towards specified (or specifiable) resolutions. (pp. 4-5)

Similar questions can be asked about transition. It is important to note here that the end of formal Apartheid in South Africa and the process of democratizing the polity has been ubiquitously referred to as transitional in both everyday and scholarly discourses. The idea of transition immediately casts South Africa into the domain of a globalized “third wave” of transitions from authoritarianism, ostensibly to democracy, that defined political practices and processes of the late 20\textsuperscript{th} century (see, Huntington 1991; O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Di Palma, 1990, Munck,
South Africa’s transition is limited by the neglect of the specificities of colonialism as they pertain to the polity.

In the South African case, there is a slim, but thoughtful scholarship that has emerged pertaining to causes (in particular) and (immediate) consequences of the violence of transition. Taylor and Shaw (1998) argue that the Apartheid government adopted a strategy of negotiation and destabilization whose twinning would substantially weaken the position of the ANC on the ground and thus at the table. This perspective is similar to the CASE assertion that the “peaks and troughs [of the violence] mirror the waxing and waning fortunes of the National Party government, as it seeks to negotiate a future South Africa which retains minority control of economic and political power” (Everatt and Sadek, 1992, p. 1).

The position of Graeme Simpson and Janine Rauch (1993) is that the opening up of political competition removed the tight controls that inhered in Apartheid urban management and accelerated the violence. This is affirmed by the TRC. Philip Bonner and Vusi Ndima (2008) suggest that the violence was fuelled by the spatialization of urban township life and the extent that this spatialization produced and mirrored social tensions. Combined with the emergence of local schisms in the taxi industry, violence manifested. Ivor Chipkin (2004) argues that scholars should understand “nationalism as such” in the African circumstance and makes the case for a reading of violence as the manifestation of different perspectives on the emergent national subject.

Violence itself, its manifestation and trajectory, its dynamics, its multiple articulations and its continuities and structural manifestations in the “post-war” are all but absent from scholarly analysis. Popular public commemorations peripherally acknowledge “the violence” but as objectified and something separate from and imposed upon the community (imagined as a contained, coherent and already formed collectivity).74

Du Toit (in Barolsky, 2005) elaborates on the unsettling position of violence on a “master narrative” of nationalist struggle. This narrative was anchored in the stance that “cast democracy as the opposite of violence; indeed it projected democracy as the solution to the history of conflict and political violence” (p. 40). Struggles, even violent ones, against Apartheid driven by

74 This is analyzed more broadly below
the liberation movements were considered emblematic of and buoyed by notions of political inclusion. Violence that emanated beyond this narrative thus became incomprehensible or unspeakable.

In commemorating 10 years of freedom in 2004, the then president of South Africa and the ANC, Thabo Mbeki, spoke to the episodic character of transition’s violence and the unassailable march to modernity that struggle represented. A violent past is juxtaposed with a democratic present. Violent conflict is not only regressive, but related to an historical moment, unhinged from and unrelated to life in the present in general. In ANC Today (April 2004), Mbeki states:

The period of 350 years from the arrival of the Dutch settlers in the Cape in 1652, to our liberation in 1994, was characterised by uninterrupted conflict and permanent uncertainty about the future of our country. During the last few years of minority rule introduced by the Dutch settlers, our country experienced greatly heightened levels of violence as the apartheid regime did everything it could to retain power… the masses of our people, black and white, would be the first and best guarantors of the peace they won in 1994. The masses would not be easily persuaded or duped to join some violent campaign to solve any of the challenges our country faces.

The violence of transition becomes “non-narratable” in that it finds no place in the (inter)national narrative about South Africa’s miracle. But, more importantly, the register of this violence was antithetical to the nationalist organization’s commitment to the ideal, principle and practice of the unity of African people against the divisions that are regarded as being drawn and fuelled by colonialism incentivized by the possibilities of indirect rule.

Indeed, the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa was formed in 1912 with the intention of uniting Africans against the “demon of tribalism” in order to fight colonialism. During the course of its centennial history, the ANC has changed the times and been changed by the times, but it maintained fidelity to national liberation and its cornerstone, detribalization.

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75 This was most recently expressed in the History Television documentary, “Miracle Rising: South Africa” which honours the nobility of a forgiving nation that chooses non-racial modernity over “primitive violence” (the characterization of one of the stars interviewed, Charlize Theron). It posits a dichotomy between the “Davos men” of the negotiations and the safari-suit clad/panga wielding traditionalists.

The ANC sought to fashion nationness through a version of inter-culturalism (rather than multi-culturalism) whereby the symbols and heroes of various ethnic groups were incorporated into the movement as heroes and symbols of national liberation. This hegemonic impulse was well articulated in the organization’s logo: the spear and shield, battle symbols of all Africans, for example, represent what the ANC regards as an on-going struggle against colonialism, an unbroken inheritance that is the ANC’s: The logo contains a spear and shield to represent the early wars of resistance to colonial rule, “the armed struggle of the ANC’s former armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the ANC’s ongoing struggle against racial privilege and oppression.”

Radio Freedom broadcasts would almost always contain the call to arms and mass mobilization based on a collective and national inheritance of resistance: “Sons of Sekhukuni, Sons of Shaka, Sons of Hintsa, Sons of Moshoeshoe – the time has come (Sekunjalo).” Historical animosities within and between pre-colonial polities as well as the fluidity of the boundaries of those polities were ignored in the interests of nation-building. The Reef violence registered cracks in this long fought for edifice of national solidarity and belonging. Its memorialization has thus posed an elliptical dilemma.

There are a number of additional issues that are of importance here in understanding the memorialization process of the Reef war: firstly, by the time of the early 1990s breakthrough in South Africa, the idea of the nation as inclusive of all “races” had been naturalized, including its boundaries and its people for the ANC and its millions of supporters. Secondly, the ANC historically took seriously its organization-building imperative, which was regarded as simultaneously a nation-building imperative. In this sense, the nation and the organization are reflective of the same principles and same objectives; the national organization is thus the embodiment of national culture. Thirdly, the “democratic breakthrough” of 1994 signaled an important transformation in the way in which nationness is broadcast and cultivated.

77 “Symbols of the ANC,” http://www.anc.org.za/content/what-anc

78 The first broadcast of Radio Freedom is believed to be in 1963 from inside South Africa. Subsequently, the ANC would broadcast from exile.

79 Mandla Langa, personal communication, November 2010
As mentioned, Simpson and Rauch (1993) posit a process of “deregulation of social control” in an effort to explain the violence that exploded across the former Pretoria, Witwatersrand, Vaal (PWV) area. This deregulation of control pertained to a range of political processes and organizations: the ANC itself had to contend with (re)forming a cohesive national and nationalist organization and, at the same time, position itself as the authentic manifestation of the nation. Since the 1969 Morogoro conference, the ANC had been guided by a logic of “four pillars of struggle”\(^80\) and, as such, combined with the incarceration of much of its leadership, faced its unbanning with multiple locations of power. In addition, the ANC regarded itself as a multi-class, non-racial, non-sexist organization involved in a rather intimate threesome with the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). Much of what was agreed to at Kempton Park reflects compromises that derived from internal ANC contradictions and political battles. One of the significant compromises at the time was the nod to the institutionalization of ethnicity through the provincial system of statehood and the incorporation of traditional leaders into a formal “house” of state.\(^81\) While this institutionalization is often regarded as an accommodation of ethnic entrepreneurs produced through Apartheid bantustanization, it was foremost an attempt to accommodate the various power brokers in the organization itself that threatened disunity. In other words, a rescribing of the ethnic tale of South Africa was not contrary to the interests of the ANC.\(^82\) It is within this context that we can begin to understand the memorial processes as they have unfolded in Kathorus in general and Thokoza in particular.

Chipkin (2004) argues that the war on the Reef was a battle about the identity of the National Democratic subject. In this regard, the responsibility for the violence of identity formation is placed within the domain of the perceived winners of the battle. He is partly correct; but only partly in that he elides the centrality of other versions of the national imaginary which are dominated by ethnic assertiveness, white dominance and anti-Communism in fomenting

\(^{80}\) The four pillars included: internal mass mobilization, international mobilization, armed insurrection and the underground.

\(^{81}\) South Africa’s four provinces and 10 homelands were organized into nine provinces, corresponding to ethnic dominance. Two provinces are distinct from this – Gauteng, the industrial and financial power-house that draws crowds from across the land; and the Limpopo province which incorporates three different homelands. It is dominated by the ANC, which has to manage particularly its cabinet deployments on the basis of an ethnic calculus.

\(^{82}\) Mac Maharaj, Personal communication, Durban, December 2010
violence. In addition, post-Apartheid subjectivities are far from being resolved suggesting that the assumption of a victor and her concomitant history is a flawed one. The memorialization process of that war describes another version of the victors of the fight, and indeed, an as yet unresolved battle over the cultural identity of the nation.

Nationalizing East Rand violence in the form of narrative and memorial representations is a minefield for a number of reasons. Firstly, memorialization would have to contend with living participants and witnesses who carry subjective hurts, anger, political perspectives and anguish at the same time as it constructs an imagined paradigm of that hurt, anger, politics and anguish superseding that which is subjectified and that which is local to be owned by the public as a whole. Kansteiner (2002) warns that the use of the term “memory” when thinking about constructions of pastness as the past of the nation is metaphorical at best. Indeed, the use of the term memory itself is part of the nationalist construct in that it creates an individual subject of history, a singular body (inclusive of heart and mind) that is the nation. The metaphor is of an interiority objectified, of a banal and naturalized historical subject.

Secondly, the nationalization of the East Rand violence would have to contend with the multiple interpretations of that violence, all of which contradict a broader national narrative that demands a history of unity of Africans against apartheid. There is a special place for collaborators or ‘sell-outs’ in this narrative, but the East Rand war cannot be cast as such. Instead, local initiatives have attempted to memorialize violence with all the attendant problems that arise from this including: a relative democratization of processes resulting in multiple contending voices, the need to achieve cohesion in relatively fraught milieus, funding issues, publicity and relevance.

Lazarus Kgalema (1999) provides a useful processual history and “meta-memorial” of some of these local memorials that have either flourished or failed. Consistently though (and interestingly given the overwhelming assumptions about the nationalist movement imposing a victor’s history across South Africa’s landscape) the practices and processes of memorialization have remained local and inconsistent one with the other. Monuments have been erected in Mamelodi, Sebokeng, Kagiso, Tembisa, Wilgespruit, Kvalehong and Thokoza. Each has experienced its own challenges. Mamelodi, for example, has two memorials because the one was named Stanza Bopape after the ANC hero, which many felt undermined the heroism of others in the community. Hence, another memorial was erected to honour all those who had died at the hand
of Apartheid forces (Kgalema, 1999, p. 16).\(^{83}\) Kagiso too has two monuments: one in library gardens with the names of well-known activists and a larger one at the local cemetery with the names of all those killed by Apartheid forces (Kgalema, 1999, p. 14). The initiatives have also originated from different groups in localities – from political organizations to civic groups to the local state. In Katlehong, for example, the local municipality initiated a memorial led by the local ANC and IFP\(^{84}\) (Kgalema, 1999, p. 10). In Thokoza, the endeavour was generated from various social and political organizations and individuals (Mokena, 2008).

The focus of this analysis is on memorialization in Kathorus in general and Thokoza in particular. The reasons for this are manifold: firstly, Kathorus was the epicenter of violence during the period of transition. More than 3,000 people were slaughtered there during that time. Secondly, the ambiguities of nationalist narrativization are majestically articulated through the present troika of the Thokoza Monument, the museum of Zulu culture at Mshiyafaze hostel, and the Ke-Ditselana Multi-Cultural Village and the absence of the memorial in Katlehong’s Radebe Section. Together they speak to the contestations between localization and nationalization, to the relationships between memorialization, historicization, commodification, and nostalgia and to the ways in which democracy permits diverse responses within a contradictory politics of consensus\(^{85}\) that manages conflict and silences dissent.

The Katlehong memorial was the first of the memorials to the dead and the memory of the violence to be erected. Activists identified an open ground at the edge of the Radebe section for the erection of a monument. This particular spot had been a so-called “no-go” area during the violence; there was a time in the early 1990s when any human presence in that area would be summarily eliminated by either the SPU or the SDU. The erection of a monument that would commemorate the suffering of all in the community was regarded as an important symbol of unity. The reclamation of space and its transformation from a zone of danger to one of safety was seen as transcending war and motivating lasting peace.\(^{86}\)

\(^{83}\) Eric Itzkin and Subesh Pillay, personal communication, November 2009 and December 2010

\(^{84}\) ST and ANC Katlehong branch members, December 2010

\(^{85}\) Chantal Mouffe (2000) theorizes the move towards a politics of consensus as being anathema to democratic practice.

\(^{86}\) ST, personal communication, December 2010
The idea and construction of the monument was regarded as a “joint venture” between the ANC and IFP who canvassed the area together to gain support for the project. Time and budgetary constraints influenced the design and content of the memorial slab that was unveiled on 21 March 1998, South Africa’s Human Rights Day which commemorates the Sharpeville Massacre of March 21, 1960.

The intention was to fundraise for a permanent structure that would inscribe the names of all those who died in the war. The inscription of the first memorial plaque was a generic “call to remember all who had died in the carnage that swept the area” (Kgalema, 1999, p. 11). But the permanent memorial was never erected. And the initial memorial no longer stands. A drunken driver destroyed it in an accident. All that remains of the memorial now is a memory of it and some degree of bitterness towards the Thokoza monument that for those involved in political activism in Kattlehong seems to stand in for all the violence, for all the dead, for all the victims of the war on the East Rand, the wars of transition. Activists see the Thokoza monument as being endorsed nationally, inscribed in the national memorial landscape and, in so doing, decentres and forgets the people of Kattlehong. In this battle over memorialization, the actual events themselves become displaced and the political fragments are those within the nationalist organization itself as to which domains are regarded as the authentic bearers of national suffering.

The Thokoza Monument is not a ‘national monument’ in the sense that it was a local initiative, conceived of and funded by local investors. It is not essentially local in that all monuments in South Africa are protected under the auspices of the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). But it is also not unique in this regard. However, the perception remains that the Thokoza Monument is endorsed nationally as representing the war dead from 1991-1994.

There are numerous versions as to the initiators of the Thokoza Monument. Was it a joint proposal of the SDU and SPU? Was the scheme proposed by the Thokoza Phenduka Displacees Committee (TPDC)? Or was it driven by individuals with a mission, such as Margaret Mojapelo

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87 Site visit with comrade TR from the Kattlehong ANC branch, December 2010. I half joked with him about using the language of business to describe a political process.

88 ST, TR, personal communication, December 2010

89 ST, TR, Kattlehong ANC branch members, personal communications, December 2010
or John Khumalo (cf. Kgalema, 1999; Mokwena, 2008)? The various founding myths of the monument notwithstanding, what is uncontested is the locally-driven character of the project and its unifying objective in both process and product. At a public meeting, well-attended by multiple representatives of (about 28) organizations of civil society, a Thokoza Monument Foundation (TMF) was established with the ANC, IFP, municipality, TPDC, Thokoza Education Forum (TEF) and others at its helm. The ANC representative at the TMF emphasized that “the monument neither belongs to the ANC nor the IFP; it is a community venture and it must be treated as such by all” (Nchika in Kgalema, 1999, p. 4). Nchika invokes the being of a group called “community” that exists prior to its present configuration. The memorial is thus an exercise in reinterpreting the violence of transition as a perpetratorless act of aggression against (mostly) innocent victims of circumstance. Or to remember violence personified as the enemy and the community united as his/her victim. Either way, the notion of a victor’s history is hard to simply apply to the ANC given the empirical evidence that seems to indicate broad notions of ‘social cohesion’ trumping versions of the heroism of the ANC in defense of communities, and rejects the idea of a cohesive and centralized organization at least where memorialization is concerned. The ANC, for example, had imagined a memorial that would be named for the slain Thokoza civic leader and underground ANC operative, Sam Ntuli. However, his memory was supplanted by the innocuous, generic and neutral memory of all who died; by the imperative to “reconciliation” over either historical truth or a victor’s one. Sam Ntuli’s is now one amongst almost 700 names that appear on the black granite of the Thokoza Memorial.

The processes towards the construction of a memorial in Thokoza were relatively lengthy (the names of all the dead had to be determined) and fraught with conflict over fundraising, the misappropriation of funds and political disagreements about the unveiling itself. The TMF was dissolved when it failed to resolve many issues and a new structure, the Thokoza Monument Council (TMC) was formed, which included representatives from the Gauteng Provincial Government to assist with preparations for the monumental unveiling.

After many delays in the unveiling date, the ceremony was eventually presided over on October 16, 1999 by Thabo Mbeki, then president of the ANC and newly elected president of South Africa, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, President of the IFP and at the time South Africa’s minister of home affairs. The presidents walked together down Khumalo Street symbolizing unity in the
face of historic divisions. Khumalo Street was transformed from a former no-go area into a place of reconciliation, a symbol of the new South Africa, populated by new South Africans.

The Thokoza Memorial, like Katlehong’s, chose to remember the bloody violence of transition with the inscription of the names of the dead on granite monuments. This monumental practice is dubbed by Richard Werbner (1998) as “the modern democracy of death” (p. 71), a World War 1-induced shift in memorialization towards individualization. In contrast with this, Werbner continues, is the authoritarian compulsion towards elite memorialization in the postcolony, signified by Zimbabwe’s Heroes Acre (or Namibia’s with its similar phallic fantasies of the anti-colonial struggle).

South Africa’s memorials to transition’s violence uphold the aspiration towards democratic practice in that it not only names the dead, all the dead, but it decentralizes initiatives which denationalizes them (in the sense that the memory of the violence belongs to that ‘community’ and the imperative is to the attainment of unity within it). The appropriation of the memorial device of naming the dead, inscribing the dead, further denationalizes the enterprise in that it is a transnational instrument of memory. What does this appropriation signify for the South African situation in general and for Kathorus specifically?

Thomas Lacquer (in Werbner, 1998) identifies the “new era of remembrance” as “the era of the common soldier’s name or its self-conscious and sacralized oblivion.” (p. 72) Here Lacquer yokes together the seemingly contradictory objectives of remembrance and forgetting. However, since Ernest Renan (1882), the idea of the nation has been imagined through the processes of the construction of a unified past which demands forgetting as a central component of memorialization, not as its opposite. Nations are built on an edifice of what Milan Kundera (1980) and others have referred to as “organized forgetting”. In both Kathorus examples, the imperatives of present peace and community-building took precedent over an historical record or historical claims. It resembles a national imperative towards reconciliation as elucidated through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the reiteration in policy documents and government speeches of “social cohesion” as policy practice and objective, and through the granting of positions of contending voices in government. In this sense, the presumption of a singular

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90 Elsewhere I have written about the government portfolios of Home Affairs and Arts and Culture being the domains of the IFP in the Government of National Unity (GNU) and after. I analyze what it means that the very
ANC narrative that is any deeper or broader than an idea of a nation reconciled obscures power dynamics and limits the “critique of power” that Werbner (1999, p. 2) suggests is the obligation of memory studies.

In Mokwena (2008, p. 26), the chairperson of the TMF, Dr. Margaret Mojapelo, narrates how she looked at international examples of memorials to help shape the vision for the Thokoza Monument. Specifically, she refers to the Vietnam Memorial that inscribes the names of fallen soldiers. She regarded that as an important mechanism of healing for families who have lost loved ones. The context of the Vietnam War and its quite fundamental differences to the war of the transition in Kathorus are elided. In Kathorus, soldiers were not sent off on a mission on a nation’s behalf. There are multiple interpretations of the Kathorus war, all of which point towards a battle related to the last spasms of a seemingly dying colonialism and a violent reshaping of the contours of what was to come. Because of this, the architects of the Thokoza Monument would have done better to assess the memorials of the so-called American Civil War which could cast the Kathorus war as representing an already established and historical community of people momentarily divided by conflict; as representing a “reassuring fratricide” (Anderson, 1991, p. 201).

The inscription of the names of the dead is important in South Africa’s context of “massifying” blackness, and dehumanizing the black living and dead. Naming the dead, in this instance, serves as a humanizing device. However, as its opposite, “atomizing” the dead denudes the violent transition of its structural causes and consequences, and its continuities in the present. It shuts out the possibility of a critique of power in that violence’s victims are the 677 names on black granite in Thokoza as opposed to a more general idea of victims of structural deprivations (in this way, critiques of the Monument echo criticisms of the TRC). Pain induced by violence is hereby privatized through the intervention of public processes and objects. The Monument thus operates as an ellipsis that “reminds us of something it is immediately obligatory to forget” (Anderson: 1991, p. 201). Like those inscribed on the Monument, the past of violence is dead, is no longer with us. All are remembered equally – the struggle heroes, the perpetrators who were also victims, the innocent victims. We remember the names of the dead in order that we can forget contours of the nation – of who belongs as well as the cultural identity of the nation – were considered negotiable enough by the ANC to hand over their political leadership to ethnic nationalists.
both who they were and what the violence was. In this way, “the transition” retains its status as the important historical event while “the violence” is its foil.

The Thokoza Monument is closely situated to Mshayazafe (“beat him to death”) hostel on Khumalo Street. The hostel gained notoriety during the transition as the axis of IFP/Third Force operations against the broader populations of Kathorus. Today, the residents of the hostel have transformed it into a site of nostalgia for Zulu culture. A replica of a Zulu hut has been erected in the center of the hostel grounds and it houses Zulu paraphernalia, what Ma’D calls “a museum of Zulu culture”. In addition to the museum, there are women selling Zulu trinkets and beadwork and a resident sangoma. There is a wardrobe of beaded traditional Zulu clothes that visitors touring the hostel can dress up in to engage in an authentic Zulu experience. When asked about what happened at Mshayazafe in the past, Ma’D explained: “We don’t want to think about that. Those days showed the bad side of divisions between our people. Now, the hostel is a place where people can come and enjoy. Tourists can see how Zulu culture is.”

There are many sides to a panga historically. Panga’s after all were deployed in the numerous battles against colonizers in Natal (such as Isandlwana and Bambatha). Pangas, as a cultural weapon of choice, were also used in massacres in the early 1990s in KwaZulu-Natal and the PWV. On display in the museum at Mshayazafe, pangas are stripped of historical deployment and the politics of the panga neutralized in a display of a static and exotic Zulu culture. On one level this is akin to what Comoroff and Comoroff (2009) have referred to as “Ethnicity Inc”. The upside of this commodification according to the Comoroffs is the reinvention of ethnicity and belonging. The downside is the erasures that it induces. Alongside the names carved into a granite wall that urge us to remember the dead (albeit by forgetting struggle) is the “museum of Zulu culture” that implores us to forget.

Ke-Ditselana Multi-Cultural Village is situated on the road between Thokoza and Katlehong (Venus Road, Katlehong). Its construction was a joint effort between the local municipality, the

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91 It was outside this hostel that the photographer Ken Oosterbroek was killed. As a young student activist working in the neighbouring squatter camp, Phola Park at the time, we would travel first past the hostel to determine whether it seemed safe to bring students to work or not. Generally, the presence of white students in the township was enough to rein in security forces, but we still believed it was necessary to check. When in the field in 2006 after visiting the Thokoza Monument, I went by the hostel, a place that once induced sheer terror in my teenaged heart. I was interested to see the extent to which the single-sex hostel had been transformed into family units as per the mandate of the new state.
provincial government and the National Department of Public Works and continues to be funded by the National Department of Environment and Tourism.\textsuperscript{92} The Village is a constellation of nine traditional ethnic homesteads that aims to be a tourist attraction as well as a venue for workshops and events.\textsuperscript{93} My guide mentioned that there was talk about building a tenth homestead denoting another significant South African ethnic group – an Afrikaner kraal. That has not yet come to fruition.

This reconstruction of ‘the past’ seems to have some popular appeal. Zenoyisa Madikwa (2007) wrote nostalgically in the\textit{ Sowetan} daily newspaper that:

\ldots the perfectly straw-thatched rondavels yell for attention as they stand out in sharp contrast to the surrounding township… The kraal, the cattle, the beautiful and large mealie fields, and the green pastures on which cattle graze gracefully are a reminder of what was.

The path in the ANC from antagonism to tribalism, to the embrace of ethnicity as an expression of ‘multi-culturalism’ has been relatively seamless, but not without its detractors. For Pallo Jordan, the village signifies a capitulation to the colonial notion that Europeans are historical and Africans are not. Modernity erects museums within which historical artifacts are housed for posterity. “I have asked comrades,” said Jordan, “to show me where Africans still live like this (in kraals)… In the absence of that evidence, the villages should be displayed in museums. The west has museums, we have cultural villages!”\textsuperscript{94}

Pandey (2001, p. 48) claims that the understanding of nationalists who are oppositional, or liberatory is that there is the possibility of many histories – many kinds of histories – of the same event or object. Anti-colonial nationalism contains within it the contradictions that can result in the transcendence of itself in that the national is historically a colonial form. History suggests though that the nationalist impulse has supplanted the anti-colonial one and post-independence cases of state-building have appropriated models of civic or ethnic nation-building. The imperatives of a single story thus cannot accommodate the multiplicity of suffering which it must

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item The budget for the construction of the village was about R50 million (about USD540,000 at current exchange rates).
\item Ke-Ditselana promotional pamphlet
\item Pallo Jordan, personal communication, November 2010
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either ignore or localize. Structural deprivations and personal pain are transformed into problems that need to be addressed by institutionalizing Kathorus as an entity worthy of a Presidential Lead Project and leaving the discursive memorialization of violence to the local residents. This memorialization refutes the messy and unresolved and opts for consensus.

However, the examples of Kathorus also point to the ways in which “the local” are constitutive of “the national” in two ways. Firstly, academic and popular critiques of local memorialization assume a hegemonizing impulse of the ANC in terms of the history of struggle. In refusing to recognize the local chasms between ANC locals and negotiated approaches to memorialization with other local groupings, these analysts themselves produce an ANC narrative. Secondly, local memorials have the capacity to become national through the efforts of the local. The ANC in Katlehong remains bitter about the way the national organization has foregrounded Thokoza as representative of violence and loss. But it took time and effort to coax the leaders of the ANC and IFP into unveiling the monument. It was not a given and nor was it directed from above. Indeed, all the attempts at memorializing described above have been locally produced and are more or less democratically shaped. All have erected a cleansed or sanitized memorial edifice that plaster over the fissures and cracks of recent history. There is probably slender argument that could be made for a memorial practice that reproduces those fractures. However, a memorial practice that sanctions the messy and opens conversation rather than imposing closure on a pre-1994 past would serve to denaturalize the structural deprivations that continue to exist.
CHAPTER SIX

Naming the Nation: A Tale of Three Cities

South Africa’s transition from Apartheid to democracy was both enabled and burdened by the global political conditions of the late 1980s. The shifting balance of forces meant that at once the global appetite for authoritarianism was passing as the horizon of possibility suggested by socialism was fading. In other words, democratization efforts were encouraged by the international community while radical transformative economic and social projects were not. Tied to this global “pressure from above” for political transformation was country-wide mobilization of the masses of people for change. This local organization put pressure on, but was unable to dismantle the power of, the Apartheid military and the white-owned economy. Coupled with that social reality was an ideational perspective articulated by the leading liberation movement, the ANC that “South Africa belonged to all who live in it, black and white”. In other words, the national imaginary accommodated both oppressor and oppressed albeit in a new relationship of political equality.

The navigation of this moment and the compromises that ensued significantly limited the depth of democratization that would unfold in the polity. Whilst momentous, the project of democracy-building without a twin project of decolonization of the social, economic and cultural life of the polity has reinforced the power of the already empowered and naturalized the impoverishment of the formerly, formally oppressed. This is evident politically in the reproduction of the bifurcated state (cf. Mamdani, 1996), economically in the persistence of massive un- and under-employment of, in particular, African people and culturally in the symbolic presence of colonial statuary and monuments throughout the country.

More than two decades after its official demise, Apartheid’s presence remains ubiquitous in South Africa. Chapter Two mapped out the extent to which the monumental or heritage landscape is persistent in its naturalization of the legitimate presence of colonialism. A number of factors have produced this seeming contradiction between a new liberal democratic politics and a tenacious and unreconstructed memorialization of colonialism. Among these are: the critical juncture of the late 1980s and early 1990s that enabled the transition to democracy, but
limited its capacity for fundamental social change (see Chapter One for a discussion on this); the relative lack of importance designated to the memorial realm by the new governing party (this is evident in the fact that the ministries that govern culture, memorialization and social identity were given to the IFP); the fissures and fractures that inhere in a multi-class, ‘broad church’ anti-colonial nationalism; and the legal instruments put in place by the former regime to secure its memorial (and other) dominance. In essence, the new dispensation bureaucratized processes for transformation particularly in heritage policy and legislation that served to build and reinforce the relative powerlessness of the liberation forces in institutional terms. In other words, through a convergence of endogenous and exogenous factors, the ANC has bureaucratized itself out of the capacity to assert a victor's history and has institutionalized its relative powerlessness.

To reinforce the normalcy of the memorial presence of colonial and Apartheid leaders are the city streets whose names commemorate the worst of Apartheid colonial leadership. Modernist theories of the nation suggest that the manner in which the past is constructed is central to building national solidarities and that nationalists build nations through constructing usable pasts (Commager, 1967). The ANC has chosen a bureaucratized route to accommodating histories in an effort at building national solidarities. Nowhere is this ambiguous, administrative and often denationalized practice of nation-building more evident than in the street and place re/naming processes in three South African cities: Pretoria, Johannesburg and Durban. An analysis of the processes of renaming in these cities alerts us to the multiple articulations of power in the postcolony, and, in particular, to the heterogeneity of statist practices in nation-building and transformation efforts.

**Naming and the National**

Toponomy has historically been the purview of geographers generally and historical geographers in particular. With the rapid changes wrought by the collapse of the Soviet Union and democracy’s “third wave”, combined with the flourishing of memory practices as a field of study, social scientists have begun to take more of an interest in place naming as a political act (cf. Milo, 1997; Azaryahu, 2000; Light, 2004; Kirschenbaum, 2010). The transformation of the global political-economic landscape is often registered through the transformation of the symbolic landscape of a country. Memorials are torn down and new ones erected and the place names that commemorated the prior regime are replaced. Social science scholarship began to pay
more attention to place names which are “at once both material and metaphorical, substantive and symbolic” and, as such, “are all about questions of power, culture, location and identity” (Nash, 1999, p. 457); or, as Azaryahu (199, 314) suggests, are “nation-building measures”.

Daniel Milo (1996-1998), in his analysis of French street names, advises that place naming “tell(s) us about the establishment’s representations of the national memory and the nation’s great men as well as about the means of promoting these representations” (p. 372). This chapter seeks to understand the process of naming itself, its bureaucratization and ritualization and the character and place of the skirmishes involved in changing the symbolic space of what is conjured up as a continuous nationness that is South Africa. It is an analysis of the event itself of naming and renaming public space as an exercise in nation-building.

The South African state begins to democratize within the context of an elaborate domestic and international web of institutionalized and technical naming practices. At the level of the United Nations, its Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) saw the need for a group to standardize geographical names at national and international levels. Amongst other things, ECOSOC was of the view that “geographical names” play an important role “economic, social and cultural development, particularly in the developing countries.”95 As such, in 1959 it carved the space for the elaboration of what became the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN). The first conference on geographical names standardization was held eight years later in 1967 and has taken place every five years since. Between 1967 and 2007, Geographical Naming Conferences under the auspices of the UN have adopted 195 resolutions. Some of those resolutions divides Africa in to four linguistic/geographic groups in the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names being Africa, West; Africa, Central; Africa, East and Africa, South.96

Drawing from the UN guidelines, South Africa has enacted its own legislative framework for place names during Apartheid, which was amended in 1998. The legislation siphons much of its content from the UN recommendations on national standardization,97 including the establishment

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95 Resolution IX/2 Organization of the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Groups of Experts on Geographical Names on the African Continent

96 Resolution 111/26 African linguistic/geographic divisions and Resolution VI/1 Creation of an Africa, South Division, a Baltic Division and an Eastern Europe, Northern and Central Asia Division

97 Resolution I/4 National Standardization, pp. 27-32
of authorities tasked with directing the standardization of national geographical names. The UN standardization gets complicated when contextually administered. The politics of South Africa are such that some of the international resolutions invariably collide one with the other. In particular, the resolutions on the promotion of minority groups and commemorative naming practices make for lively political battles.

In February 2010, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Lulu Xingwana, released the following statement:

The standardisation of geographical names in a democratic South Africa is part of the process of redressing the marginalisation of indigenous language, culture, and heritage. It reclaims this wealth for the benefit of all, now and for the future. It is an exciting and dynamic process filled with opportunity for South Africans to enhance their understanding of themselves and their geographical places and in this way, to celebrate our common identity.

Geographic names standardisation is not a uniquely South African phenomenon. In terms of United Nations (UN) Resolution 4 of the first UN Conference on the Standardisation of Geographical Names, each country has, the sovereign right to standardize its geographical names and decide what the name for each feature in that country should be and how that name should be written. In 1998 the South African Geographical Names Council Act (Act No.118 of 1998) was passed by Parliament.

Names standardisation is part of the broad reconciliation and social cohesion process. The standardisation of geographical names in South Africa is part of the healing and reconciliation process, within the broader context of social transformation. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommended the re-naming of geographical features as a form of symbolic reparations to address South Africa’s unjust past. We all know that many of the existing names of our geographical features are not reflective of our society and our quest for national unity. Names standardisation is not an attempt to obliterate the history of any section of our society. It seeks to contribute towards inclusivity and participatory democracy that acknowledges our common heritage.

Resolution V/15 Establishment of National Geographical Names authorities, pp. 33-34
This statement is quoted in its entirety for its careful articulation of the key concerns of the state in respect of history, change and the rewriting of South Africa’s national narrative. The considerations of the state in respect of name changes are fundamentally concerned with altering the historical denigration of African life while not alienating white people from a sense of national belonging. At once, the state presents an argument for redressing the specificity of South Africa’s racist past whilst placing South Africa in an international context that generalizes its concerns and argues its case in terms of a global technicality. The language used is not language of fundamental and revolutionary change, but the language of aspirant social cohesion and a democratic polity that values and foregrounds the notion of a common heritage.

The statement goes on to list 28 name changes approved by the minister. Like the almost one thousand other name changes that have been approved since the promulgation of the Geographical Names Changes legislation in 1998, this list mainly comprises names of rivers, mountains and other natural features, innocuous changes such as the names of post-offices or other buildings and changes that reflect the correct spelling of African names (such as eNyoni rather than Nyoni). Indeed, 60% of name changes from that period are of natural features or post-offices, railway stations and other such public buildings. The other 40% comprise of names of mostly African villages and townships as well as multi-racial towns which comprise but 4% of the total changes. There is a yawning gap between the formal statist naming practices of the “new” South Africa and the informal conventions of the unofficial living spaces of South Africa’s burgeoning squatter communities. The informal settlements that pepper the urban landscape unabashedly name their places for their heroes, dead or alive such as Ramaphosa, Thabo Mbeki, or Slovo.

Many of these new names for towns have little historical controversy except for places such as Potgietersrus and Pietersburg, whose municipal names have become Mokopane and Polokwane respectively. I emphasize that it is the municipal name that has changed to highlight the efforts that the current nation-builders have made to meeting the historical needs of disparate groups while still managing to essentialize South Africanness. Amongst many of its transformation imperatives, the post-Apartheid state was tasked with altering the logic of Apartheid spatial geographies.

99 Approximately 118 natural features, 404 post-offices and 36 towns.
Typically, Apartheid divided living spaces into racialized zones. These included white towns or cities that formed the center of daily life and commerce which were buttressed by the existence of labour pools on their outskirts comprised of segregated African, Indian, and Coloured townships. The facilities and infrastructure of the white areas resemble those of any previously settler colony such as the USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand with all their modern features. The townships, on the other hand, were typically zones of under-development mostly a function of resource deprivation borne of the notion of black inferiority and impermanence in the ostensibly white lebensraum. The different racialized zones of the Apartheid local state were governed by different racialized municipal authorities with Black Local Authorities (BLAs) regarded by most as puppets of the regime in the later years of Apartheid. In the earlier incarnations of segregated urban living, these authorities were often regarded as strategic sites of operation for activists.

With Apartheid’s demise, this spatial logic was necessarily challenged and living spaces became deracialized and the local state unified. Formerly white towns and black townships were yoked together through the efforts of Demarcation Boards which redrew the boundaries of the local. These new municipalities were named, sometimes retaining the name of the former white area, but often acquiring a new name. The names of towns within the municipal boundaries remain the same. For example, Ekhuruleni is the name of the mega-city that incorporates numerous formerly white towns and black townships that still exist, such as Benoni, Brakpan, Germiston and Daveyton, Tsakane, Katlehong. Johannesburg, on the other hand, which incorporates places like Alexandra and Soweto townships, has retained the name, Johannesburg and is now known as the City of Johannesburg. The imperative for the new post-Apartheid council was continuity in branding terms – Johannesburg is known nationally and internationally as the center of commerce not just in South Africa, but for the continent more generally. In Johannesburg’s case, the pragmatics of capitalism override the sentiments for what Daniel Milo (1996-1998) sees as the imperative of the French Revolutionaries in renaming as “a means of propaganda, an instrument of revenge, and an arm of punishment” p. 372).

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100 Makgane Thobejane, personal communication, November 2009; Joanne Murphy, personal communication, December 2010
There is one controversial new name on the 2010 list: the municipality, eMkhondo was formerly designated as Piet Retief. Together with the new municipal names Polokwane and Mokopane, eMkhondo is controversial in that it tampers with the honour bestowed upon various Boer heroes by their followers. Piet Retief still exists as the seat of the Mkhondo municipality, but still, as just another place in the coterie of places that make up the municipality. There has been effort amongst Afrikaners to salvage the public memorialisation of these leaders. It is interesting to note that the defence of historical leaders pertains to pre-Apartheid leadership. There have not been court cases in defence of, for example, Verwoerd or Malan or other architects and enforcers of Apartheid. Although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was not able to categorize Apartheid as a crime against humanity, there is a general acceptance that Apartheid was aberrant in social terms and its leadership should not be immortalized in state memorial practices. This same consideration is not given to pre-Apartheid colonial engineers. Interestingly too is the ‘non-revolutionary’ character of the names that have eventually replaced the pre-Apartheid Boer names. In general, municipalities have been named according to what is defined and designated as the local rather than the national. Or, rather, the evidence of new South Africanness is articulated through the notions of diversity and heritage. The local is thus the national.

The complexities of the notions of both diversity and heritage are complicated further by the colonial and Apartheid past. The revivification of tribalism via the more modern notions of culture, tradition and ethnicity operate to obliterate colonial savagery and the revolutionary movements that sought to oppose this. State transformation has been animated by a revitalized paradigm for ethnic expression (see Chapter One for a full treatment of this debate). The new names of new municipalities do not memorialize and immortalize the heroes of the national liberation struggle, but rather elevate pre-colonial leaders or African languages and community-building concepts in an effort to conjure up a “pure” time, an apolitical moment, an ostensibly idealized unity of a national local that only exists in retrospect. It is about shoring up the notion of a nation that exists continuously and is deeply rooted in the landscape. It is evidence of continuity even in the absence of the existence of a notion of “South Africa”. In that, King Mgobane Kekana (after whom Mokopane is named) becomes emblematic of a pre-colonial Africanness that belongs to all South Africans regardless of his actual domain of rule historically.
Polokwane, on the other hand, is the accommodating “place of safety.”¹⁰¹ It is no longer the town of Pieter and his people, but the realms of all South Africans who seek comfort there. Its African name identifies it as an African (in the continental sense) town. Both Mokopane and Polokwane are towns in Limpopo, South Africa’s northern province which borders Zimbabwe. The ANC has a virtual political monopoly in the province (peaking at close to 90% of the vote in 2004 and dropping to a still overwhelming 78% in 2014).¹⁰² Its naming practices, however, point to, at best, a gracious victor. Neither ANC heroes, nor ANC slogans infuse the built landscape as a commemorated presence. They are, in fact, notable in their absence.

The discussion below on the attempted name change of the country’s capital city from Pretoria to Tshwane reinforces the combined ideas that heroizing the apparent victors in South Africa is not a primary commemorative concern and, at the same time, Apartheid is extracted from a lengthy settler coloniality and delegitimized, while colonialism prior to Apartheid is granted a legitimizing revisioning in the pantheon of nationalist memorialization strategies.

Street re/naming too presents a productive avenue for reading the relationship between nationbuilding and the past. Street names, according to Maoz Azaryahu (1997, p. 311) have been understudied by social scientists “in their studies of the structures of authority and the legitimation of power” since they are “ostensibly visible, quintessentially mundane, and seemingly obvious”. Duncan Light (2004, p. 154), suggests that streets have garnered less attention than public place renaming more broadly in social science literature since they are seen at first glance as a “trivial topic of investigation”.

However, Light (2004) argues that street names can be “significant expressions of national identity with a powerful symbolic importance” (p. 154). Nowhere is this more apparent than in South Africa where, according to Subesh Pillay, a member of the Mayoral Committee of the Tshwane municipality, no other issue of state transformation has created as much oppositional concern and antagonistic mobilization (of both people and resources).¹⁰³ What is it about streets and their relationship to nationness and identity that makes the act of renaming so fraught and

¹⁰¹ This is the English meaning of the name.
¹⁰² see http://www.elections.org.za/content/Elections/National-and-provincial-elections-results/ for details
¹⁰³ Subesh Pillay, personal communication, November 2009, December 2010
how does memorialization through street naming act as a nation-building exercise? What does this process elucidate about ideas of public memory, the nation and the state? Is there a dimension to the everydayness, or Azaryahu’s “mundaneness” of streets and their names – after the event, after the major moments of naming and renaming that reinforce and reproduce the idea of a national identity – that make the event itself so fraught?

Streets, as signs of mobility, of modernity and freedom are central objects in the imagining of a “new” South Africa. The Apartheid state tasked itself with significantly curtailing the mobility of black people. The tribalization of Africans found expression in the bantustan system that apportioned homelands to different tribal authorities, in an attempt to deny the possibility of unified African nationalism as against primordial segregation. The strategy was classically divide and rule and, in Mamdani’s terms, South African Apartheid did what colonialism achieved across the continent which was to erect a ‘bifurcated state’ – a state that was racialized at the center and tribalized at the periphery. A significant part of the traditionalizing apparatus of the modern Apartheid state was to create urban zones of impermanence for Africans, who laboured in white South Africa. These transient zones, the urban townships of South Africa, racialized the landscape into segregated living spaces. Movement, for African people, was circumscribed by the domination of racist capitalism.

As a marker of lived space streets are symbolic and also utilitarian and functional, and, as such are expressions of politics. Colonial city streets are designed to control and assert formal dominance over the colonized. Apartheid spatial geographies maintained segregation in form and practice. The design of black townships gave expression to the logic of Apartheid supremacy. This was nowhere more evident than in the streets of the township. The usual township had one major arterial route into and out of the township. Rendering residents immobile was imminently available as a mode of control. The web of streets through the townships attests to the impermanence of townships residents at least in Apartheid theory if not in everyday practice. The venous streets that circulate through townships were mostly unnamed, a symbolic injunction towards the transitory position of black people in white South Africa. In Apartheid’s aftermath, the unnamed townships streets are not just an issue for symbolic redress, but also a bureaucratic problem for the state. Dispatching ambulances or providing the other multiple services of state are hindered in the absence of order, of intransience and of maps. Authoritarian control requires
the capacity to close down avenues for mobility. Democratic control demands state access to the individuated mass.

In naming the landscape and streetscapes of South Africa, the “Afrikanerising bureaucrats” (Neville Alexander, 1989) also sought to limit the ideational mobility of its subjects. In other words, authoritarian control demands a physical and mental component. Control of the ideational domain is about the production of “common-sense”, the construction of the taken-for-granted aspects of daily life (like, in Apartheid South Africa, the belief in the normative value of whiteness and the alterity of blackness). Part of the normalizing practices of white dominance included the naming of the environment. The white country in general, and the Afrikaner country in particular, were vivified in the names and languages of its streets and places. It is in this regard where the nationalism of the liberation movement needs to be read differently to the democratizing impulses of the global third wave. National liberation was historically posited as a drive towards decolonization and the idea of democracy was one amongst many means towards achieving decolonization. But the global democratic moment outstripped the exigencies of decolonization and the response to statist attempts to name and rename the landscape has been dominated by the former imperative. For Cabral, national liberation is “an act of culture”, a political act that fundamentally alters the terrain of the taken-for-granted. Part of altering the terrain is the political act of naming.

Extending this perspective, even the forgotten named on street signs become part of the language of a place. They become part of the sound and geography of public space, the vocabulary and culture of nationhood and what is regarded as a nation. This quiet and implicit memorialization is what some scholars refer to as “habit memory” and what Pierre Bourdieu (1977, pp. 82-83) refers to as “habitus”, “a system of lasting, transposable dispositions” in consistent albeit muted dialogue which “functions at every moment as a matrix of perceptions, appreciations and actions.” In this sense, street names as part of a vocabulary of a city become devices for what Eviatar Zerubavel (1997, pp. 87-89; 2003, p. 317) calls “mnemonic socialization” – the process through which citizens are culturally attuned to the narrative of a place prior to, and outside of a formal process of education. In a sense, it is the everyday reinforcement of groupness.

It is less that the nation-builders will be forgotten than the content of the city will become dominated by another vocabulary, that another common-sense will prevail. This is the peculiar
legacy of street and place names. On one level, they are memorial plaques that pepper a
cityscape. On another, they are simply geographical markers with invisible histories and obscure
political import. Street names in this second sense are easily disregarded – in the FSU it was
possible “to walk along Socialist Street without thinking of socialism” (Kirschenbaum, 2010, p.
251). Similarly, King George Street or Point Road in Durban, are equally devoid of political
significance or meaning. Streets renaming thus becomes momentous historically on two
occasions: at the moment that the street is renamed and political conflict or consensus prevail;
and as markers of the cultural content of a city that infuse everyday life with a sense of belonging
or estrangement. In other words, we might not think about socialism whilst trekking down
Socialist Street, or know of or think about British Imperialism when ambling across King
George, but combined with other street names of the revolution or of imperialism, helps shape
our imaginations and our sense of ownership of a city.

In Lefebvre’s (1991) terms, place and street naming work to produce space and to produce its
“essentialized” characteristics. In addition, the emptying of the historical or political meaning of
a particular name creates the space for the name to acquire new meaning. A place name is not
simply absorbed by the community which it comes to define, but it is transformed by that very
community. A memory of a place may have little to do with who or what it is named for, but for
the historical or social battles or circumstances of the people living in the place. While Soweto
may just be a geographical designation of a living space – the acronym for South Western
Townships – it has come to register the heroic place in the struggle against Apartheid (whether
this is historically accurate or not). Changing the place name, an Apartheid place name, would be
tantamount to erasing a significant memorial to the horrors of Apartheid and the fight against it.

Kirschenbaum (2010, p. 243) regards city streets as “palimpsests”, and as such they are
expressions of cities of memory. These ghosts, she argues, “coexist with the modern state’s
tendency to use its control of the city streets as a means of supplanting local associations” (p.
244). Urban geography, particularly manifesting through the street, accordingly inscribes “a
particular view of the national past” (Light, 2004, p. 154) by the modern state. But the modern
state is neither monolithic nor is it homogenous. Even if its bureaucratizing impulse numbs the
political content of those at its helm, it does so differently conforming to the multiple contexts of
the diverse spheres or tiers that institutionalize the state in daily life. The extent to which “the
national” can incorporate “the local” and articulate the perspectives of these locals to its own is
the extent to which hegemony is achieved, is the extent to which, in this instance, “the national” is achieved. Comparing the experiences of Johannesburg, Durban and Pretoria municipalities in dialogue with the national state’s dual imperative of nation-building and achieving social cohesion, reveals a much less linear process than either Kirschenbaum or Light suggest and significantly varied nationalist statist capacities.

Within the ANC itself, there were multiple contending perspectives as far as history is concerned. Unlike the collapse of regimes across the globe, South Africa had a much less certain or more ambiguous response to the question of transforming the discursive environment of Apartheid. Alexei Yurchak (2006, p. 292) contends that the primary “irreversible results” of perestroika were achieved “at the level of discourse”. This was not the case with South Africa. For the FSU, the collapse of communism was symbolically accompanied with the tearing down of walls, of statues, of monuments and the restoration of historical place and street names where as early as 1990, name changes were central to the transformative agenda (cf. Azaryahu, 2000; Light, 2004; Kirschenbaum, 2010). This was not the immediate case in South Africa and where changes have happened, they have most often not been honorific of the heroes of national liberation, nor ideological (as in “Liberation Street”, “Freedom Street” etc.). The questions are why and what it signals for the study of nation-building and pastness.

South Africa was not just over-determined by the moment of its liberation. It was also over-determined by the theories of nationalism. Gyandera Pandey (2001, p. 48) presents a third type of nationalist enterprise as against the Eurocentric German (ethnic) vs. French (civic) types. He introduces an anti-colonial or liberatory nationalism that at its heart is varied, which acknowledges that “there is the possibility of many histories – many kinds of histories – of the same event or object”. If history and commemoration are to be taken seriously as acts of politics, then the impulse to uniformity both in historical method and the critique of the idea of national interest need to examine context, not as a variable in the theory, but as theory itself. Part of the

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104 For the former Minister of Arts and Culture, Pallo Jordan, “history would resolve itself” and was not worth battling in such an emotional terrain. Joel Netshitenzhe contended that the ANC at the moment of democracy was consumed with what it regarded as the more important domain of political economy. For Bridget Mabandla, former deputy culture minister, the pursuit of a democratic memory was key.

105 Daniel Milo segregates street naming in French historical political practice as either honoring heroes or honoring ideas; that is, as honorific or ideological.
agenda for African liberation movements has been to reassert black subjectivities as political agents. Having been denied historical agency by centuries of imperialism, colonialism and Apartheid, African nationalists have demanded a place in history. But the critiques against national liberation movements are the same critiques leveled at any nationalism, and the critique against the “late decolonizers” is the same critique that is leveled against the corrupt regimes of a time before. The power/knowledge nexus is nowhere more obscure and complicated than in the context of South Africa. Where does power reside in post-Apartheid South Africa? What are the communities of consent that challenge the state? The reactions against the state to street renaming reveals a cacophony of voices that, at once, acts as an important restraint on state power, at the same time as they act to reinforce the power relations of the past in a vocabulary that only liberal democracy can provide. It is a language of multi-culturalism, minorities and rights that assume equity and elevate the idea of cultural groupness as apolitical and above other social schisms (like class or gender).

The renaming processes in Pretoria and Durban have been fraught – but each in their own unique ways. Durban has seen a more confident and muscular ANC that has pushed its agenda regardless of the vitriolic response from its opposition. Pretoria has offered a more cautious and inclusive approach to name changes. This has been met with stiff opposition too with the result that the ANC has been unable to even change the name of the municipality let alone any of the city streets. It is hardly evidence of an iconoclastic nationalist movement that seeks to dominate the historical landscape. Johannesburg’s process has comparatively been seamless as it has evolved a response to name changes that have emptied the process of potential political conflict and the municipality has ensured all its technical ducks are in a row.

**Tale of Three Cities: Johannesburg, Tshwane and eThekwini compared**

The process of institutional deracialization of the towns and cities of South Africa began in earnest in the early 1990s during negotiations between the Apartheid regime and the liberation forces. The product of the negotiations was the Local Government Transitional Act (No. 209 of 1993), which laid the groundwork for the incorporation of segregated neighbourhoods into unified local authorities. The imperative of this round of negotiations underscores the impasse that resulted in Apartheid’s demise. In political terms, at least, there were no clear victors in the historical battle for and against Apartheid. The municipal electoral system, produced alongside
the demarcations of the new townscapes, provided for a larger share of the vote for those who became known as “minorities”. For most of the country, this system skewed votes in favour of whites. By the second local government elections, the Municipal Structures Act (No. 117 of 1998) and the Municipal Demarcation Act (No. 27 of 1998) had secured overall proportionality of the municipalities and produced the context for the first one-person, one-vote municipal elections. 106 Whereas the previous interim legislation had demarcated wards on the basis of segregated areas rather than voter numbers and given wards 60% of council seats, the new legislation demarcated wards on the basis of voter numbers and assigned ward and proportional representation seats on a 50:50 ratio. Accordingly:

The 5 December 2000 elections were therefore the founding elections for South Africa’s first truly democratic and fully representative municipal councils. These elections had the same historical significance for local government as did the 1994 elections for national and provincial government (Independent Electoral Commission, South Africa, p. 7).

106 The Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998 reduced the number of municipalities from 843 to 284. This included six metros (City of Cape Town, City of Johannesburg, City of Tshwane, Ekurhuleni, eThekwini and Nelson Mandela Bay. Buffalo City and Mangaung were designated as Metros after the 2011 local election), 231 local councils and 47 district councils.
TABLE 1: 2000 election results compared: Johannesburg, Tshwane (including Pretoria) and eThekwini (including Durban)  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Jo’burg % vote</th>
<th>Jo’burg No. of seats</th>
<th>Tshwane % vote</th>
<th>Tshwane No. of seats</th>
<th>eThekwini % votes</th>
<th>eThekwini No. of seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African National Congress (ANC)</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance (DA)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>53</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority Front (MF)</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Christian Democratic Party</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
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107 All figures are from various data sets from the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) that oversees South Africa’s electoral processes. See www.elections.org.za
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<tr>
<td>Vision-Visie 2000+</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>1</td>
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</table>
TABLE 2: 2006 election results compared: Johannesburg, Tshwane (including Pretoria) and eThekwini (including Durban)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>Jo’burg % vote</th>
<th>Jo’burg No. of seats</th>
<th>Tshwane % vote</th>
<th>Tshwane No. of seats</th>
<th>eThekwini % votes</th>
<th>eThekwini No. of seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African National Congress (ANC)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>117</td>
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<tr>
<td>Democratic Alliance (DA)</td>
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<td>59</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Vryheidsfront Plus</td>
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<td>Minority Front (MF)</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0</td>
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In that ‘founding’ election, Pretoria and Johannesburg were won comfortably, but not overwhelmingly, by the ANC. The demographics of each area determined the rest of the field. Although the ANC rejects the notion of South African elections constituting a ‘racial census’, there is certainly evidence of Apartheid-era identifications in the way in which constituencies vote. Besides, for the ANC the electorate has tended to be regionalized with ethnically oriented parties finding small, but nonetheless significant support in former bantustan regions. For example, the notorious Lucas Mangope had enough support in the former Bophuthatswana to offer him a seat in the new provincial legislature as did Bantu Holomisa in the Eastern Cape and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party Name</th>
<th>2004 Percentage</th>
<th>2003 Location</th>
<th>2003 Percentage</th>
<th>2002 Location</th>
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<td>United Democratic Movement (UDM)</td>
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<td>Vision-Visie 2000+</td>
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<td>United Christian Democratic Party (UCDP)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mangosuthu Buthelezi in KwaZulu-Natal. Equally, the DA would find its support amongst whites in general and the right-wing parties amongst Afrikaners in particular. Working class Indians and Coloureds have tended to vote for former white parties – a source of some discomfort for the ANC (which considers itself to be a party fighting for the rights of “blacks in general and Africans in particular”) and with a leaning to the poor and working class. Whichever way election results are analyzed, from a majoritarian perspective, local elections in Pretoria and Johannesburg articulate a majority consensus about who should govern. But the particularities of the opposition have significantly impacted how the majority governs.

Durban only managed to get an outright majority for the ANC in the 2004 election. The character of the ANC in this region determined the nature of governance that created very different outcomes and processes than Johannesburg and Pretoria in respect of naming practices.

The following three subsections consider the specific experience of each of these ANC-led municipalities in the processes of street and place name changes. All three municipalities are bound by the national and provincial legislative dispensation that provides the parameters within which name changes can be effected. Each municipality has evolved specific regulations that derive from the national legislation. The national legislation, as identified, attempts to depoliticize what remains a contentious project of cultural transformation. The municipalities have, in turn, set in place a multitude of bureaucratic procedures that further undermine the claim of an authorized national imposition of historical narratives. In other words, ANC majorities have not translated into a seamless and uncontested process of name changes. On the contrary, the organization/party has often been significantly hamstrung by procedures that benefit those with voice and means to direct cultural processes, albeit in a changed political climate. Significantly, these cases seen comparatively point to the heterogeneity of state practices and the state as practice (as stateness) which belies the all-to-easy frame of the homogenous and unilinear state.
The process of becoming or Pretoria/Tshwane – capital of the old/new South Africa

What is the past and what is memory? At the end of the day this debate is irrelevant. Tshwane exists in people’s memories, in their communal identity; and that is enough. (Subesh Pillay)

The area around what is now known variously as Pretoria or Tshwane was populated some 400 years ago by groups of Ndebele people under the leadership of Chief Musi. The Mfecane disrupted their life – the fleeing Mzilikazi decimated the groups already settled in the area. Later, rumours of the movement of Boers towards his settlement caused Mzilikazi to preemptively attack the trekkers. The battles that ensued eventually resulted in Mzilikazi crossing the Limpopo into what would later become Zimbabwe while whites began farming in what is now the Tshwane municipality. They were joined later by a group of trekkers coming north from Natal and the Free State. Andries Pretorius led this group and advocated for the recognition of the independence of the Voortrekkers in this region. Eventually, in 1852, the Sand River Convention confirmed British support for Trekker independence north of the Vaal River. The Transvaal was born. Pretorius’ son, Marthinus Wessels purchased two farms in the area which he amalgamated and declared a town which he called Pretoria, named for his father. A few years later, in 1860, Pretoria became the capital of the Boer Republic of the Transvaal. It later became the capital of the Union of South Africa (1910) and was endorsed 50 years later as the capital of the Republic of South Africa. It remains the administrative capital to this day.

In the post-1994 era, local government was established constitutionally as a “sphere” of government which established its status as an equal partner in governance with the provincial and national state. In addition, the boundaries of municipalities had to be reorganized to reflect the aspiration to a deracialized polity. By the late 1990s, municipalities were redrawn once more with a focus on their clustering in order to ensure a greater parity and equality between local areas of infrastructure, resources and human capital. Smaller municipalities in peri-urban and rural areas were incorporated as districts while urban centres were drawn together into

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108 See Appendix Five for photographs of changed and changing street names
109 Subesh Pillay, personal communication, December 2009
megacities (in-line with the imperatives of global ideals of neo-liberal governance). Pretoria was one of 13 municipalities drawn together to form what would become the new (mega)City of Tshwane. The extent of the administrative restructuring that needed to occur cannot be overstated. The new city had to engage in a “levelling process”\textsuperscript{110} to integrate personnel, payrolls and grading systems.\textsuperscript{111}

In addition to sorting out the institutional morass of integration, this new political entity needed to be named. In 2000, a process was established by the Municipal Facilitation Committee which included public engagement. At the end of this process, in March 2005, the municipality was named, City of Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality by the municipal council. The Council then sent the name to the South African Geographical Names Council (SAGNC) which recommended to the minister of arts and culture that the name be accepted. This is where the process has stalled. The minister at the time, Pallo Jordan, neither accepted nor rejected the recommendation. This left the process in bureaucratic limbo. No ANC minister since then has signed off on the name change due to interventions by the powerful Afrikaner social movement, Afriforum.

In naming a place of national importance, such as the country’s capital city, the following process is followed after Council approves a recommended name:

1. Recommendation to the South African Geographical Names Council (SAGNC).
2. SAGNC approves/rejects recommendation.
3. Council gives its recommendation to Arts and Culture Minister.
4. Minister approves/rejects recommendation.
5. Approved/rejected name is published in the Government Gazette.
6. Any person or body unhappy with the name change can complain within one month of above.
7. The minister can consult the SAGNC.
8. The Minister's decision (with reasons) is published.
9. The Minister will then take the recommendation to Parliament where a final decision will be taken.

Arriving at the name Tshwane itself was a laborious process that took years to complete. According to a research report commissioned by the Municipal Facilitation Committee, Tshwane was an Nguni chief who resided in the area when the Voortrekkers arrived. The research relied

\textsuperscript{110} Subesh Pillay, personal communication, November 2010

\textsuperscript{111} The metropolitan area was officially born on December 5, 2000. It incorporates municipalities such as Hammanskraal, Pretoria, Mabopane, Soshanguve, Mamelodi, Centurion, which were historically white only areas, African townships or segregated towns in the former bantustan of Bophuthatswana.
on oral histories to establish that the area has “always been referred to, colloquially, as ‘Tshwane’”. Chief Tshwane, according to this oral historiography, was the son of Chief Musi who inhabited the area prior to the arrival of the Voortrekkers. According to a City of Tshwane tourist publication, “[A]nother version is that the name Tshwane is the authentic African name for Pretoria and was used by the early inhabitants of the area. It is synonymous with the slogan, ‘We are the same or we are one because we live together’” (A brief history).

The Congress of Traditional Leaders in South Africa (Contralesa) has disputed Tshwane’s existence as a chief. The organization claims not to have any historical evidence or record of his tenure as a chief. A separate UNISA research project reinforces the Contralesa perspective and claims that there is no historical evidence of a chief called Tshwane. Neither is there evidence that the word refers to the idea of unity as implied by the slogans related above. Indeed, L.J. Louwrens (2006, p. 100) contends that the etymology of Tshwane is the Ndebele word “tshwana” which denotes a black cow. According to Louwrens, this was the name given to the Apies River owing to the interconnectedness of the black cow and the river water in rain-making rituals.

About one month after the publication of Louwrens’ research, a statue of the apparent Chief Tshwane was unveiled by a member of the mayoral committee, Absalom Ditshoke. The statue stands outside Pretoria City Hall, nearby to the still standing statues of Marthinus Wessel Pretorius and Andries Pretorius after whom the city was originally named. Since there is no physical evidence of the existence of Chief Tshwane, “the statue has the face and the physical build of a typical Tswana/Ndebele male, and is clothed in the traditional costume and accessories of a chief from around the 17th or 18th century” (Morobe, 2006).

Because Pretoria is the capital city of South Africa, its route to naming is a little more circuitous than for other amalgamated entities, although the process across the country is rather convoluted with a series of bureaucratic steps that need to be taken prior to the acceptance of the name. Like

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112 Subesh Pillay, personal communication, November 2009.
113 Subesh Pillay, personal communication, November 2009.
114 The statue is 3.6m tall. It is bronze and its pedestal is crafted from Jukskei and Rustenburg granite. It was sculpted by Angus van Zyl Taylor.
other merged municipalities, the original town or city names remain with a new name given to
the administrative unit that has been formed from its constituent parts (in other words, Pretoria,
Garankuwa, Atteridgeville etc. all remain as areas within the municipality). Typically, in other
new municipalities across the country, the name approved at a local level is taken to the
Provincial Public Space and Street Names Committee, which adjudicates the process and the
substantive motivations for the name. That committee will then make recommendations to the
Member of the Executive Committee (MEC) responsible for naming and renaming (usually
culture and sports) and the MEC will sign the relevant approvals. This approval will then be
directed upwards to the National Public Space and Street Names Committee which will then
send a recommendation to the arts and culture minister. Once the minister has signed off on the
new name, the municipal name is official.

Pretoria/Tshwane travelled the same re-naming path all the way to the minister, where the
process was stalled. The minister would not sign the new name into being. The proposed name
change remains in bureaucratic and political limbo. Successive ANC arts and culture ministers
have not taken the step to sign the municipal name into life. Lulu Xingwala had signed in 2010,
but withdrew after a court challenge initiated by Afriforum.

The status of Pretoria as the capital city has meant that special attention is paid to this name
change in particular. The pre-1996 constitution made reference to Pretoria as South Africa’s
capital, but the final constitution does not. City officials thus felt empowered to make a name
change without the need for a constitutional amendment.

There are three important exogenous reasons for the name change being stalled even though the
ANC held a majority in the city, the province and the country. Firstly, there are international
implications for changing the name. Pretoria is the capital city and is known internationally as
such. Secondly, there are important issues of so-called national reconciliation that pertain to this
proposed change. Numerous important signals were given to whites in general and Afrikaners in
particular at the moment of democracy that they would not be held to account for Apartheid and
would be integrated into a new dispensation. This includes the Sunset Clauses, an antidote to the
Lustration Laws of post-Communist Eastern Europe and the TRC that promised forgiveness and
not prosecution. Finally, and linked to the second point, is that the city has the highest
concentration of Afrikaners in the country. They have organized themselves in the post-
Apartheid era into powerful (well-resourced and well-organized) social movements that seek to protect their place in the postcolony. Tied to this context is the uneven and often messy character of stateness.

What becomes clear in the Tshwane re-naming exercise is that states are not homogenous and finished entities that act in a unified and coherent way. In particular, states as nation-builders refract the very contradictions inherent in social formations, and this eliminates the possibility of authoritarian impositions of narratives of the past, especially in a democratic and post-colonial milieu. Besides the obvious political differences between political parties in the local state, schisms persist between the political elites and the state functionaries that affect processes of change as well as disagreements between the local ANC and its national leadership.

For ANC city officials, the adoption of the name Tshwane as the municipal designation that amalgamated 13 smaller municipal units while retaining the name Pretoria as the central area within Tshwane was an important compromise in itself. There is an unspoken, but almost universally implemented code in the new dispensation that Apartheid designations can be changed without fanfare, but pre-Apartheid icons remain intact. Names like Paul Kruger and Louis Botha and edifices like the Voortrekker monument remain important symbols in the “reconciled nation” whereas Apartheid iconography has been hastily removed (such as the renaming of Verwoerdburg, Centurion which is part of the amalgamated Tshwane and the renaming of D.F. Malan Drive as Malibongwe Drive in Johannesburg). The logic is not directly identified, but seems to respond to an understanding that Apartheid as a program of segregation and racism is distinct from the formative processes of colonization that are innocuously inscribed currently as heritage. Heritage is understood here as belonging in particular to Afrikaners, and to the polity more generally too. City officials regarded the retention of the suburb designation as Pretoria as an important expression of the national motto, “Diverse people unite” (“!ke e: lxarra llke”) which at the local level has been translated into “We are the same”. Both mottos are trying to communicate the idea of a shared and essential humanity based on the nationalist imperatives of promoting reconciliation and social cohesion.

But the compromise was not regarded as sufficiently generous and the discursive battle for Pretoria ensued. The battle has not been waged explicitly on an historical level. Arguments against the name change have often concerned the practical, such as marketing, costs to business,
costs to the state etc. The refrain that there are more important concerns for the state than name changes is one that is uttered across the spectrum of political perspectives. The city was taken to court by Afriforum, who complained about issues of process within the regulations that were flouted. In addition, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) was approached to rule on the use of the designation “Tshwane” as the capital rather than Pretoria. The ASA ruled in favour of Afriforum. This means that any member of the ASA cannot refer to the City of Tshwane in their advertising until it is signed into formal existence. Afriforum also interdicted the city for its changed directional signage with “City of Tshwane” rather than Pretoria identified. The lower court upheld the interdict.

The proposed name change also had international implications. This is not simply about how embassies, for example, refer to the South African state as “Pretoria” – language of representation can certainly change over time. But in anticipation of the World Cup soccer tournament in 2010, the city had to negotiate with FIFA in terms of marketing venues. Compromise with FIFA was reached to co-use the names, Pretoria and Tshwane. International marketing would refer to “Pretoria” whereas national marketing would direct people to matches in the City of Tshwane.

By early 2016, the dispute remains. In the August 2016 local government election, the ANC lost to the DA. It remains to be seen whether its radical coalition partner, the EFF, will push the issue of name changes further.

For Subesh Pillay, a former member of the mayoral committee, “transformation has to be real as well as symbolic. Reconciliation is a two way process. The dominant brand is Pretoria and it is time for us to repeal that brand… But the name continues to be an area of huge confrontation.” Indeed, Pillay believes that there is no single other issue before the city that has exposed and reinforced such massive fractures.

The issue that came close was the 2006 policy, “The Spatial Development Framework” which considered the matter of densification as a potential avenue to meet the housing backlog in the locality, as well as to integrate communities that hitherto had been segregated according to Apartheid racist categories. The policy was initially resisted with arguments about how it would

115 Subesh Pillay, personal communication, December 2010
work structurally, the extent to which property prices in formerly white areas would drop and the risk profiles for insurance would adjust resulting in the increase in insurance rates. The thinly veiled racist arguments were rejected and could not hold up to any legal scrutiny. Pillay asserts that now, “Pretoria has the highest rate of residential growth and life goes on, people co-exist and this restructuring can be regarded as a successful project in nation-building.”

He believes that if the national minister had the courage to sign the name change and legalize it, the debate would evaporate and people would begin to accept the change.

It is worth reiterating here that Pillay (together with other members of the Mayoral Committee) as well as the various national ministers of arts and culture who have presided over this issue (Jordan, Xingwana and Mashatile) are all from the ANC. The perspective then that the ANC asserts authoritarian praxis over the country in general and in particular when it comes to re-scripting the past does not stand up to scrutiny in this instance. Rather, we find a much more cautious organization – both at the local level where care is taken for inclusive processes to unfold as well as at the national level where successive ministers are prepared to act against the recommendations of ANC municipalities in the interests of placating a white minority.

The virulence of the conflict signals something else though. The immersion in a cultural landscape of whiteness, which includes sets of beliefs and values, the ways in which groups of people regard themselves in relation to the rest of the world, the language and historical markers of a place, are less about the memory of a person per se and more about the elevation of a way of being in the world. There is a very real attempt to maintain the center of whiteness and the periphery of blackness in Pretoria/Tshwane, if not in spatial and political terms than in the idiom of culture and ideas and its associated configurations in the economy. In other words, the untransformed character of the economy of South Africa is buttressed by and refracted through the untransformed character of the landscape, of the hierarchy of meaning that can no longer explicitly support whiteness, but normalizes its enduring dominance.

The very vocabulary and bureaucratic environment of the new dispensation is used for good measure to reinforce the dominance of the old order. This was on display in both the City of Tshwane political committee on street and place name changes and in conversations with city

bureaucrats responsible for toponymy. The very process initiated and adopted by ANC municipal councils is utilized by its opposition to hamstring the council and delay the possibility for a significant shift in the cultural environment.

A few years after the first attempt to change the name of the capital city, the Tshwane municipality tried to change the names of 27 streets in the center of Pretoria. The convoluted process can take up to eight months if all goes smoothly. In the absence of a municipal consensus, it can take much longer. Indeed, this street renaming process began in 2007, seemed to be completed four years later in 2012, but was ongoing until 2016. In other words, it had taken more than nine years for a major municipality in South Africa to change only 27 street names. In 2012, the municipality rolled out the changed street names only to have an Afriforum application for an urgent court interdict scupper its plans to remove old names. In 2013, the high court, presided over by Judge Bill Prinsloo decided in favour of the applicant and changes were halted. The municipality appealed the decision and it was turned down. In September 2013, the Supreme Court of Appeal in Bloemfontein granted the municipality leave to appeal the ruling, heard before a full bench in the North Gauteng High Court in Pretoria which adjudicated in favour of Afriforum on the basis of technicalities.

The case eventually went before the Constitutional Court which, in July 2016, ruled in favour of the street name changes. The majority judgment, read by Chief Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng, pivots on questions of belonging and a rooted sense of place. In this instance, Afriforum had suggested that the removal of street names subjects Afrikaners to a feeling of displacement. Justice Mogoeng Mogoeng rejected that argument, chastising the group as “highly insensitive to the sense of belonging of other cultural groups or racial groups… and does not seem to have much regard for the centuries-old deprivation of ‘a sense of place and a sense of belonging’ that black people have had to endure” (in Mabuza, 2016). A minority opinion of the court rejected the dichotomized versions of belonging and appealed to a politics of inclusive connectedness. Be that as it may, it took nine years and multiple court cases to change only 27 street names in the capital city.

Meantime, new and old street names sit side-by-side on street poles in the yet-to-be renamed capital city. The irony of directional devices being the subject to such disagreement on the direction of the city and the country in the general is not lost. As a memorial practice though, the
multiple names for single streets, with the past crossed out in red and the current not quite yet permitted to be, functions well at the level of reflection, consideration and confrontation with the traces of Apartheid in the postcolony.

The regulatory framework for arriving at a street name change is as follows:

1. A proposal is made through a ward committee\textsuperscript{117}. Anyone can make a proposal in writing.
2. If the proposal finds traction in the ward, it will come to the municipal planning department.
3. The planning department will send the proposal to the Public Place and Street Names Committee.
4. The PPSNC will direct the proposal to the Mayoral Committee.
5. The Mayoral Committee will send the proposal to Council.
6. Council will deliberate and approve or reject the name change.

There are numerous ways in which this process can be derailed or stalled. In the case of the 27 names, the first obstacle was evident at the first step. The process was initiated through ward committees which sought proposals from public meetings for possible name changes. Because the streets affect the center of the city, the meetings were managed under the auspices of the Tshwane Municipality’s speaker’s office. The regulations stipulate that submissions should be delivered in writing. The Speaker said that verbal submissions would be adequate too, given the nature of meetings and the need to be as inclusive as possible. The verbal recordings were then sent to the toponomy department for transcription and analysis.

However, numerous meetings had no recording devices and hence the department was furnished with only five recorded meetings out of 11 held. Some of the meetings were conducted in languages that the department had no competency in and the recordings were sent to the Council’s Language Bureau. However, the Bureau objected, contending that the transcription of those public fora was not its responsibility. This made toponomy feel like it was in a “catch-22” – it has no competency nor does it have the budget to hire external vendors for translation services. The department handed the recordings back to the Speaker’s Office for it to organize transcriptions. In addition to this lack of evidence of meetings and proposals, some public meetings were disrupted by right-wing residents. In 2008, meetings in Eastland and Pretoria

\textsuperscript{117} A ward committee is a political unit of the municipality. The ward is similar to a constituency within a municipal boundary. Sixty percent of municipal councilors are directly elected ward councilors and 40% are derived from party lists, which approximates proportionality.
North were broken up by flying fists and chairs. In Pretoria North, lights were switched off and attendance registers stolen.  

By the end of 2010, the Toponomy Department had not yet received all the transcriptions from the Speaker’s Office. Nor did it receive all of the attendance registers. With the information that it had, the department compiled a database of all the names suggested, which streets were suggested for changes, the number of proposals received, whether they complied with policy, which were provincial and local roads etc. A progress report was sent to Council. But the report could not be accepted without the input from the Speaker’s Office with 187 proposals. The bureaucrats were clearly feeling frustrated that their work was incomplete. Politicians in the Speaker’s Office in turn are concerned that efforts at transformation are being stalled by unreconstructed bureaucrats.

What is clear is that the very regulatory expectations of the ANC-led council are difficult for it to properly implement given financial and technical constraints, as well as constraints imposed by the past that effects the logic of written submissions for many of Pretoria’s residents. It is also apparent that the technical team is influenced by the arguments furnished by the ANC’s opposition regarding the street naming process. Members of the team parrot the perspectives of the opposition in Council and the national ANC sublimation of colonization to “heritage” – they argue for the use of more “neutral names”, as well as, in the interest of national unity, not erasing “a part of another culture”. They tend to quote the perspectives of any black participant in public meetings who echo this sentiment (such as the Atteridgeville man who suggested the Council keep old names and name un-named streets with African names; or the white doctor working in the black township of Mamelodi who charged that changing street names is wasteful in the context of massive backlogs in clinic services) as a claim to added legitimacy of their views. One of the examples of an appropriate name for the promotion of unity in the Name Bank is “Rainbow Nation” street. After meeting with the numerous stakeholders in the naming process

118 Councillor Dau, personal communication, November 2010; Toponomy department, personal communication, 2009 and 2010
119 Ms. Brown, Toponymy Manager, City of Tshwane, personal communication, November 2009 and November 2010; Ms. Shanmugam, Toponymy Department, City of Tshwane, personal communication, December 2010
120 MMC Dau and MMC Segabutle, City of Tshwane, personal communication, November 2010
and analyzing the passage of the 27 street name changes, one can only speculate whether Rainbow Nation Street is an aspiration or an historical moment that evaded capture.

Council eventually accepted the proposal for the 27 changed street names. Some of these names are “political names” and the argument for the change, for an historical rectification was agreed to. Once more, the regulatory environment restrained the expectations of the post-Apartheid Council. Objections were levelled against the changes. These objections were rejected and the Council went ahead with changes. Soon, 27 streets of Pretoria had new street plates, with the old names still visible beneath them with a red-line crossing them out (a good lesson learned from the Durban experience). This would stay in place for a period of four months and help residents get used to the changes. The objectors, represented through AfriForum, took the Council to court in April 2013 when Tshwane Mayor, Kgosienszo Ramokgopa announced that the old crossed out names would be removed. AfriForum applied for an urgent interdict to halt and reverse the name changes. The argument from the objectors relied on a technicality to good effect. The Council had accepted the argument that the streets needed to be changed because the names reflected a past of subjugation and should not be honoured with street names. Two of the 27 streets, however, did not fall into this category – Church Street and Zambezi Street. This anomaly caused the Council decision to be deemed justifiably illegitimate by the court. In June, Tshwane went back to court and lost its appeal. Mapiti Matsena, the deputy chairperson of the Regional Executive Council (REC) of the ANC in Pretoria issued a statement condemning the court decision and reiterating the organization’s support for name changes.

Proposals for name changes or new names at the municipal level travel through the Public Place and Street Names Committee (PPSNC). These working-group committees are multi-party and take proposals to councils for approval. The ANC is the majority on this committee and could technically simply vote to ensure smooth passage of its proposals. The same would then happen at the council level. However, in the interests of bringing on board disparate communities of people and winning broader consent for sometimes difficult council decisions, the party adopts a more conciliatory and dialogic approach to especially contentious issues like name changes.\(^\text{121}\)

\(^{121}\) Observation of Municipality of Tshwane Public Place and Street Names Committee, November 19, 2010; Councillor Dau and Segabutla, personal communication, 2010
The PPSNC derives its mandate via the hosts of national and provincial legislation pertaining to public place and street names. It is a multi-party committee that drafted regulations on the basis of the national and provincial framework and those regulations are submitted through council for approval. Once approved, these regulations guide the work of the PPSNC. By 2010, the regulations were in their third iteration and are quite similar to the regulations in municipalities across the country. The regulations attempt to navigate the terrain of naming and renaming in such a way as to defuse the tension that a reworked cultural universe may have. In so doing, the regulations bureaucratize and systematize the approaches to naming and renaming. The process is rendered technical, the politics of which then tends to serve the status quo. This is apparent in the capacity of the beneficiaries of Apartheid to use the courts and those technicalities to their advantage and to the advantage of scuppering the transformation of the cultural landscape.

The original policy that was passed in 2007 required that a minimum of 51% of registered voters living on or owning businesses on a street would have to give written consent for a new street name. This would significantly impede any attempts at changing the names of streets in predominantly white areas in a city of predominantly white-owned businesses in the city center. Rewriting the consultation requirement signaled for the opposition a departure from a robust engagement to a diluted one. In a world without the history of racialized politics and living spaces, perhaps this challenge would be legitimate. In that early iteration, however, it was quite clearly a regulatory requirement that would thwart change. An additional requirement for consultation is that proposed name changes are published in local newspapers. Name changes have also been challenged on the basis that not all local newspapers were included. The democratic process and transformation imperative of the local state are both inseparable and contentious partners, and manifest ambiguities and contradictions that elucidate a messier version of statehood and history-making than the clichéd perspectives that states are authoritarian, discrete and unilinear entities that impose their will on society.

There are three categories for name changes in the municipality which have slightly different procedural requirements:

1. Old townships who’s streets remain un-named or places that are un-named
2. New developments that need names
3. Old names where proposals have been made for re-naming.
The first two categories are less contentious in respect to naming. For example, in the Tshwane area the only new street name that has been formally accepted is “Mandela Drive” or “Mandela Rylaan” in Afrikaans. This street is an extension of the R24 highway and the naming process was not controversial. Furthermore, the figure of Mandela is a unifying one, especially amongst those who’s interest is vested in the new dispensation. However, there remains a coterie of people who object to the elevation of even Mandela’s status. In an act of informal protest at the new street name, “Mandela Rylaan” was spray-painted to read “Mandela Rylaan”.

Koos De La Rey was an important Boer General who fought valiantly against the British in the South African War. Resurgence in his popularity was abetted by a song dedicated to his heroism by the popular Afrikaner crooner, Bok van Blerk. The song, though referencing De la Rey’s courage in the “Anglo-Boer War,” is composed in the present tense signifying a call to action for Afrikaner nationalists. Van Blerk reaches out to the historic De la Rey, imploring a vivification of the legend:

De La Rey, De La Rey, will you come and lead the Boere… General, General, as one man we will fall around you… a handful of us against their entire great might, our backs here against the cliff face, they think it’s over, but the heart of a Boer lies deeper and wider, this they will see…

It is on the crest of this resurgent nationalism that groups organized within Council and through groups like AfriForum are able to assert their dominance on the cultural front.

In addition to this complication, the City of Johannesburg named the R24, Albertina Sisulu Highway. In order to achieve this, the City had to consult with the Ekhuruleni Municipality since a portion of the R24 runs in its jurisdiction, as well as the Gauteng Province, since the highway between the cities falls within its domain. As the R24 advances to Pretoria, it becomes the R21 and is now named Mandela Drive. Johannesburg obviously was not going to submit to Pretoria that Mandela Drive is named Albertina Sisulu. This case will be discussed in more detail in the Johannesburg section.

122 see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtKKJSfYraU
The point remains, however, that, in general, naming streets and places in a municipality is less contentious and thus potentially less cumbersome than renaming. In the main, public consultation is limited to discussions in council ward committees which are affected. New developments do not need to travel through the community consultative process since there is none yet. The third category is mired in a battle for the proverbial soul of the place, the cultural identity of the center and the familiarity of the place in historical and cultural terms. Public participation is a significant part of the process for this category.

In 2009, the council was in the public participation phase for a new municipal street naming policy to be promulgated. The new policy proposals suggest a clarified process with a step-by-step guide as to the path that needs to be taken to change street names. The objectives of the policy are to “standardize, transform and correct” naming practices in the city. In other words, on a technical level, this policy seeks to correct spellings and ensure that there is little duplication in names across the municipality and the country as well as, on a political level, to transform the landscape of the polity to better reflect the changed circumstances in South Africa and the demographic reality of the municipality. This is not a straight forward endeavour.

The regulatory framework draws on a host of national and provincial legislation within which it finds its legitimacy. This legislation includes:

- Regulations on the standardisation of geographical names published in Government Gazette 24999 of 7 March 2005 by Notice R339
- Land Survey Act, 1997 (No. 8 of 1997)
- Development Facilitation Act, 1995 (No. 67 of 1995)
- Town-planning and Townships Ordinance, 1986 (Ordinance 15 of 1986)
- Local Government Ordinance, 1939 (Ordinance 17 of 1939)
- Gauteng Planning and Development Act, 2003
- Gauteng Rationalisation of Local Affairs Act, 1998 (No. 10 of 1998) schedule 2
Prior to reaching the streets or the courts in protest, the political space afforded through the PPSNC is characterized by the formal machination of liberal democratic politics that reins in the more rowdy and impolite politics of the streets. For analysts to claim that a victor’s history is being imposed on the polity is either complicit in the maintenance of white and capitalist power in South Africa or imposing a well-rounded theory on a square context. Besides for a regulatory context that eschews authoritarian impositions or popular political assertions of reconceived narratives, the meanderings of municipal council committee meetings expose a polite politics of compromise. Indeed, the form of the committee gatherings directs the political outcomes that it achieves.

In the midst of Tshwane/Pretoria the imposing concrete office block houses the old/new municipality. On a warm summer’s morning, I was generously afforded the opportunity to attend a committee meeting of the PPSNC at the municipal offices which I was not permitted to record, but am permitted to describe and analyze.

All political party representatives (except the PAC representative who was absent that day) gathered in the foyer before the meeting began for coffee, muffins and chit-chat. The only light in the foyer and, indeed, in the meeting room itself, was artificial – a great pity considering the warm morning sunlight available in abundance outside. The meeting room itself is set out with typical circular and elevated seating – designed for dialogue. The committee chairperson was seated up front with technical support from the toponomy department to his right. I sat beside them. The room was dimly lit in a haze of orange. There was no indication of the time of day from the light of the room. The agenda for the morning lacked controversy – it was a scheduled meeting to discuss some potential street name changes. But with focus on the technicalities of name changes and the conduct of democratic politics, a game that everyone agrees to play but pretends not to, unfolded. This began with handshakes, knowing smiles and humorous banter in the foyer and ended with the same after a brief interlude of contention.

The Council’s technical section that deals with naming is the toponomy department which was formed in 2003 specifically to deal with matters of integration. According to the technical toponomy team, there were about 118 naming projects unfolding during the period of 2004 – 2010. The toponomy team had to begin their work with an audit of streets across the municipality without names. The team developed a file of street codes that would identify the
streets until a name was given. They have been able to map the municipality using these codes which have provided spatial representation that shows where there are no names or where the municipality has a property that is yet to be named.

Linked to the spatial representation is a project list. The team estimated that there were about 5000 streets with no names. It took years to reach this point. The team is small and “if you inherit stuff, you don’t know about the mistakes. It is easier to start things from scratch.” The team further contends that the communities they have been dealing with often do not regard the work as that important. They are more concerned that the named streets should be tarred. The argument concerning the hierarchical needs of South Africa’s population with street naming being somewhere at the bottom is one that permeates the battle over naming. It has been used by the right-wing to maintain the status quo of street names (see court records, on-line conversations and newspaper articles), and by some ANC national Ministers and thinkers who are concerned with political and economic transformation first. The left argument is slightly different in that it suggests that the naming exercise provides rhetorical cover for neo-liberal municipal programs. Nonetheless, naming streets with no names is crucial for the proper functioning of municipal service provision and for safety and health services (such as police and ambulance calls).

Theoretically, once the technical coding and project planning is completed, naming should not be too contentious given that the regulatory framework prefers apolitical names and is designed to limit the number of proposals for politicized names. The policy requires that exceptional reasoning is offered for such naming. In addition, people who are still alive should not have streets or places named after them. A notable exception to this rule is the name, “Nelson Mandela”. Indeed, it was the only name in the midst of Pretoria that has not been formally challenged (though there has been informal defiance). A little more on that is outlined below. The existing name bank also theoretically makes the naming process uncontroversial since the

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123 Toponomy Department, personal communication, Pretoria, November, 2010
124 Joel Netshitenzhe, personal communication, December 2010; Pallo Jordan, personal communication, December 2010
125 Patrick Bond, personal email communication, 2011
words in the bank have already gone through a process of approval that sticks religiously to the regulations.

In Tshwane/Pretoria, like in many municipalities, provinces and the national geographical names committees, potential new names for streets are kept in a council “name bank”. This bank is a repository of approved potential names. Opposition councilors in the PPSNC come to meetings with analysis of the name bank, as well as analyses of the demographic make-up of Tshwane. The name bank at the end of 2010 had 67 approved names, 38 of which were Xhosa names. Opposition councillors concluded that there were too many Xhosa words in a municipality with few Xhosa speakers and hence called for increasing other languages and decreasing Xhosa. “In light of reconciliation,” pronounced a DA councilor, “Afrikaans is included according to the language policy”. According to the 2011 Census, Afrikaans is the second most spoken language in the City of Tshwane (18,4% of the population speak Afrikaans; a close second to 19,4% who speak Sepedi. What is clear from the conversation that ensued is that language becomes the channel through which identity politics is engaged by opposition parties.

In this way, ethnic identification is re-articulated through a less ideologically and historically tainted vocabulary of “language” rights and liberation organization politics of unity amongst oppressed against Apartheid is fashioned alternatively in the new political dispensation. In this world, majorities are absent and the division of the world into “language” rights rhymes with global democratic aspirations to the protection of minorities. For South Africa, as through the embrace of international geographic naming practices, the normative approach does not account for colonialism (of any type) where the minority is not a dispossessed group that needs to be protected by law. On the contrary, the character of colonialism is that the majority indigenous population is subordinated to the needs and interests of the white minority. Decolonization thus demands a rectification of that social relationship.

In addition, the opposition councilors suggest that the formerly African townships of Tshwane have streets that need names. Historically, township streets were not named except for the main thoroughfares. Townships were often zoned and hence an address would comprise of a house number and the zone or section that the house was in. The suggestion from opposition councilors then is that those streets are given African names, while the streets with Afrikaans and English
names (usually in the center of the city) remain unchanged in the interest of language and demographic parity.

The ANC then rejected a proposed Afrikaans street name from a ward committee. The opposition challenged the rejection since it is ward committee approved. The ANC responded by suggesting that the ward committee had not quorated in more than a year and hence could not legitimately advance a name change. The new regulations were cited. In addition, for the ANC, the word has no significance and, instead, it suggested an IsiXhosa word that is in the bank that means “belt” and for the ANC councilor proposing it, it suggests a drawing together of disparate people, a unity. Both the DA and the FF+ complained that it is too difficult a word for the whites of Tshwane to pronounce. The ANC suggested that whites must learn to pronounce African words. Eventually, a compromise was reached with an African word, Umjajo, becoming the committee approved name. And so the dialogue proceeded, to the satisfaction of all participants.

The stalling of the name change process masks a significant correlative debate about nation-building and stateness that has not ensued: why Tshwane? What does Tshwane represent? What are the implications of the choice of this name, this (fictional?) historical character as a representative of the South African nation-state?
Identifying “the worst nationalist”: The City of Johannesburg and the pragmatics of a memory/nation

Johannesburg is a city that has grown from the rubble of gold mining. These days, it is the center of South African commerce, its finance capital bordered by the remnants of its earlier start – the mine dumps that are an environmental and health hazard to especially the poorer communities that live in their shadow.

Johannesburg is one of the only metropolitan cities in South Africa that has kept the former name of the “white” municipality and projected it onto the newly expanded boundaries of the mega-city. But unlike the other mega-city, Cape Town, Johannesburg is clearly named for an historical figure. Who that person was though, is unclear. Molwedi (2006) claimed that in the early 1900s, the only person who had authority to name towns was President of the Transvaal Republic, Paul Kruger who named the emerging city after the local African chief, Johannes. This assertion was later disputed by the City of Johannesburg’s Culture and Heritage Department. Its research suggests that Johannesburg was named for both Johann Rissik and Johann Joubert (Joubert Park and Rissik Street in Johannesburg bear their names too). Regardless, the maintenance of the city name illustrates the trumping of commercial considerations over historical ones.

The decision was a pragmatic one. From a name recognition perspective, Johannesburg was seen by new South African city planners as an important brand. Thus, the City of Jo’burg, a more colloquial, friendly version of the official name that was globally recognized was reborn. In keeping with the “politics of pragmatism”, the ANC-led city has embarked upon a muted street name change course which has garnered little controversy from opposition.

An email written by Ursula Ntsubane, a development manager at the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) to Sue Krige, a heritage academic, in 2005 exemplifies the local state’s approach to street name changes. Ntsubane needed to prioritize changes in Randburg, a suburb of Johannesburg. She asked Krige who was “the worst nationalist” out of leaders of the colonial and

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126 Joanne Murphy, personal communication, 2009.; Makgane Thobejane, personal communication, 2009  
127 Email correspondence between Ursula Ntsubane and Sue Krige, October 24, 2005
Apartheid regimes who are honoured there with street names. The streets include: Jan Smuts, HF Verwoerd, Hans Strijdom, CR Swart, Fouche and Schoeman. The approach to change in this regard is incremental or reformist as opposed to revolutionary. The kinds of issues that were of concern to the JDA in addressing this question included the need for symbolic transformation and social cohesion coupled with questions of costs of change and the practicalities for commerce. Street naming and renaming in Johannesburg have by and large followed this approach.

Some of the first street name changes to occur either replaced those named for Apartheid architects or innocuous names such as numerical figures or unremembered personages. D.F. Malan Drive in the mid-west of the city became Beyers Naude Drive. The politicians deliberately changed the name of the street from an Apartheid leader to an Afrikaner cleric who supported the liberation movement. This was deliberate rejection of Apartheid, but through the embrace of an Afrikaner icon of anti-Apartheid struggle. Its passage through council was uncontroversial and the change did not inspire opposition mobilization. Also at the end of September 2001, Harrow Road running through the decaying flatlands of the inner city was renamed Joe Slovo Drive after the SACP leader who had made Yeoville on the east-side of the street his home.

While Apartheid names were quickly changed, street names celebrating pre-Apartheid Afrikaner leaders have been left intact. While it has not been possible to find records of national or local discussions that promote this as policy, it is a clear direction that the post-Apartheid regime has assumed. This can be read in relation to the ANC’s perspective on colonialism of a special type (see Chapters One and Three). It is in this way that Louis Botha Avenue can be retained as one of the main and busiest routes through the city, not as a commemoration of colonial conquest, but as a naturalization of the name in South Africa’s landscape.

In Johannesburg, place and street naming or renaming has been largely diluted of political conflict and is, instead, a mostly technical process governed and directed by myriad bureaucratic procedures and filtered through numerous government departments prior to political decision-making. But there is a difference in approach between the formerly white suburbs of the city and

the formerly African townships. It is in the townships where a more assertive nationalist organization makes its claim.

While victory was less clear in respect of the battle between Apartheid South Africa and its anti-colonial antagonists, the ANC was the clear victor in the battle for the leadership of the anti-Apartheid struggle. Without hesitation, township streets are named or renamed after cadres of the ANC with some concessions made to icons of the smaller organizations at the provincial level (for example, the ANC’s Health MEC Brian Hlongwa in October 2008, officially renamed the Pretoria Academic Hospital the Steve Biko Academic Hospital after the Black Consciousness hero, who was also a medical doctor).

This is nowhere more apparent than in the former African township of Alexandra (colloquially known as Alex). Two processes are revealing in regard to ANC dominance. Firstly, the soccer stadium was renamed, Meshack Kunene Stadium after an ANC activist, who was shot and killed there on June 30, 1990 at a welcome home rally for Alfred Nzo. In 2008, the Alex Local Football Association (ALFA) petitioned to have the name changed back to the Alex Stadium since they were not consulted about the change as stakeholders. In addition, the chairperson of ALFA, Moss Selolo argued that “I don’t even know who this man, Meshack Kunene is. But I understand that he is a comrade of a few people in political office”. Selolo suggests that if the stadium needs to be renamed, it should at least be after someone who has contributed to sport. The Johannesburg Council said that it would investigate the matter, but by the end of 2010 there had been no further action.

During the course of 2007, the ANC in Zone 13 approached the City of Johannesburg to rename six streets as part of the 50th anniversary commemoration of the Azikhelwa Bus Boycott. The activists did not want to rename the township, which was named for the daughter of Mr. Papenfus who owned the land before it was sold to Africans in 1912. Activists agreed that the name “Alex” now signifies a rich history of its own distinct from and in addition to the person, Alexandra Papenfus. The following name changes were suggested:

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129 Alfred Nzo was an ANC NEC member from Alex who was exiled and returned to the country after the unbanning of liberation organizations in February 1990. The period between 1990 and 1994 was a particularly violent one for black South Africans (see Chapter 3) and Alex was one of the areas most affected by or immersed in violence.
1. Vasco da Gama Street should be renamed, Florence Moposhe Street (1923-1985). She died in exile and was the first woman to be elected to the ANC NEC from Alex.

2. Hofmeyr Street should be renamed Richard Baloyi Street commemorating a martyr of the Bus Boycott who died in 1962.

3. Selborne Street should be renamed, Reverend Sam Buti Street who was President of the South African Council of Churches (an affiliate of the ANC-aligned United Democratic Front) and was instrumental in the ‘Save Alex Campaign’.

4. Rooseveldt Street should be renamed Alfred Nzo street after the ANC NEC leader from Alex who had recently died.

5. Rooth Street should be renamed Josias Madzunya Street after a 1950s political activist.

6. London Street should be renamed Vincent Tshabalala Street who was a Six Days War (1986) hero who died at the intersection of 12th Avenue and London Street.

After significant ANC and ward consultation, these name changes were approved by the Johannesburg Council on July 26, 2007 and the renaming decision was implemented on October 26, 2008.

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Department was given only two days notice to input in the processes and thus had little influence over the direction of the changes. In an email to council in September 2007, Eric Itzkin from the department suggested that not all streets should be named after activists as per the parameters of the regulatory framework. Instead, streets could carry the names of other role models, events, ideas or slogans. He suggested names like, Azikwelwa (we shall not ride), Asinimali (we have no money), ‘Ha Bongoela’ (we don’t drink anymore), Boycott Street or Bus Boycott Street and “Modikwe Dikobe Street’ (a writer who participated in and wrote about the protests).

For Itzkin, these names not only align with the constraints imposed by the geographical naming regulations, but also serve an important commemorative purpose: the use of names of events, slogans or concepts prompt a connection with the past and the unfolding of history. People’s names, on the other hand, are easily dislocated from historical time and the street names often absorb the characteristics of the street in the present. So, for example, Vincent Tshabalala in time may become less about the connection to the person, the activist, the struggle hero and more about the car hijackings that London Rd has been notorious for.
Neeshan Balton\textsuperscript{130} tells the story about comrades of his from Lenasia who were blown up when their limpet mine exploded before they could carry out their mission to plant the mine at Park Station in 1989. Their original target was the Hillbrow Police Station, but their reconnaissance changed that. A sports stadium in Lenasia had been named after them: The Yusuf Akhalwaya and Yusuf Naiker Sports Stadium. However, by 2010, this stadium was in such a state of disrepair, such a “decrepit state” that the members of Balton’s Umkhonto we Sizwe unit petitioned to remove their names. They did not want their “heroic names to be associated with crumbling facilities”. Balton understood that with time, what would be left of his comrades would be a run-down present, their good names would be reduced to signs that represent decay.

This is likely what Helen Suzman had in mind when she rejected the proposal from the city council that Houghton Drive be renamed after her. She was historically a Member of Parliament for the liberal Progressive Federal Party (PFP) and was considered the lone voice of opposition to white minority rule in the Apartheid parliament. In keeping with the principle of social cohesion or nation-building and honouring agents of change from Johannesburg in the new naming practices, the ANC-led council proposed this renaming.

The principles of renaming in Johannesburg in the main do aspire to an apolitical naming strategy or, at least, to characters who have a universal appeal across the political spectrum. In this regard, the naming of the new Johannesburg public bus service stations have been according to geographical features where the station is located or the destination (e.g. Nasrec Rea Vaya Station or Constitutional Hill Rea Vaya Station etc.). In 2010, the council adopted these as provisional names until a decision would be taken about advancing a naming process.

In Newtown, the historical cultural hub of the city, names were changed in 2004. Carr Street, named for the 1902-03 mayor was retained. Other streets have been renamed for leading cultural figures Gerard Sekoto, Mahlatini, Barney Simon and Miriam Makeba amongst others.

Questions of place and street naming had been located in the municipal Department of Transport and Planning and when those departments split in two (in 2009), the responsibility for place and street naming became the domain of the Development Planning and Urban Management Department. However, the department had to work closely with numerous other departments in

\textsuperscript{130} N. Balton, personal communication, 2009 and 2010
effecting changes. Several departments would propose name changes, for example, the Parks Department and the request would travel through Planning to the Arts, Culture and Heritage Department (to verify historical facts), to the political committees and finally through a public consultation process. This occurs for each proposed name change.

But the public consultation process does not always proceed as planned. Once the administration has advanced through its procedures and new street names are up, there have been a number of cases in particularly poor and black areas where residents pull down the names. I was interested in understanding why, after consultation, there was still dissatisfaction and residents would resort to illegal removals. For James Murphy of the City Planning Department, the line between formality and informality is both thin and gaping.  

What this means is that for many poor black communities, informality has become the process through which actual politics happens (and in that sense is transformed into a formal mechanisms). But state institutions produce a formality of their own, and their procedures often exclude the formerly disenfranchised. This is not entirely dissimilar from the problem in Pretoria/Tshwane, where the newly formed institutions of participatory democracy are used well by those who have been historically advantaged through Apartheid and remain inaccessible for the majority of black residents of the municipality. The resort to informal expressions of discontent then remains the central avenues through which politics is conducted.

James Murphy identified a number of streets in Soweto and Ivory Park where new street signs had been removed. In essence, the Planning Department would have to scribe a report of the incident, formally rescind the approved name and bring the new name back to the Mayoral Committee (Mayco) via the local geographical naming committee for approval after a process of public consultation occurred once more. A similar process had to occur if an approved street name was misspelled and required correction.

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131 James Murphy, personal communication, November 2009

132 The local geographical naming committee is made up of representatives from all regions of Johannesburg and all departments concerned with naming. According to the Provincial Geographical Naming Committee, the local body should have external representatives who can act as objective participants in the process. The Johannesburg committee did not have external representatives.
At the time of the interview with the Planning Department, an audit was under way to determine how many new street names had been approved in Johannesburg. What had come to the attention of the Department was that names had been approved upward of seven or eight years prior but the changes had not yet been implemented because of budgetary constraints. These delays then were not evidence of deliberate stalling tactics, but confirmation rather of current (in)capacities of transforming local government and its priorities. As Murphy explained, the view of politicians was that, “We are not going to prioritize putting up street names when there are other urgent service delivery issues that need attention”. However, for Murphy, street names are “an urgent service delivery issue”. This is particularly relevant for formerly formally black townships where the webs of unnamed streets significantly slow down emergency services, make municipal services like garbage removal difficult in planning terms and inhibit the efficient processing of services such as street paving, and the erection of road signs (like traffic lights and stop signs).

In order to speed up and stream-line the process of implementing policy, a Prioritization Task Team for Street and Public Place Names was assembled late 2005. This Task Team was coordinated by the Department of Development Planning and Urban Management with a representative from each of the regions and an official from each of the following departments: Development Planning, Corporate GIS, Johannesburg City Parks, Johannesburg Road Agency and Arts, Culture and Heritage Services. The purpose of the task team was to address the back-log in implementation dating back to about 2001 and to “quantify, assess, prioritize applications and implement approved name changes”.

Emerging from this Task Team, a “Three year operational plan for street naming” was adopted which would begin to work in July 2010 until the end of June 2013. James Murphy took the lead on the plan. This plan aimed to:

- Identify certain streets that are under the City of Johannesburg jurisdiction for possible name changes
- Implement change over 3 year period
- Ensure availability of funds to implement the identified streets
- Ensure sufficient consultation has been done in accordance with the guidelines
The plan is a condensation and operationalization of the regulatory framework which has itself been adopted and amended since 2000. James Murphy argued that even informal areas or squatter camps should be a focus for street naming. Often, informal areas become formal over time or, even if they do not, people reside in them for decades and hence should be afforded services. A new area in Soweto, called Freedom Park, was being established at the time of the interview. The planning department requested a list of possible street names that had been publically sanctioned, and the translation of the names. This way, ‘minorities’ in council would be better able to approve names. For this particular development, Murphy had sent some names back to the councilors and the communities they represented because the names were duplicates of already existing street names; another technical consideration in the process of street naming. This process can take up to five months.

There are also numerous examples of political and commercial developments that include street naming over which the council has little or no jurisdiction. Examples of these include private housing developments and questions of international relations. Cosmo City perhaps best exemplifies the privatization of the city characteristic of the depletion of the public in the post-modern city. Cosmo City is a new private development in the western part of Johannesburg. Like all new developments, its license was given on the basis that it would incorporate low income or RDP\textsuperscript{133} housing into the development. The developer went ahead and named the project as well as the streets that are part of the project. All are denuded of historical references to South Africa. Cosmo City declares itself a rootless and multi-cultural enclave that is denationalized and detached from the ugliness of history. It denotes a lifestyle aspiration. The name Cosmo City according to the developer’s mission statement (August 2006)\textsuperscript{134} “reflects the cosmopolitan vision for and nature of the development – a model for social integration of people with widely varied cultural, racial, financial backgrounds in the new South Africa”.

\textsuperscript{133} RDP is the acronym for the Reconstruction and Development Program of the early post-Apartheid government. The program was regarded as the implementation strategy of the Freedom Charter of 1955 (i.e. it would ensure housing, water, electricity and a host of other ‘basic needs’ to South Africans). The Ministry responsible for the RDP was closed down by the late 1990s and, even earlier – by 1996 with the adoption of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy – the RDP was regarded as anachronistic.

\textsuperscript{134} Candidate’s personal collection
The streets in the middle class areas have all been named after US states, (e.g. Missouri Crescent, Tennessee Avenue etc). In the low-income areas, the streets are named after African countries. Although this is in conflict with international and national norms and regulations that promote the avoidance of foreign names, the developer went ahead without following any process. These US and African streets wind their way through a development of fully bonded houses with Tuscan design.

On the international front, a letter was sent to the executive mayor of Johannesburg in 2007 from the Ambassador of Argentina, R. Carlos Sersale di Cerisana requesting the name of a street in the leafy suburb of Parktown be changed from ‘Falklands Avenue’ to ‘Malvinas Avenue’. He justifies the request on the basis that Britain had colonized and occupied the Malvinas Islands in 1833 and renamed them the Falklands.

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, Parktown was home to the so-called Randlords – the mining barons of the Transvaal. Street names were derived from their countries of origin. Falklands Avenue was named after World War 1 to commemorate a battle fought between the Germans and the British in the South Atlantic – The Battle of the Falkland Islands - where Germany was defeated. Falklands Avenue was called Rhodes Avenue after the British colonizer, Cecil John Rhodes. Hermann Avenue, down the road, was renamed Rhodes Avenue at the same time as Falklands Avenue was named. Hermann Avenue had been named after the German randlord, Hermann Eckstein. But, at the end of World War 1, anti-German sentiment resulted in some measure of public pressure to remove the name, Hermann Avenue. The original Rhodes Avenue was a back-lane whereas Hermann Avenue was more prestigious. The double renaming was approved by the Works Committee on July 1, 1918.\textsuperscript{135} While Falklands Avenue was not named in respect of the on-going territorial dispute between Britain and Argentina, and it is a relatively minor street, it has attracted the attention of the Argentinians in South Africa. But this is not a local issue. Rather, it is an issue for international relations and has hence been submitted to the national state. However, if a name change is suggested on the basis of a national review, it would need local council approval as well as a public participation process in order to be finalized.

\textsuperscript{135} See Anna Smith (1968), Johannesburg Street Names, Juta and Co.
The ‘last outpost’: eThekwini and battles for cultural dominance

…it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture (Amilcar Cabral, 1970).

If Johannesburg is the example of a functional and relatively seamless street naming approach, the eThekwini Municipality (in which Durban is the central area) is the articulation of its direct opposite. Post-Apartheid South Africa has been the locus of more protest action than any other country. Upwards of 10,000 protests (including labour strikes, and so-called service delivery protests) have been calculated annually. These could be evidence of a robust democratic practice or state incapacity to meet basic needs or to evolve the institutional capacity to direct and manage dissent. Protests have usually been the domain of the African majority. But as we see in the Pretoria/Tshwane case, street name changes have been the issue that has enabled mass mobilization of particularly “minority” communities. This mobilization, especially in the Durban case, has taken the form of protest gatherings, illegal acts of vandalism, on-line ranting and formal court challenges.

All three cases, Pretoria, Johannesburg and eThekwini have followed similar processes regarding name changes. All have been informed by national and provincial regulations as well as empowered by a variety of laws affecting governance at the municipal level.

What separates these cases then is the combination of the following factors: the character of the ANC in the area, the character of the opposition and the relationship between the local structures and the national (both ANC and state).

Durban is the main city in KwaZulu/Natal and the second largest city in the country (after Johannesburg). The political terrain of Durban is complicated by the large white community descended mainly from British settlers (who regarded Natal as “the last outpost”), a large

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136 I use the term “minority” cautiously. Its deployment registers a kind of forgetting in the sense that it carries a different meaning in the present than its expression in the vocabulary of the liberation formations in the apartheid period. Currently it refers to whites, Coloureds and Indians. Coloureds and Indians historically were regarded as part of the black majority. An extension of this new notion of minorities is the elevation of ethnic identities as cultural groups in a multi-cultural polity. In this way, the African majority is divided into discrete parts.
population of Indian South Africans who are mostly descendants of indentured labourers, and a politically mobilized and historically provincially dominant Zulu organization, Inkatha.

The ethno-nationalist Inkatha unleashed a reign of terror in the KwaZulu homeland and the African townships of Natal. After the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 violence escalated as each formation fought for their version of national subjectivity and future statehood. Inkatha was well funded by the Apartheid regime and was trained militarily by the Israeli state. The UDF, on the other hand, was regarded as a front for the banned ANC and was supported by social democratic and communist states, as well as by the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Massacre upon massacre took the lives of thousands through the 1980s and early 1990s in KwaZulu and Natal and this violence spilled over into the townships of the East Rand and Johannesburg in the 1990s.

It was only at the eleventh hour that the IFP decided it would participate in the country’s first democratic election in 1994. It was so late in deciding that millions of already printed ballot papers from the period had an additional sticker applied with the party name and logo at the bottom of the list of possible choices. Just prior to this decision to participate, the IFP had marched through the streets of Johannesburg and converged on the headquarters of the ANC. What is commonly referred to as “The Shell House Massacre,” left 19 members of Inkatha dead, eight outside the ANC headquarters.

After that election, the IFP won sufficient votes to be part of the Government of National Unity (GNU), a negotiated deal that would support some degree of power sharing in the immediate

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137 I was at Shell House that day. I was terrified and remember the cries of the people who took refuge in the foyer of our offices as armed Inkatha men marched through Johannesburg’s streets. Some weeks before this march, a right-wing bomb attack had shattered the windows on the 19th floor of the building. A ceiling had caved in and I imagined that that would be where I hid if Inkatha managed to get into the building. I remember ANC security coming onto my floor to get weapons from the room-sized safe opposite my office. I was terrified to see that they only took a few boxes of bullets. I remember the smoke and the helicopters. I remember the dead bodies lying on the pavements and streets outside my workplace. I remember feeling relieved that they were not bodies of my colleagues. Later that day, when things had settled a bit, we wanted to leave and hung around the lobby waiting for direction from leadership. Raymond Suttner was there. He suggested that we could leave then and make sure only whites were visible in the car. Inkatha would not kill whites. A few years later when I worked in KwaZulu/Natal, Bheki Cele (who became a police commissioner under Zuma, but eventually fell from favour) took me to visit Shobashobane where the IFP had just massacred people. I was nervous, but he was quite convinced too that the IFP would never hurt a white person. The day of the “Shell House Massacre”, I remember, was the day that El Salvador had their first election after the civil war – a good day there. The ANC head of security at that time, Gary Kruser, faced the TRC for what happened. Nelson Mandela, as ANC leader, took full responsibility for the massacre.
aftermath of Apartheid. It also won the majority in the newly unified KwaZulu-Natal province. Many (especially ANC cadres in the province) believe that the province was given to the IFP in exchange for a modicum of peace. Due to the continued unsettled security nature of KwaZulu-Natal, the province did not have its first democratic local government elections at the same time as the rest of the country. Rather, the province went to elections a year later, in 1996. The election results were split between rural and urban enclaves. The ANC was supported through what was dubbed the province’s “T”: the towns along the interior west/east N3 highway and up and down the Indian Ocean coast. The rest of the province, under relatively tight control of traditional leaders, was the domain the IFP.

In Durban, the ANC won a plurality and governed as a minority with the support of the Indian oriented, Minority Front (MF) led by the exuberant Amichand Rajbansi. For a decade, the ANC governed the city with a minority with all the compromises and negotiations that the position demands.

Like most municipalities, by late 2001 eThekwini had adopted a street re-naming policy. Some of the main themes evident in other policies and embraced from the national regulations included the following: streets would not be named after living people (unless circumstances were exceptional); efforts would be made to name streets after relevant local/provincial people; names should reflect the history and diversity of the city; and, procedurally, street name changes would occur “subject to prior consultation with the addressees and all other affected parties…” This consultative process would have considerable implications for the transformative project of street name changes. Considering the racialization of neighbourhoods and ownership of businesses and properties, and the patterns of political participation in Durban for white residents, the likelihood of any ANC council recommendation being accepted during this public  

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138 In all polls conducted prior to the election, including in-house polls and polls conducted towards the second election over which I presided, the ANC won the majority in KZN. We justified the anomaly in pre-election polling and election results insofar as KZN was notoriously difficult to poll. Rural areas were hard to traverse and answers would depend on a calculation made by respondents as to whose side the interviewer was on. Having said that, we designed polls that took account of those issues. We wouldn’t, for example, send Durbanites or university educated people to interview in the rural areas but would train rural folk. We also spent inordinate amounts of money ensuring that the rural areas were properly represented in the sample.

139 October 29, 2001
consultation was next to nil. This procedural point in particular exemplifies the potential compromises that are necessitated by minority governments.

In line with this policy, the council established a task team of officials (which would initiate processes and make proposals to a council sub-committee and conduct the work of the bureaucracy with regard to naming), and a sub-committee of council called the Masakhane Grants in Aid Committee, which would ultimately make recommendations to the Executive Committee (Exco) and finally to Council for approval. Political parties in council would be represented on all the political committees. While work on phase 1 began in 2003, this was interrupted by the national and provincial elections of 2004, and again by the municipal elections of 2006.

The rapprochement approach to governing was quickly dispensed with when the ANC won a majority in council in the March 2006 local government elections. At the level of street name changes, the organization emerged guns blazing on the naming front to the extent that in the Mayor’s new year address to council in January 2007, he made reference to the nine streets by their new names (which were still only proposals).

With similar majorities, the ANC in Tshwane had not even embarked upon a street re-naming program in the center of Pretoria having struggled to change even the name of the city by 2010; the ANC in Johannesburg had embarked on a less cautious, but pragmatic and unhurried re-naming endeavour, with care taken to be as inclusive as possible and follow all procedures, including political committees, committees of bureaucrats and popular consultation. The ANC in eThekwini, on the other hand, upon assuming power, embarked on a determined two-phased project for street renaming that focused on the City of Durban and its suburbs (rather than the township areas). The first phase involved the changing of nine names of streets and two buildings, and the second, the renaming of 99 streets.

In an undated discussion document by Belinda Francis Scott, an ANC regional executive committee member for eThekwini and member of the Provincial Legislature, the ANC argues

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140 The ANC won 57.8 percent of the popular vote in the municipality.

141 It was given to me in 2009 and references court cases of 2007 and 2008 so it is likely scribed in late 2008 or early-mid 2009.
that just over 100 changes in a city with 44,000 streets is not considerable (since it constitutes but 0.23 percent of the named streets in the municipality, streets that had historically been named by white councils and the Inkatha homeland government). However, the political backlash was ignited by the network of streets that were the target for change. The ANC had honed in on the areas that were historically juridically white and were contemporaneously empirically white (except for the demography, but not ownership of the inner city). The response to the publication of street name changes was swift and furious.

Phase 1 ended on the February 28, 2007 and phase 2 on May 28, 2008. By June 2007, the Democratic Alliance (DA) had applied to court to have the decision set aside. The DA was later joined by the IFP and by September 2008, both parties together had challenged the phase 2 with court action. Both applications were eventually dismissed by the court in June 2010. The DA then appealed the court’s judgment.

The appeal for the second phase was dismissed, but it was accepted for the first. The court documents submitted by the DA object to the nine names on the basis that the mayor had suggested the process was a fait accompli without embarking on necessary public participation and when notice of phase 1 was advertised in the media (in February 2007, after the mayor’s speech) it was given in terms of Section 28 of the Local Government Authorities Ordinance 25 of 1974 whereas it should have referred to Section 208. Once the public consultation process was over, Exco repeated the same recommendation, which was sent to council for debate. The debate was heated, with objections from the DA and IFP. However, the decision was eventually taken by a majority vote.

The second phase, which began in early 2007, embarked on a much more robust consultation process with notices in local newspapers and public offices calling for proposals for name changes and stipulating some of the key criteria for choosing new names. In this phase, 245 proposals were received and the Masakhane Committee whittled those down to 176 that qualified. These were then published for comment alongside 176 old names.

The council received 27, 645 responses. The Task Team organized the responses into a schedule of substantive comments and objections which was presented to the Masakhane Committee. The Committee recommended that the period for public comment be extended due to the volume of responses. A council meeting endorsed this recommendation and also debated a recommendation
to amend the original street names policy. Instead of the requirement of prior consultation with
the addressees and affected persons, Exco recommended ward committee consultations. The DA
and IFP vehemently opposed this change, but were defeated by the majority vote in council.
Ward committee consultations promote a broader and potentially deeper democratic practice in
that it includes the ward as a whole as opposed to who lives or own businesses on the streets in
question.

In his submission to the courts, the city manager, Michael Sutcliffe, argued that the reason for
the amendment was two-fold: firstly, at the time of the original policy, the council had not yet
contemplated city-wide street renaming and was responding to isolated requests; and, secondly,
ward committees were not yet in existence at the time of the first policy.\footnote{Ward Committees
were established in the eThekwini Municipality in April 2007 in line with the Municipal
Structures Act (part 4, Chapter 4).} Seventy-six out of
100 ward committees commented on the proposed name changes by the extended due date.

The Task Team then embarked on a process of reviewing the comments and submitting a
shortlist of no more than 100 names. The Task Team submitted a list of 83 names which went to
the ward committees. Responses were then presented to the Masakhane Committee (in
November 2007). The Masakhane Committee then sent the recommendations to party caucuses
for further consultation. Eventually, in mid-May 2008, the Masakhane Committee met and
enlarged the list of name changes to 100, which was then sent to Exco. Exco submitted the list
to Council and at the end of May, Council endorsed 99 street name changes.

I have spent some time outlining the process and its lengthiness – it took more than a year from
the initial consultative process to achieve an agreement in Council. So, while the ANC in Durban
was deliberate and combative in terms of using its majority to pass name changes, it was still
hemmed in by its own regulatory paradigm. Change is not sweeping and neither is it particularly
fast.

The constraints that Council imposed on itself led to the Supreme Court of Appeal judgment
(November 30, 2010) that the Council had not applied its own standards of consultation in phase
1 and hence, “…council’s decision… to change the names of nine streets involved did not satisfy
the legal obligation imposed on it to engage in a reasonable public participation process”
(Supreme Court of Appeal, 2010, p. 16). The street naming policy of October 2001 had not yet been amended when these street names were changed. The court, as per its mandate, adjudicated on a technical matter of legality. The nine streets of phase 1 would therefore have to return to their original names.

On the second phase, the court considered that the consultation process satisfied the regulations and policy prescriptions of Council, which was the main challenge of the opposition parties. Additional challenges, that some of the names are provocative and insensitive, were rejected on the basis of the separation of the judiciary and the executive and legislative arms of state: “It is not for this court, or any other court, to interfere in the lawful exercise of powers by the council” and to adjudicate in what was essentially a difference of political perspective.

While the court cases were in progress, between 2007 and 2011, a section of the public in the city were up in arms. In particular, (mostly) white DA supporters and IFP supporters were mobilized against the changes. The IFP supporters were particularly furious about the change to the name, Buthelezi Highway that ran through Umlazi township to Griffiths Mxenge Highway. Mxenge was an ANC member and lawyer originally from KwaZulu-Natal who was assassinated by the Apartheid regime. For the ANC-led Council, the name had never been officially changed to Buthelezi in the first instance. An opposition march on Council was dominated by IFP supporters.

On-line attacks against Michael Sutcliffe, the ANC-aligned city manager throughout this time, were vicious. He was regarded as the power behind the changes, ingratiating himself to the ANC. In contrast, the mayor, Obed Mlaba, did not evoke the ire of the antagonistic public. One can speculate that this is a remnant of South African racism that cannot imagine that the African mayor would have the capacity to embark on such a project without the cunning of the white manager, but, what is clear, is that Sutcliffe was the face of the name changes in both the press and as respondent to the court applications.

The name changes also were rather provocative. For example, the main street that runs through Morningside, an area known to house many whites who had fought in Apartheid South Africa’s border wars, was renamed SWAPO street in honour of the anti-colonial Namibian force that would have been their enemy. Sutcliffe insists that Council was not deliberate in naming that street in particular SWAPO Street. In addition, the main street running through Amanzimtoti,
Kingsway Road, has been renamed, Andrew Zondo Street in an apparent defiance of the elevation of social cohesion and reconciliation over redress.

Andrew Zondo was a young MK operative who planted a bomb at the Amanzimtoti shopping mall, killing five and injuring 48. He was captured and later executed by the state. He was 19 years old. ‘Kingsway’ had honoured the role played by Dick King for his heroic horseback journey in 1842 from Natal to Grahamstown to mobilize additional British forces against the Voortrekkers, who declared Natal a republic. In this sense, Kingsway Road became emblematic of the power of Anglo dominion in the area and its change, a negation of its cultural centrality. In a revealing fit of privilege, a writer for News24 was angered that, “A road, named after a brave man, Dick King, who rode to Grahamstown on horseback in nine days together with his trusty helper Ndongeni…” is being renamed after “a killer” (who is presumably not illustrative of a “trusty” native). The already existing street names across KwaZulu-Natal are thus not regarded as having their own history, their own politics, even though each one was named by either a colonial regime or an un/anti-democratic white regime or an un/anti-democratic ethno-nationalist one, but are regarded as history, as heritage. As such, power is masked and naturalized.

The vast majority of the new names are associated directly with the ANC (such as Solomon Mahlangu Drive, Problem Mkhize Road, Joe Slovo Street), a handful are from the broad, progressive forces for liberation in Africa (for example, Samora Machel Street, Amilcar Cabral Road, Kenneth Kaunda Road), and a few are pre-liberation movement figures (such as King Cetshwayo Highway, King Dinuzulu Rd and Mahatma Gandhi Road). While the Council mostly named streets after people as against the recommendations of the Geographical Naming provisions, it did not name after living people (except for Kenneth Kaunda who was assumed to have passed on!). Effort was also made to ensure that the new names are representative in

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143 Zondo was sentenced to death by Ramon Leon, the father of the leader for a time of South Africa’s main post-Apartheid opposition party, the Democratic Alliance. He later served as an ambassador for the post-Apartheid government. Zondo was betrayed by an accomplice, “Mr. X”. Two of his co-accused, Mr. Phumezo Nxiweni and Mr. Stanley Sipho Bhila were acquitted but later ‘extra-judicially’ executed by Security Branch members. Zondo’s brother was so brutally beaten by the police that he developed epilepsy which later killed him. Two mourners were shot and killed leaving a memorial service for Zondo. A security police called Lembede, who was involved in the murder of Zondo’s accomplices, was later executed by MK.

144 Michael Sutcliffe, personal communication, Durban, 2009
respect of gender and ‘racial’ considerations. While women are represented, they are not close to hal

Some in the ANC do not necessarily approve of the approach taken by the cadres of eThekwini. Kgalema Motlanthe asserts that, “Name changes must never depend on and reflect only the heroes of the governing party. Their meaning must resonate further. Because if we can change historical markers, there is no stopping the next party. 145,”

Motlanthe points to the fact that for this incipient nation, heroes cannot be taken for granted. This is an interesting departure from documented perspectives of the ANC where it regards itself as the model of the nation and hence its heroes are the people’s heroes. In “The State, Capital and Social Transformation,” (1996,) the ANC affirms that,

The struggle for the social and economic transformation of the South African society is essentially the task of replacing the Apartheid state with a democratic one… Over the decades, through its theory and practice, this movement has proved that it is the only vehicle which possesses the capacity to act as the leader of the people in their struggle to establish a truly democratic state.

This important document implicitly identifies one of the substantive contradictions that plagues the transformation of South African society (and indeed the character of politics in most former colonies): at once, the paper calls for the democratization of South African society at the same time as it posits the ANC as the only political force able to accomplish that. This contradiction is reflected in the theorizing of Cabral. When he claims that national liberation as “an act of culture” he means that “we may consider the national liberation movement as the organized political expression of the culture of the people who are undertaking the struggle” (Cabral, 1970).

But Motlanthe seems to view the post-colony differently with the foregrounding of party politics in democratic contests for power rather than a liberation movement invested and vested with the voice of the people and able to make claims on its behalf. As far as names changes are concerned

145 Kgalema Motlanthe, personal communication, Pretoria, December 11, 2009
then, for Motlanthe, these changes should work in the interests of building community and building an “inclusive nation”\textsuperscript{146}

In a piece written for an ANC online journal, Motlanthe maps out the ways in which street and place names in South Africa have reflected the imperative of colonization including the erasure of African presence and white ownership and dominance over their physical and cultural milieu. In an effort to change that, numerous transformative laws and regulations are in place. Motlanthe suggests though that localities adopt a process that “extends beyond the formal and legal elements”. He outlines a research process of oral historiography and public consultation that is not dissimilar to the Pretoria/Tshwane approach to change. For Motlanthe, this approach would mean that “the town will have been able to construct a common history shared by all residents, and hence a common heritage. It will also contribute to the forging of a common destiny.” This has not been the consequence of Pretoria/Tshwane’s attempts at change. Indeed, from the perspective of nation-building as it relates to the ANC’s perspectives on the national question, neither the Pretoria/Tshwane approach nor the eThekwini approach have generated cohesion. Both processes emerge in the context of attempted democratic practice where the underlying features of South African society remain steadfastly skewed towards the perpetuation of white privilege, joined now by a small black elite.

A common misconception in respect of street and place name changes is that the devolution of the process to the municipal level has resulted in flawed and ad hoc approaches that undermine the nation-building imperative. In the opening of Parliament State of the Nation address in 2009, President Zuma declared that,

\begin{quote}
We will ensure a common national approach to the changing of geographic and place names. This must provide an opportunity to involve all South Africans in forging an inclusive national identity, to deepen our understanding of our history and heritage.
\end{quote}

In an interview with a former director in the Johannesburg Municipality, Makgane Thobejane, the perspective is reiterated…. However, all three municipalities examined have evolved naming policies that derive from national guidelines and follow similar processes. The differences between their experiences are based on a number of other characteristics.

\textsuperscript{146} Kgalema Motlanthe, personal communication, Pretoria, December 11, 2009
The responses to name changes in eThekwini thus remain vitriolic from both the left and the right. For the right, the name changes are a display of African nationalist authoritarianism and, for the left, the street name battle gives revolutionary cover to the neo-liberal practices of the local state.
CONCLUSION

Unimagined Communities

It was a beautiful early spring day on the East Rand. The depth and tranquility of the blue sky with its wisps of white clouds stood in stark contrast to the dusty roads of Thokoza, already seething with internecine violence that accompanied negotiations. Sam Ntuli, the General Secretary of the Civic Association of the Southern Transvaal (CAST) and member of an ANC underground unit, was leaving his father’s house for a meeting. He reversed his Toyota Corolla onto Mazibuko Street and drove to Khumalo Street, the notorious seven kilometer stretch that became the bloody boundary in the most violent arena of South Africa’s war of transition. His father recalled noticing a man surreptitiously pointing him out as he left the house. At about 11am on September 29, 1991, a witness remembers seeing a blue Cressida attempt to drive Ntuli off the road. When he stopped his car, the occupants of the Cressida opened fire and pumped twelve rounds at him as they overtook him and sped away. He died instantly. Devastating as his assassination was, it was also unremarkable. Sixty community leaders had been targeted and killed by hit-squads since the signing of the Groote Schuur Minute in May 1990, the agreement that began the formal negotiation process. From the start, violence and especially the elimination of local liberation movement leaders, was a negotiation tactic. Ntuli’s murder reminded the ANC of the capacity of the Apartheid state and its Inkatha collaborators, for targeted violence. The blood-drenched, bullet-riddled car of Sam Ntuli on the side of Khumalo Street was jarring in its juxtaposition with the image of the suited signatories of the National Peace Accord just two weeks prior (on September 14, 1991) in the elegant Carlton Hotel in central Johannesburg.

Eight years later and Ntuli’s name was commemorated as one among thousands on the Thokoza Monument. Nation-building efforts drained the present of historical rogues and heroes; with all the dead of the East Rand violence afforded a memorial place on the Monument regardless of their role in fomenting it. Together with the then ANC President, Thabo Mbeki, IFP leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, unveiled both the Monument and a street named in his honour. It was
also in his name, or, at least the name of the organization that he led, that the Khumalo Gang assassinated Sam Ntuli and robbed the ANC of one its brightest, most diligent and dedicated young cadres (he was 31) and many in the movement and the Thokoza community of a friend.

The project of nation-building from an Apartheid state to a democratic one in South Africa demanded the unimagining of a racist and ethnicized nationalism and the reimagining of a unified state of equal citizens. Central to this un/re-imagining is the place of memorialization in the production of nationness. In this case, justice and its decolonial companion were sacrificed for relative peace, articulated through the prism of reconciliation. For example, in his death, Sam Ntuli was nationalized and belonged as an equal citizen to the same community as his killers even though in life he did not. Such was the global and national moment where conjunctural forces both enabled and limited this transition and produced the parameters for change, the horizon of possibility for agents of change.

This dissertation has considered this memory/nation nexus through two inter-connected lenses: it has sought to trace the processes through which decisions about national memorialization are made and to understand the institutional constraints that limit action. Thinking about processes directs our attention towards political agents and the way in which they are able to shape and transform the national landscape and build new communities. But agents do not operate in a vacuum. They work within, as they create institutions. It is by examining the decision-making of agents that we can fully understand the extent to which institutions reproduce historical relations of power. In considering the intersection of processes and the institutions within, against and through which agents operate signals the ways in which the memory-nation have and have not been transformed in the post-colony.

The focus on the heterogeneity of circumstances and fractures within governing parties and states permits the ways in which the on-going processes of nation-building reflects history and power, sometimes subverts them and shapes them. The focus on process allows us to see that pastness and dominance are about both: material power and interests (often embedded in institutional forms) and ideas and legitimation. By focusing on the intersection between processes and institutions the dissertation reveals the limits of agency and the materiality of ideas. What is most important here is that in directing attention towards the specificity of a moment and the unfolding practices within that, the otherwise broad and often abstract
constructivist argument is given concrete form. This study then avoids the voluntarism that often pertains to notions of construction and presents an opportunity to read through the messiness, the contradictions, the limits and the often unintended consequences of building solidarities between people and communities historically at war.

It is unoriginal to make the claim that institutions of colonialism, specifically its coercive and extractive capacities, are reproduced into the period of independence. However, the extent to which agentic forces participate in this reproduction and create changes is unique to this study. What is revealed in the memory/nation nexus is the nexus where material powers intersect with ideas in a mutually constitutive dance. The so-called battle of ideas is a terrain through which a new common-sense institutionalization can be born and legitimated or naturalized. This battle plays itself out most profoundly in the domain of memorialization as a collective expression of public consent. What is remembered/forgotten both reflects a collective consensus and is key in building that consensus which is the cornerstone of collectivity.

In contrast with the focus on institutional reproduction are the accounts of nation-building that stress, in the South African case, that the governing party is hegemonic and imposes a coherent memorial narrative onto the (reified) nation. However, a closer reading of the governing party reveals a more internally inconsistent approach to memory-making.

The argument of the dissertation elaborates, in quite concrete ways, how states and governing parties are complicated and conflicted entities. All the chapters point to internal tensions within the ANC, between its various structures and in relationship with the communities in which structures are located. It is the same ANC, for example, that supports the naming of a street in Thokoza after Mangosuthu Buthelezi and supports the renaming of Mangosuthu freeway in Durban. The different historical contexts of Thokoza and KwaZulu, coupled with the different kinds of organization produced in these contexts, and the different relationships with the national office, promotes a fighting ANC in one location and a conciliatory one in another.

Competitiveness between ANC branches, as revealed in Katorus, further discredits a simplistic reading of organizational coherence. Much of this incoherence can be traced back to South Africa’s partial critical juncture.

South Africa’s transition was both enabled and constrained by the collapse of Communism, the stagnating national economy and the pressures of mass mobilization of forces opposed to Apartheid. While opposition forces possessed the power of organized masses and the moral authority and legitimacy of a global community antagonistic to Apartheid, the Apartheid regime was buttressed by a delegitimization of the opposition’s key global allies, and triumphant capitalism; a military that was ideologically antagonistic to opposition forces and was one of the strongest and best equipped armies in the world; and an organized and dangerous counter-movement in the guise of Inkatha that mobilized on the basis of ethno-nationalism. In other words, the primary antagonists vying for control of South Africa’s destiny had reached an impasse. South Africa’s horizon was thus limited by the capacity of each side to negotiate the future.

The primary objective for negotiations for the ANC thus became the realization of an inclusive nationalism that dispelled the anxieties of white people in respect of their place in the new polity, especially with regard to the economy and reassured the ethno-nationalists that democracy would carve out a special and secure place for them; in other words, the aim was to achieve a consensual conscription of ethno-nationalists (whether white/Afrikaner or isiZulu) into the new national project. This aim was a reflection of the objective conjunctural conditions of the early 1990s as well as the fractures evident in the ANC itself. A more conservative global dispensation bolstered the more conservative elements of the ANC (cf. Marais, 1998; Saul, 2014; Ntsebeza, 2008; Kasrils, 2013).

The imperative of reconciliation thus became the vessel through which all policy and practice was filtered. The belief in the capacity of South Africa’s whites and ethno-nationalists to violently disrupt the transition was elevated above the belief in the capacity of liberation forces to withstand them (this historic compromise is detailed in Chapter One). This belief has significantly affected the capacity of the post-Apartheid state to influence social change and directly influenced practices of memorialization (relating to determining eventfulness and the veracity of interpretations about pastness).
This has been illustrated in the dissertation where memorialization processes have been mapped out by focusing on the national and local states. At the national level, three key sets of institutions are examined: the bureaucratic institutions represented by the national heritage infrastructure; the representative institutions represented by the national assembly, and the national liberation movement itself.

In respect of heritage infrastructure, the chapter points to the prevalence of Apartheid and colonial monuments and memorials that were effectively privatized prior to democracy in an effort to protect them from black rule. Paying little attention to questions of the past, the ANC gave up the political leadership of this sector to the IFP. The new legislative environment was dominated by two imperatives: firstly, to accord with international best practice, and, secondly, to decentralize heritage infrastructure. The memorial environment was legislatively transformed into a heritage sector, thus denuding it of responsibility for the present. The most ambitious new memorial project, Freedom Park, it was argued, is a memorial more to the imperative of reconciliation than to redress. Advocates for the Voortrekker Monument were able to input into the direction of Freedom Park; this capacity was not reciprocal.

As far as the National Assembly is concerned, once more we saw the extent to which the agenda for debate was led by the opposition. The ANC in parliament agreed quite late in the process to participate in a debate on the Anglo-Boer South African War, and there was little organizational discussion as to the direction the party would take. Ultimately, the ANC used the debate as an opportunity for reconciliation and deracialization rather than to engage in a debate revealing the colonial character of the war. The debate thus served nation-builders with an opportunity to assume the nation prior to the boundaries of state even being inscribed, and inadvertently dull the claims of the majority for historical redress.

The ANC’s own historical perspectives and the contradictions that inhere in those were scrutinized in the fourth chapter. Here, the exigencies of the critical juncture, including the elevation of processes of decentralization and ethnicization in Africa generally, produced a reading of the ANC’s idea of CST, tied to an understanding of African ethnicities, that effectively decolonized the settlers, without denativizing the colonized. The effect is to reinforce the power of settlers, when the attempt was to accommodate them.
At the local level, the processes through which a memorial to the victims of East Rand violence reveal the importance of individuals and the significant differences between ANC branches in similar locations. In addition, the elevation of notions of reconciliation suggests that South Africa’s past is not made up of perpetrators and victims of abuse and violence. Rather, violence itself is agentic, the community as a whole its victims. The embrace of the idea of African ethnicity as a way to accommodate IFP ethno-nationalism produces an informal memorialization that exoticizes the weapons of war.

The national, international and local are most visibly revealed in the processes around geographic naming in South Africa. Bound by international regulations and a national legislative environment, local regulations have created conditions of formality that hamstring municipal capacities to change Apartheid and colonial names and replace them with new ones. What is also revelatory in the comparison of three municipalities with similar ANC majorities is that the character of the ANC in a locality matters, the character of the opposition matters and the relationship of the local state to the national is key in determining the ways in which name changes proceed.

As identified in the introduction, scholars of nationalism regard the production of a usable past as a key ingredient in the construction of national identity. The assumption is that nationalists create a past that points to a continuous human community. This historical continuity justifies the nation and legitimates the elevation of national belonging over all other loyalties. As a construct of the present, authorized national commemoration acts in an instrumentalist way to justify contemporary power. This perspective is evident in scholarship about the role of the Zimbabwean state in the production of memory. Indeed, Ruramisai Charumbira (2015) deploys the metaphor of a “well-tended garden” to describe the manner in which the Zimbabwean state makes memory. Charumbira’s analysis builds on the perspectives of the dominant scholarship on Zimbabwe. Brian Raftapoulos (2007), for example, claims that central to the economic crisis in Zimbabwe then was a “selective rendition of liberation history deployed as an ideological policing agent in the public debate” (p. 181). In other words, the appeal to a heroic past explains in part and also makes meaningful a degraded present. The senescence of the state seems to directly correlate with the appeal of/to the past. This view is reinforced by Tendi (2008) and Ranger (2004) who identifies a shift from a focus on the history of nationalism to “patriotic history”.
Scholars extend this analysis and refer to the idea that nationalist ideologues engage in “organized forgetting” to legitimate their projects (Shari J. Cohen, 1999; M. Anne Pitcher, 2006, pp. 94-95). The idea that nation-builders produce a usable past, which suggests both organized remembering and forgetting emphasizes a deliberate, sustained and determined authorial voicing of the remembered and silencing of the forgotten.

However, it is important to bear in mind the contention of Thandika Mkandawire (2004) that intellectuals in/of Africa tend to be state-centric and overestimate the capacity of the African state, as agent, in social and economic transformation. The assumption of authorial statehood in regard to memorialization practices is also called into question in this study and is not evident in the South African case. At best, South Africa’s official memorial practice may be construed more as a “disorganized remembering/forgetting” on the part of the post-Apartheid state. It is disorganized in the sense that the coherence of the ANC cannot be taken for granted, the coherence of government cannot be assumed (particularly through the tenure of the Government of National Unity) and the coherence of the state cannot be pre-supposed (especially in the context of the unification of Apartheid and bantustan bureaucracies). Actors, in this instance, are multi-scalar and operate in different institutional spaces.

In addition, Pierre Nora (2000) reminds us that the late twentieth century has produced a trend towards the “democratization of history” (p. 2). Although this sentiment was not an official position of the ANC, it constituted the world-view of the ANC MP, Bridget Mabandla, who was appointed the deputy minister of arts and culture under the stewardship of the IFP Minister, Ben Ngubane. It is also consistent with the perspective of the first minister of education under the new regime, Kader Asmal, who opted for an outcomes-based education system that was driven by an antagonism to nationalist education with a singular, over-arching and propagandistic narrative.

Even in the context of a more authoritarian Zimbabwean state, the voluntarism that is ascribed to its capacity to invent memorial narrative neglects a multiplicity of limiting agents and institutions. The Zimbabwean legislative framework, for instance, is continuous with a colonial Rhodesian one – by the early 2000s, William Ndoro and Gilbert Pwiti (2001) alert us to national monument legislation that declares a site to be considered a national monument and thus legally
protected as one existing prior to 1890 (p. 24). Needless to say, that excludes any liberation monuments.

Norma Kriger (1995) alludes to the controversies surrounding the removal of colonial statuary in Harare and Bulawayo following independence. Unlike its South African neighbours, the liberators of Zimbabwe quickly renamed streets after liberation heroes from the first Chimurenga and included names of contemporary political leadership. A Heroes Acre was erected that pays homage to the leaders in the fight against colonialism. Liberated only a decade prior to the South Africans, Zimbabwe was born into a different world that approved different commemorative strategies. However, Zimbabwe remained significantly constrained in its ideas for a new world order. In particular, the declaration of the Matopos as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO means that the final resting place of the imperialist profiteer, Cecil John Rhodes, remains undisturbed and legally protected.

The impulse then to lend coherence retrospectively to practices of commemoration as they pertain to nation-building leads scholarship to quick conclusions and reductionism. National imaginaries are complicated and do not work according to a script. Tracing processes and understanding their convergence with institutions alerts us to the fissures and contradictions that inhere in nation-building. The intention of this dissertation is to assert the power of contingency in understanding the non-exceptional exceptionalism that is the practice of nationness in the contemporary moment.

It is apparent then that memorialization practices are never straightforward, nor are they completely settled. The rebellion in South Africa against the 1994 compromise was recently initiated under the banner, #RhodesMustFall, a challenge to the ubiquity of the colonial presence in its apparent aftermath. The post-Apartheid imperative of nation-builders to accommodate ethno-nationalists who had the power to promote violence and had control over the economy led to an embrace of reconciliation that extracted concessions from Apartheid’s victims and served to naturalize social relations inherited from the past. South Africa’s transition, characterized here as emerging from a partial critical juncture, serves to heighten a focus on the production of the memory/nation. In contemplating the role of political actors in relation to institutional practices, this study revealed the disciplining role of institutions on the ideas of agents, and how the
interaction of local, national and global processes has permitted a very particular reconstruction of the nation that has eluded any meaningful official engagement with the colonial past.
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APPENDIX One

Statues

Photo: M Levin

In front of Parliament, Cape Town  Photo: M Levin
Behind Parliament, Cape Town  Photo: M. Levin

President Hofmeyr

Beside Parliament, Cape Town  Photo: M. Levin
Down the road from Parliament, Cape Town  Photo: M. Levin
APPENDIX Two

Freedom Park and the Voortrekker Monument

Freedom Park. Photo: Wikimedia commons
Freedom Park Graphic  Photo: www.freedompark.co.za

Freedom Park Memorial Wall  Photo: www.freedompark.co.za
Voortrekker Monument Photos: myslowjourney.com
APPENDIX Three

DAC Bureaucracy

Culture Promotion Act 35 of 1983

Cultural Institutions Act 119 of 1998


National Heritage Council Act 11 of 1999

National Heritage Resources Act 25 of 1999

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Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997

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UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (October 17, 2003)

UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects (June 24, 1995)

Second Protocol to The Hague Convention of 1954 for the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict (March 26, 1999)

UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (October 20, 2005)

UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001)


UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage (October 17, 2003)

UNESCO Memory of the World: General Guidelines to Safeguard Documentary Heritage
DAC Bureaucracy  Graphic: Department of Arts and Culture, South Africa
APPENDIX Four

Violence of Transition

Walking down Khumalo Street
From violence to moving along please

Thokoza Monument; Zulu Cultural Centre (hut struck by lightning); Buthelezi Street (renamed in honour of the ethno-nationalist in an act of reconciliation)  Photos: M. Levin
The paved road is Khumalo Street  Photo: Wikicommons, August 2009
Thokoza Monument  Photo: M. Levin
This is a photo given to me by Nhlanhla Radebe from the Ekurhuleni Municipality. The plaque was unveiled by then deputy president, Jacob Zuma, and IFP leader, Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

My child standing in front of where the monument once stood  Photo: M. Levin
The hut in the center of what was once the most feared hostel in Thokoza  Photo: M. Levin

Ke-Ditselana Multi-Cultural Village

Photo: M. Levin
Cultural village in Katlehong  Photo: M. Levin
APPENDIX Five

Bureaucratizing the past: place and street re-naming in post-Apartheid South Africa

*Between democratization and decolonization*

In Durban, 100 street names have been changed. While the council is responsible for 44,000 streets, the 100 form the core of Durban’s business, tourist and white suburban districts. It has been enormously contentious – seen by some as a bold move, by others as provocative and unfair. In order to transition from the old names to the new, the council has crossed out the old name in red and placed the new street name below it. In an act of defiance against the change, a protester has blotted out the name of Steve Biko, erected to replace Mansfield. *Photo: M. Levin*
The work of street name changes  Photos: M. Levin
Street name changes from below, August 2014 (Cape Town). In commemoration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the Marikana massacre. Photo: M. Levin