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An analysis of the engagements of intellectuals and intellectual activity in the South African media: a case study of the Native Club

Masango, Philile

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

May 3rd 2006, saw the birth of the Native Club, which was launched in Pretoria, South Africa. Its founders, defined it as 'a public initiative' (Native Club, 2006) focusing on issues of identity, representation and the positioning of black people in society and the black narrative in reshaping the socio-political and economic debate in South Africa. The Native Club also justified its existence as a forum mobilizing black intellectuals to regenerate their communities to balance the injustices of Apartheid which had led to cultural divisions and marginalization. "Furthermore the legacies of our past has been the detachment of many leading black people from the cultural processes that are central to nurturing good values, ethos and morals as well as programmes that help to build leadership in poor and marginalised communities and ensure that there are role models who can help mentor young people" (Native Club, 2006).

A few days after the launch of the Native Club, the first opinion pieces started to emerge in the media, particularly in mainstream newspapers. During the first few days, these were mainly articles, advocating for the objectives and existence of the Club. One of the first was written by Sandile Memela from the department of Arts and Culture, one of the sponsors of the Native Club. In this article, which appeared in the *Mail & Guardian* (May, 2006), Memela named and personally attacked those who in his view were "celebrity, coconut intellectuals" who were always ready to attack the government instead of promoting its ideals, which include a democratic society. In his account, he also criticised the media for seeking expert opinion from the same public commentators (who are usually anti-government) instead of sometimes referring to "intellectuals within government". This article by Memela, which appeared under the headline "*Black brainpower*" alongside one by Ebrahim Harvey ("*Where are the black thinkers of the left*?"), was to mark the beginning of an eruption of media articles about the Native Club. In the following weeks, commentary appeared thick and fast across the mainstream newspapers and on some internet websites; through journalistic articles (written by

journalists as news stories) as well as through opinion pieces. Those who engaged in the debate came from diverse backgrounds, including those from influential structures critical of government such as the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu).

The commentators who responded to the formation and existence of the Club raised a wide range of contentious issues including its perceived link to the ruling party and the office of then President Thabo Mbeki. This is because one of its key founders, Titus Mafolo, was a political adviser to the former president. Mafolo himself contributed some media articles that promoted the existence of the Club.

The commentary made by individuals in reaction to the Club, appeared to focus on its motive and whether it was relevant to South Africans today. Some authors, especially proponents of the Club, questioned the way the media had covered the Club's launch only after the ensuing controversy about it.

1.2 AIM

This study explores how intellectuals and intellectual activity is engaged in the news media. It investigates this issue by focusing on how the Native Club entered public debate and by tracking the issues and debates raised in response to its launch, covered in and carried by the media. These are responses of commentators in and outside of the Native Club. Some of the questions asked included how the Native Club had positioned itself in society and the issue of how the Club was put on the media agenda and why it remained there. This study asks what kind of public debate happened in relation to this particular issue by investigating the prevalent themes in media articles, and who exactly spoke in the media, in response to the launch of the Club and the issues about intellectuals flowed from the launch of the Club. Posing this question was also key as the media plays an important role in the making of public intellectuals by choosing some individuals ahead of others to comment on news stories appearing in the media.

1.3 RATIONALE

South Africa has gone through major changes in politics, economics and education since becoming a constitutional democracy in 1994. The country's policies have put great emphasis on uplifting previously disadvantaged communities in all sectors. These communities include black people who make up the majority of South Africa's population. Such policies include Affirmative Action and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), a policy which has now been widened to Broad-based Black Economic Empowerment.

In relation to intellectual activity we saw calls from the new order for much greater participation by intellectuals and in particular black intellectuals, in public debate. In many of the speeches he had presented at various forums, former President Thabo Mbeki, consistently asked the black intelligentsia to be more visible and vocal in the socio-political arena. Mbeki had not only made the call in South Africa, but throughout the continent as well. In one of his earliest attempts to call for the vigorous participation of intellectuals, Mbeki used the forum of the Z.K. Matthews Memorial Lecture held at the University Of Fort Hare on the 12th October 2001. In paying tribute to Matthews, Mbeki used some of the Professor's respected writings to highlight the fact that Matthews (who was also the first black person to obtain a BA degree from a South African institution) had been among the few African intellectuals who "had awakened to his responsibilities" because "at all times these Africans refused to be so de-humanised and deprived of their identity and pride that they should submit to becoming 'mis-educated Negroes' or Natives as the case may be". (Mbeki, 2005: 4)

On January 2nd 2005, in Khartoum, Sudan, in his acceptance speech for an honorary doctorate from the Africa International University, Mbeki called for greater participation by intellectuals in improving Africa's many impoverished societies as he lamented the invisibility of the intelligentsia in this regard:

> …our continent is littered with half completed or failed projects in part because the intellectual discourse has remained within the confines of the hallowed halls of universities, where only a select and fortunate few, among the Africans, have the privilege of creating and obtaining knowledge (Mbeki, 2005: 2).

Mbeki repeated his call for intellectuals to "arise" a few weeks later in Cape Town in his address at the Conference of the Association of African Universities in February 22nd 2005. Here the former president reiterated the need for institutions created by Africans to not only help analyse problems faced by the continent but also offer practical solutions to address these problems.

Mbeki's position appeared to influence the country's intellectual activity as several commentators and intellectuals have noted the calls made by the president through the years. One such Wits University academic Dr. Devan Pillay (2006) writes, "When, a few years ago, President Mbeki asked: 'where are the intellectuals?', he seemed to be inviting black intellectuals to participate more vigorously in a public discourse that continued to be dominated by white intellectuals". The issue of intellectual activity has also been taken up and canvassed in the media by various commentators. In recent times the issue of intellectuals, particularly black intellectuals, resurfaced with the launch of the Native Club in May 2006. The case study of the launch of the club offers a potentially illuminating window into contemporary public intellectual engagement and its treatment in the media.

The promotion of 'transformation' policies by the new South African government filtered, and continues to filter, into almost all spheres of society including the transformation of the media. "The new ANC government made a strong push for transformation of the media industry. This kicked off with sharp criticism of the unrepresentative racial breakdown of senior media management positions and newsroom personnel, and moved on to a complaint that this generated a preternatural hostility towards the new order" (Harber, 2006). The 1999 ANC policy document highlighted

issues of unequal access to the media and defined the transformation of the media into three central elements according to Harber.

- The diversity of ownership, particularly the need for black owners
- More representative staffing and management
- Content less hostile to the ANC-led transformation project. (Harber, 2006)

This thinking by the new government put journalists and media managers in a position where they were under pressure to transform their way of thinking and ideologies in relation to the policies of building a new democratic society as outlined by the new government.

Although, as discussed earlier, the place of black people in general as well as black people in the economic realm of the country has always been a great part of the context of the 'new South Africa', the launch of the Native Club, whom its founders claimed aims to mobilize black intellectuals to encourage greater participation in the country's issues, stirred great controversy. Issues of identity, notably racial identity, are central to the discussion around the controversy of the Club. It also appears as though, in deciding to form the Native Club, its founders had a particular idea of what an "intellectual" is and the importance of intellectuals.

The South African media are themselves a site where an assertive black presence has been called for in shaping public opinion and deliberation. The new post-apartheid government, as mentioned earlier, called on the media to provide a forum for all voices in society, especially the previously marginalised. Therefore the other interest of the study is to examine the way in which the media has chosen to follow the debates around the Native Club, (which is a 'private' public forum), and put them in the mainstream media. The manner in which the media engages in the debate will provide answers on what this tells us about the media as a public space for discussion. This relates to theories on the use of public spaces for discussion and critical deliberation, coined by theorists as the notion of the public sphere. In certain understandings of public deliberation or the notion

of the public sphere, intellectuals are considered to have a particular role which involves presenting and interrogating certain positions in society. However, these understandings are contested in most societies, particularly here in South Africa. This study looks at these various understandings and the implications they have for public debate.

CHAPTER 2

2.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

There are three main bodies of literature that are relevant to this study. The first concerns the notion of the public sphere. Literature on public sphere theories is used in the study to answer questions of where and how intellectual debates and activity takes place with regard to the Native Club. Exploring these theories also provides answers on whether the media are one of the places in which this activity is taking place and what that tells us about the South African media as a public space for deliberation.

The second body of relevant literature discussed in this chapter is the definition and the role of intellectuals in society. The Native Club positions itself as a forum of intellectuals and provides its 'own' definition of the concept 'intellectual' by calling for 'black' and 'home-grown' thinkers. The Club's definitions were reported on and strongly contested in the media. This second section of the literature review and theoretical framework seeks to provide various definitions of the concept of 'intellectual'. This section also explores various discussions on the expectations of the role of the intellectual in society and specifically in post-colonial African societies.

The role of the media in facilitating public deliberation is the third body of relevant literature. This informs questions on the role that media are expected to play in a democracy; the foundation of a democracy being measured by the level of public participation in shaping the socio-political and economic directions of society. The media literature reviewed also scrutinizes what news processes informed the entering of debate about the Native Club in the mainstream media, what issues relating to the debate remained prominent in the media and what this tells us about how the media engages public intellectual activity.

2.2. The notion of the Public Sphere

It is important for this research report to examine the media because of its relationship or link to the notion of the public sphere. To illustrate the notion of the public sphere and its significance in society and in relation to this study, this thesis explores aspects of public sphere theory. Jurgen Habermas(1991: 56-60) speaks of the idea of the public sphere as consisting of a body of private people gathered to discuss matters of public concern rationally for the "common good". In its refined form, the aims of these publics are to hold the state accountable to society through publicity. In his description of the idea of a public sphere Habermas (1991:56) continues to speak of these private individuals as a bourgeois public sphere. This idea excludes the unprivileged members of society, those men and women who do not hold titles or who are not educated. In his initial conception of the notion of the public sphere in 1962 (*The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*) Habermas relies on face-to-face discussions to describe these publics and he excludes modern-day media citing their commercial, non-conversational and entertainment features. However, in his later writings there seems to be a shift in the way he views the public sphere as he posits that "today newspapers and magazines, radio and TV are the media of the public sphere" (in Eley 1992:289). Here Habermas is acknowledging modern day forms of public discussion but also emphasises that the media role in this regard is to provide comprehensive news reports that are factual and accurate, produce opinion columns and commentary that is well-informed and rational, and allow most citizens to participate in the dialogue.

Nancy Fraser (1991:111-125) acknowledges the notion of the public sphere as argued by Habermas, but posits that the bourgeois model of this public sphere is no longer relevant, particularly in democratic societies and that a new form of public sphere or a "counter public" is needed to replace it. Fraser opts for a kind of public which is characterised by "open access, participatory parity, and social equality". Fraser also speaks of multiple publics (1991:125) where she argues that in stratified societies where relations are structured on the basis of dominance and subordination, equal participation in the public debate and deliberation is not possible. She further raises an interesting point that "public

spheres are not only arenas for the formation of discursive opinion; in addition they are arenas for the formation and enactment of social identities." (Fraser, 1991:125). In her critique Fraser points out that in today's world because of the stratified societies and "alternative publics" people may no longer be discussing to reach agreement for the "common good", but to promote their own needs and interests.

Michael Warner (2002) takes the public sphere discussion further by illustrating that the individuals who take up the public spaces and public discussions are private people who have packaged themselves or imagine themselves according to what they consume from the public sphere in the form of texts (newspapers) and other media. Warner argues that contrary to what Habermas suggests, human beings are not just an aggregation of private people. He concludes that because of this altered sense of self, the private individual in the modern world has two conditions of being; a private subjectivity and a public subjectivity. In addition Warner argues that these private individuals have the desire to participate indirectly on their subjectivities rooted in class, race, and gender, in public bodies through certain kinds of media genres.

In post-Apartheid South Africa women's organisations, trade unions, political parties, and other civic organisations generate their own media, which at some points overlaps with the mainstream media who are important vehicles of the public sphere. With the Native Club, the question of identity is central to the formation and positioning of the forum. The Club also presents itself as in opposition to the mainstream media. The study opens up to the question of whether the Native Club is an institution of an alternative or counter public sphere.

2.3 Intellectuals

As mentioned earlier, central to the media discussion about the Native Club has been the debate about who or what is an "intellectual". The definitions of the term "intellectual" range from a simple dictionary explanation to more scholarly definitions provided by Antonio Gramsci and Edward Said amongst others. This research is looking at the term

not to try to arrive at a theoretical understanding of what constitutes an intellectual, but to track the popular and public ideas of what an intellectual is that may be afloat currently. It is important for this study to look at popular understandings of public intellectuals in order to understand their link to public deliberation.

While cognisant of the academic discussion of the definition of "intellectual", it is useful for this project to explore public domain definitions of the term. One such definition is the one provided by an online encyclopaedia, Wikipedia. The Wikipedia argues that there are broadly three modern definitions at work in discussions about intellectuals:
Firstly, "intellectuals" as those deeply involved in ideas, books, and the life of the mind, secondly, and here largely arising from Marxism, the definition of intellectuals as a recognizable occupational class consisting of lecturers, teachers, lawyers, journalists and suchlike; thirdly, cultural "intellectuals", being those of notable expertise in culture and the arts, expertise which allows them some cultural authority and who then use that authority to speak in public on other matters (Wikipedia, 2006).

In his *Selections from a Prison Notebook*, (1971: 3) Gramsci makes a distinction between 'traditional' intellectuals and what he terms 'organic' intellectuals. He describes traditional intellectuals along the same lines of Marxist theorists as defined by the Wikipedia, as those who belong to professions and have inherited their titles through historical class based privileges. On the other hand, in his description of the 'organic intellectual', Gramsci highlights the function of those that fall into this category not so much being defined by their professions, but these organic intellectuals who constitute, who organise, and who are tools of social change. "The intellectual must have a certain technical capacity, not only in the limited sphere of his activity and initiative but in other spheres as well, at least in those which are closest to economic production. He must be an organizer of masses of men; he must be an organizer of the confidence of investors in his business, of the customers of his product." (1971: 5). From these definitions one draws that there are broadly two approaches that inform our ideas of intellectuals. The first is the Marxist approach, which sees intellectuals as 'co-opted' or as supporting socio-

political and economic struggles for freedom and the other is the Western Enlightenment, which values intellectuals as part of public reasoning.

The core of the discussions about the public intellectual is probably the role they play or should play in society. Said (1994:7) argues that an intellectual is "someone who is able to speak the truth to power, a crusty, eloquent, fantastically courageous and angry individual for whom no worldly power is too big and imposing to be criticised and pointedly taken to task". He further argues that the true intellectual is one who seeks to remain independent from such pressures of toeing the party line or fixed dogma and being co-opted to governments or corporations. In addition, Said's conception of the intellectual life is not classified into either private or public intellectuals. He speaks about a "quite complicated mix between the private and public worlds….there is no such thing as a private intellectual, since the moment you set down words and then publish them you have entered the public world" (1994: 9).

Said's definition and view of the intellectual has links to what one of South Africa's public intellectuals Professor Sipho Seepe, who draws off Said in his writings about intellectuals. In examining the role of the intellectual, Seepe highlights the challenges faced by intellectuals in South Africa. Seepe himself is one of the few publicly identified South African intellectuals who has been described as fearless and as having displayed a commendable level of moral courage (Jansen: 2004). Seepe's discussions in his book titled using Said's famous words *Speaking truth to Power* raises the interesting debate of not only the 'role' but also the 'position' of the intellectual, himself being a man who has packaged and positioned himself as an intellectual with no fear or favour, or as he puts it "speaking truth to power" Seepe (2004: 67).

Similar to Said and Gramsci's view of the role of the intellectual, Seepe (2004) argues that the place of intellectuals in society is to provide informed leadership by not allowing themselves to be co-opted to those in power or trying to win their favour but by raising "embarrassing questions and their public performances cannot be condensed into some slogan or othordox line" (Seepe, 2004: 67). The role of the intellectual includes the

"search for the truth, the interrogation of the meaning and implications of both public conduct and policy decisions" (Seepe, 2004: 69).

Seepe argues, however, that asking probing questions can sometimes put intellectuals in a position where they receive personal attacks, particularly in South Africa. "For instance, suggestions are advanced that our engagement is counter- revolutionary and typical of the post 1994 revolutionaries who have suddenly 'sprung from nowhere'…..For example, we have had aspersions cast on our educational competence for merely raising questions about political developments in the ANC. To the point, a question has been raised about 'what kind of knowledge we are imparting on our students'…". (Seepe, 2004: 54)

Mkhandawire (2005) shares this view of the challenges faced by African intellectuals in general, especially in post-colonial times. He brings in an interesting dimension to the manifestation and expectation of the African intellectual. Mkhandawire argues that in an attempt to fulfil their roles in society, African intellectuals grapple with "speaking truth to power" as asserted by Said, and the notion of nationalism. He says this is because during the struggle for freedom from colonialists, intellectuals were a great part of the liberation movement. During these oppressive times, he argues, a range of broad views, including those of intellectuals were accommodated as part of a common purpose against the colonial master and even if there were differences in views "these were often voluntarily or tactically muted" (Mkhandawire, 2005: 4).

This 'clear-cut' political positioning of the intellectuals before attaining democracy is what has essentially created the debate in South Africa about their role or position in South Africa as noted by Seepe, as if intellectuals are supposed to clearly define their political allegiance and not stand out as independents. "It is often after the liberation that the muted voices become louder, and it is also in this phase that we see the conflation of power with the truth" (Mkhandawire, 2005: 4).

What is clear from the discussions of the intellectual as asserted by the various scholars quoted above is that the intellectual, whether defined as traditional, organic or cultural, as private or public, is a "representative" individual, who believes and uses his/her talent to

courageously fight for the freedoms and justices of all human beings. In addition the scholars seem to be in agreement that discussions on intellectual life can not be divorced from discussions about power---power defined primarily as government authority. In other words, intellectuals are considered to be significant to society, and thus have power, and therefore much of the discussion is about their relation to power.

The review of what constitutes an intellectual and the role of the intellectual is relevant for this study as the Native Club clearly outlines the "type" of intellectual that it wants as a member of the club and to fulfil what roles- "home-grown thinkers…to pursue a unified cultural identity of South Africa as a country and also enhance cultural, social and economic development for the benefit of society at large" (*Mail & Guardian,* 2006).

2.4 Role of the media

The role of the media in relation to the public engagements of the Native Club is not only examined because of the media's capacity to shape public intellectuals. The role of the media is also examined in the context of it being a tool for change and promoter of participatory democracy. These are normative ideas of the media that resonate with public sphere ideas of the media as being an important element in creating a space for the operation of public deliberation.

In attempting to investigate these media dynamics it is appropriate to also highlight the processes behind the scenes in newsrooms, processes that influence "the selection of news" as termed by media theorists. This is essential, for the study to arrive at an understanding of how the Native Club was put on the mainstream media agenda or public agenda, because the media is constrained by material and other factors in creating a space for discussion.

Over the years the media has been noted to have several functions and many would agree that ideally the media's role particularly in the context of South Africa and as advocated for by the ruling government is to enhance and maintain democracy. For the sake of

maintaining context this research report will focus on a few of these functions which are relevant to the study.

In liberal theory the watchdog role of the media is viewed as the principal democratic practice which exposes abuse of power by those in authority. For liberal theorists this role has an overriding importance, "protecting the public by preventing those with power from overstepping the mark" (Curran, 2000:127). Curran further argues that this role should not be limited to those in power but the media should also keep other systems in check for the sake of public interest.

The media is also tasked with providing information to the public about events and conditions in society and the world by being able to facilitate innovation, adaptation and progress and by pointing out to the public the relations of power (McQuail, 1987). Such information, according to McQuail and Curran, is that which enables society to clarify its objectives, formulate policy, co-ordinate activity, make decisions and manage itself.

McQuail (1987) further points out that the media plays a democratic role in providing support for established authority and norms, socializing and nation building. Curran (2000) identifies this as the voice of the people as coined by liberal theorists. This role requires the media to act as representatives of the people by campaigning for their societal objectives in the areas of politics, war, economic development and sometimes religion. In other words the media can set the agenda for the people by raising issues that the public may not have thought of and can suggest a way of looking at these issues (Burton 2002, McQuial, 1987). This empowers the public to make informed decisions to support or reject certain public figures or statements. In South Africa's particular situation of moving from an undemocratic to a democratic society, this is perhaps what the ruling government has been advocating for in the transformation of the media.

2.4.1 Agenda Setting

In the case of the resurfacing of the issue of black intellectuals through the Native Club, it is also appropriate to briefly discuss media theories relevant to this issue, one of them

being agenda-setting theory. Traditionally, agenda setting theory explores the relationship the news media has on the perceived importance of key political issues. Historically media research and theories have shown that the media has been a significant part of the setting of the public agenda. Elements and issues that are prominent in the media agenda become prominent in the minds of the public (defined as viewers, listeners of readers). In discussing agenda-setting theory a term that features prominently is "salience", where the media positions some issues as more important than others, which in turn, shapes public thinking. In Dearing and Rogers (1996: 1) Cohen says "The press may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about". Research on the agenda-setting process suggests that the relative salience of an issue on the media agenda determines how the public agenda is formed, which in turn influences which issues policymakers consider. In the United States, for example, media studies show that the US presidency has immense effect on agenda-setting (McCombs, 2002), as does the *New York Times*.

In discussing agenda-setting theory, Dearing and Rogers (1996: 2) start by defining the term "agenda". They state that an agenda is a set of issues communicated through the media in a hierarchy of importance at a point in time, strongly influencing how the public ranks the importance of those same issues. Traditionally in agenda-setting theory these are pre-existing social issues that are often conflictual in nature. In the case of South Africa this could be mainly issues that raise the race card high, like policies on Black Economic empowerment or Affirmative Action. Dearing and Rogers (1996:2) assert that it is this "potentially conflictual nature of an issue that helps make it newsworthy as proponents and opponents of the issue battle it out in the share of the 'public arena', which in modern society is the mass media". Agenda-setting research has also shown that the agenda-setting process is composed of the *media agenda*, the *public agenda* and *the policy agenda*. The *media agenda setting* in summary, is the importance of an issue on mass media agenda. *Public agenda- setting* on the other hand is the importance of issues on the public agenda while *policy agenda-setting*'s concern is with policy actions regarding an issue, partly in response to the media agenda and the public agenda.

Agenda-setting theory is used in this study to contextualise public intellectual debate as engaged in the media because essentially the agenda-setting process is an ongoing competition among proponents of a set of issues to gain the attention of media professionals, the public and policy elites. In addition, like news, the input of intellectuals in news is such that others are chosen ahead of other commentators to comment on topical issues. Agenda-setting theory helps this study answer the question whether in the case of the surfacing of the Native Club the media focussed on the forum because it raised issues that were already high up on the South African public agenda such as race and the representation of black people, as well as the representation of intellectuals in the new South Africa? This theory also points to the importance of establishing who sets the media agenda in South Africa, because as stated earlier, the controversy around the existence of the Club was sparked, at least in part, by the fact that the president's political advisor spearheaded its formation.

CHAPTER 3

3.1. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study was to investigate how the issue of intellectuals and intellectual activity was engaged in the media, specifically by investigating what issues were raised in the media by the formation of the Native Club, how they entered public debate through the media and which individuals spoke in the debate. To answer these questions, I used two research methods, interviews and text analysis. Both methods are largely qualitative in approach, although there were some quantitative elements in the textual analysis. In combination, the methods allowed me to investigate agenda-setting questions, in other words, the mechanisms by which the debate entered into the media, as well as examining how the debates were framed, who spoke and what issues were raised. They also allowed me to map some of the dynamics of the debate, in other words how the debate was conducted and what issues were engaged.

As a first step, I decided to interview the founders of the Native Club in order to establish how the debate found its way into the media and whether there was a communication strategy used. Establishing if a communication strategy was used in getting the Club on the media agenda could help answer questions about how the issue of intellectuals and intellectual activity is engaged in the media and how the Native Club entered public debate. I selected two individuals identified with the Club, Sandile Memela and Titus Mafolo, for interviews, presented in the form of an open-ended questionnaire. This kind of interview allowed the respondents to give as much information as possible. However, I had limited success in getting the information I needed from these interviews, as I have outlined in the findings section. Memela has contributed several media articles in defence of the Native Club. At the time, he was also the spokesperson for the department of Arts and Culture, a government unit which sponsored the launch of the event. Mafolo on the other hand was a political advisor to then President Thabo Mbeki.

Next, I collected articles and reports in the print media because I established that text is readily available in substantial quantities through the print media, as opposed to broadcast and online media forms. I also chose print because this is where news of the Native Club first emerged in early 2006 when those behind the initiative advertised its conference which was to later become its launch in the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper in the March 2006 (10th- 16th edition). The ensuing debate around the Native Club also happened largely in the print media shortly after its launch. In addition I chose print media, because there is a formality about the way issues are communicated through this media form; whether the text is in a news or opinion format, when in text form, it is presented within conventional rules of arguments where the author usually presents a thought-through position on an issue. My research is thus limited to an analysis of how the issue was debated in the print media, which may not necessarily be the same for the broadcast media.

The next step was to decide on the research period and the newspapers from which to source articles about the Native Club. The period chosen for analysis was the first three months of the inception of the Native Club (May 3rd 2006 to July 30th 2006). This is primarily because my initial investigations indicated that this was the period in which debate about the club was highly concentrated in the media. This was also the time when the first news stories and intense individual reactions to the formation of the Native Club came in through the media. However, some material, that falls outside of the research period was referred to, but specifically referenced as falling outside the research period.

3.2 Method of Collection

I wanted to gather as many articles in print publications as possible in order to map out the debate as fully as possible. I could not use a simple keyword search on the internet because not all newspapers have online versions and not all online editions are exactly the same as the print version. In addition, I was interested in mapping out which newspapers had not covered the issue of the existence of the Native Club. Therefore I decided to identify all newspapers through the South African Advertising Research

Foundation (SAARF). I used SAARF's 2006 All Media and Products Survey (AMPS) on newspaper readership figures as my source list. SAARF's 2006 AMPS survey listed a combined total of 48 daily, weekly, bi-weekly, once every four days and monthly newspapers. This is evidently a significant number of newspapers to go through; therefore in order to ensure that the study was manageable I decided to filter the newspapers again, by choosing to omit community newspapers and use the mainstream South African media including both English and Afrikaans press. Because I was doing the research from Johannesburg, the information hub, which is in the Gauteng province I decided to use only newspapers that are distributed in Gauteng as well as nationally. This filter left the following newspapers available for research. They comprise daily and weekly newspapers only.

Table: A

Publication	**Frequency of publication**	**Language**	**Region Covered**
Beeld	Daily	Afrikaans	Gauteng
Business Day	Daily	English	National
Citizen	Daily	English	National
Daily Sun	Daily	English	Gauteng, Limpopo,Mpumalanga, North West
Pretoria News	Daily	English	Pretoria
Sowetan	Daily	English	Johannesburg
The Star	Daily	English	Gauteng
Beeld Naweek *	Weekly	Afrikaans	Gauteng
*Citizen Weekend**	Weekly	English	National
City Press	Weekly	English	National
Mail and Guardian	Weekly	English	National
Post	Weekly	English	Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal
*Pretoria News Weekend**	Weekly	English	Pretoria
Rapport	Weekly	Afrikaans	National
Soccer Laduma	Weekly	English	National
*Sunday Independent**	Weekly	English	National
*Sunday Sun**	Weekly	English	National

Sunday Times	Weekly	English	National
*Sunday World**	Weekly	English	National

The publications with an asterisk are the weekend editions of daily newspapers. In this study I have chosen to count them as one, under the name of the daily publication as follows:

1. ***Beeld*** (*Beeld + Beeld Naweek*)
2. ***Citizen*** (*Citizen + Citizen Weekend*)
3. ***Daily Sun*** (*Daily Sun + Sunday Sun)*
4. ***Pretoria News*** (*Pretoria News daily + Pretoria News Weekend*)
5. ***Sowetan*** (*Sowetan+ Sunday World*)

I searched the newspapers for articles in three ways; I did a keyword internet (Google) search, with the words "Native Club". In order to double check availability and to avoid duplication of articles, for those newspapers that had online archives, I did another keyword search for each publication. For those that do not have updated online archives, I did a manual search by physically going through each newspaper within the chosen period of research.

The next step was deciding on what type of articles would be useful for the method of analysis chosen. I decided that for this research articles would be defined as reports written by journalists about the Native Club, editorial comment and opinion. This is because the main question to be answered is around the media's reflection or representation of public intellectual life and the "public" view over the status of the intellectual, and such articles are selected by or generated by the media. Articles therefore exclude letters to the editor.

Using this definition of articles to search for relevant material, I found 32 articles. Thirty (30) of these were found in seven of the publications selected for the research, namely; *Beeld, Business Day, City Press, Mail & Guardian, Rapport, Star,* and the *Sunday Times.* The rest were found in the "other text-based media forms". Searches of the online and

other archives of the tabloid press logged no results. This includes the leading tabloid newspaper in terms of sales- *The Daily Sun*. The highest number of articles was found in the Afrikaans press, specifically *Rapport*, followed by *Beeld* and then the *Mail & Guardian* (**See Table E** in the next chapter on Findings).

Articles that were relevant to the study, which were text-based and shared the formality of print arguments, but not in "strict" print form, were also found in two websites namely, *Monsters and Critics* and *Buzzle.com*. I have chosen to refer to articles in these online news providers because I want to highlight the scope and breadth of the debates surrounding the Native Club. A brief description of *Monsters and Critics* is that it is a news and review website. It has topics like movie reviews and politics. It allows visitors to comment on news related topics. It is an international website, based in Glasgow, UK and Hamburg, Germany respectively (Wikipedia; accessed 15 June 2006). *Buzzle.com* is also mainly a news website with various authors and contributors whom it describes as "*our Intelligent Life on the Web*". In this study these two (*Monsters and Critics* and *Buzzle.com*) will be classified as "other text-based" media forms.

3.2.1 Publication Profiles

An important element for me in the research, drawn from debates about access to the public sphere, was the question of which spaces intellectual activity takes place in. In other words, which people or communities or publics are engaged in the discussion and whether certain communities are silent on these issues in the media? For this reason, I decided to take "publication profiling" as the next step of my research. Understanding the readership and circulation demographics of each publication also helped provide insight into who these publications understand their readers to be. For this publication profiling I once again used the 2006 AMPS from SAARF.

What is immediately evident and interesting to note is that the newspapers in which articles were found, fall into the higher Living Standard Measurement (LSM), categories, in other words, more affluent audiences. These are also newspapers with large circulation

figures, particularly among the well educated. This is supported by the data from SAARF's 2006 AMPS. The websites I referred to however, are not LSM ranked but a few markers suggest that they cater for literate audiences interested in critical intellectual engagement. An example is the pay-off line of *Buzzle.com*- "our intelligent life on the web" and the name of the website *Monsters and **Critics***. The table below illustrates the readership and LSM profile of the newspapers in which articles about the Native Club were found.

Table B. Newspaper profile

Name of Publication	Readership	Reader LSM
Beeld	**404 000**	**7-10**
Business Day	**120 000**	**7-10**
City Press	**1 900 000**	**7-10**
Mail and Guardian	**305 000**	**7-10**
Pretoria News	**97 000**	**3-10**
Rapport	**160 900**	**7-10**
Sunday Times	**3 292 000**	**7-10**
The Star	**618 000**	**6-10**

On the contrary newspapers which were eligible for this research but yielded no results about the Native Club, were in 2006, (with the exception of the *Daily Sun),* listed as having lower readership figures in comparison to the publications listed above and also as being in the lower LSM's, according to data sourced from the SAARF website. They are also all English language press. Whether this is relevant in answering the questions about the understandings of public intellectual life, as reflected and engaged with in the media, will be discussed in the data analysis phase of the study.

3.3 Method of Analysis

After collecting the material, the next step was deciding on the appropriate method of analysis and interpretation, and I decided on thematic content analysis. This approach involves fairly flexible semantic units of analysis such as a word, phrase, sentence or paragraph based on decisions about themes of "meaning" (Wilbraham, 1995). Content analysis was useful for this study because it looks at "manifest content" i.e. content and themes that can easily be agreed on by whoever is reading. Unlike other textual analysis, it does not usually attempt to read "below the surface". The nature of the study allowed me to draw the themes off the articles, rather than pre-define them.

One of the important aspects of the study was tracking which individuals emerged as the key speakers in the public debate. In analyzing the data, I have included a brief biography of the author of each "opinion" article used as data in the study. This is mainly because one of the hotly contested issues around the formation of the Native Club was the question of who is an intellectual and who is not.

In analyzing articles, certain key categories were used in this study. They were:

- Source of information (who is the author of the article or who is being quoted in the story?). In this category I looked at the race, gender and what status the author used to describe themselves or were described by the publication.
- Theme analysis (these are themes that were identified and noted after a thorough reading of the articles).
- Angle of approach to the article or story (what is the apparent attitude or position of the article or story) i.e. is the article neutral, pro or anti-formation, etc of the Native Club?

By using a qualitative thematic content analysis on the various newspapers, I was able, without computerisation, to analyse and count easily. As mentioned earlier the data used for analysis was selected using referential units. This means all articles about the Native Club, falling within the chosen period of analysis qualified for analysis.

3.4 Strengths and Limitations of Method of Analysis

Interpretative methods of analysis in the form of content analysis were used to study text in this study. Firstly the advantage of these methods is their ability to combine a variety of approaches to analyzing texts. These approaches give insight into the systematic way of analyzing text. Systematic analysis is possible with this technique because a large chunk of this research studied already existing text rather than asking people to produce text.

Like any other method of analysis, interpretative analysis has limitations. This method is subjective and biased towards the researcher. Furthermore every review of text is influenced by the socio-cultural background of the reader and also the text that is being read (Holloway et al, 1999:170-171). Therefore numerous readings of texts are unavoidable within one person or within different readers as they are open to various interpretations.

After collecting the articles and deciding on the appropriate method of analysis, the next step was to do an outline or in other words, map out the chronology of the debate according to how it unfolded throughout the various publications. This allowed me to identify the themes that appeared and note how they were linked to each other, in some cases. It was also while mapping out the debate in chronological order that I noticed that the themes addressed by the various authors were knotted together, which made it difficult to categorise them as single units, which was the initial plan of the study. Nevertheless, I was still able to identify prominent themes. It was during the mapping of the debate that I noticed that some questions arose more than others, for instance, although the question of who is an intellectual featured prominently, compared to questions raised about the link of the Native Club to the presidency, the question of what defines an intellectual appeared to be less important. I also noted at this stage, that the question of who is a Native, featured more prominently than the question of who is an intellectual. In addition, I noted the shape that the debate took, from the first time it entered the media to the last days chosen for the research period.

3.5 The Ensuing Debate

After the search and collection stages a close reading of each media article was done. After reading the articles, at this stage it was crucial that I map out the ensuing debate about the Native Club in chronological order. This helped to answer questions about when and how the Native Club entered the media agenda and stayed there.

The chronological process also gave me a basis of what sort of articles related to each other i.e. did some of the authors of articles take their cues from other authors, and across which publications, when responding to the Native Club? This gave me an idea of how public intellectual engagement takes place and in which spaces of the South African media landscape. Creating the chronology involved listing, in chronological order, (using dates) each article that was written about the Native Club from May 3rd 2006 to July 31st 2006. (See **Table C.** below).

Table C. The Ensuing debate

Name of Publication	Language	Date of Publication	Title of Article	Type of Article	Author
Mail & Guardian	English	March 10-16: 2006	*"Where are the Natives? The black intelligentsia today"*	Advertisement	**Native Club**
Mail and Guardian	English	May 5-11: 2006	*"Black brainpower"*	Opinion	**Sandile Memela**
Mail & Guardian	English	May 5-11: 2006	*"Where are the black thinkers of the left?"*	Opinion	**Ebrahim Harvey**
Sunday Times	English	May 7: 2006	*"Black intelligentsia stirs unease"*	News Report	**Xolani Xundu**
Rapport	Afrikaans	May 14: 2006	*"A brotherhood for Africans"*	Opinion	**Tim Du Plessis**
Beeld	Afrikaans	May 16:2006	*"Native Club:Mbeki must explain"*	News Report	**Jan-Jan Joubert**
Beeld	Afrikaans	May 17:2006	*"Racism?"*	Editorial Comment	**Editorial**
Beeld	Afrikaans	May 19:2006	*"A Club straight out of Apartheid"*	Editorial Comment	**Editorial**
Mail & Guardian	English	May 19-25: 2006	*"Natives are regrouping"*	Opinion	**John Matshikiza**

City Press	English	May 21: 2006	*"Native Club will help us become better Africans."*	Editorial Comment	**Editorial**
City Press	English	May 21:2006	*"Native Club was formed to redress imbalances of the past"*	Opinion	**Titus Mafolo**
Sunday Times	English	May 28: 2006	*"Native Club a dangerous move to deflect attention from state failings"*	Opinion	**Professor Jonathan Jansen**
Rapport	Afrikaans	June 4:2006	*"NP leaders govern from the grave"*	Opinion	**Z. Venter**
Rapport	Afrikaans	June 4:2006	*"Any means to curb Zumafication"*	Opinion	**Koos Kombuis**
Rapport	Afrikaans	June 4:2006	*"Jordan defends Native Club"*	News Report	**Heindrich Wyngaard**
Business Day	English	June 12: 2006	*"Is the Native Club another Broederbond?"*	Opinion	**Rhoda Khadalie and Julia Bertelsman**
Buzzle.com	English	June 15:2006	*"South Africa's 'native club' stirs unease"*	Editorial	**Editorial**
Monsterandcritics.com	English	June 16:2006	*"South African divided over merit of Native Club"*	News feature	**Bennita van Eyssen**
City Press	English	June 18:2006	*"Native Club is not a black Broederbond"*	Opinion	**Sam Ratithlalo**
Mail & Guardian	English	June 23-29:2006	*"Exclusive Evita joins Native Club"*	Opinion	**Gogo Evita Bezuidenhout (Peter Dirk Uys)**
Sunday Times	English	June 25:2006	*"Each group must heal itself of racism's wounds"*	Opinion	**Professor Herbert Vilakazi**
The Star	English	June 30:2006	*"Lets give the Native Club a chance"*	Opinion	**Edna Molewa**
Mail & Guardian	English	July 7-13:2006	*"The Native Club versus the status quo"*	Opinion	**Mandisi Majavu**
Business Day	English	July 10:2006	*"Native Club 'not president's project'"*	News report	**Wyndham Hartley**
City Press	English	July 23: 2006	*"The Native Club needs to bat for Afrocentricity"*	Opinion	**Professor Marcus Ramogale**
Mail &Guardian	English	July 31:2006	*"Presidency official free to join the Native Club"*	News report	**Author Unknown**

News of the formation of the Native Club first emerged through an advertisement in the *Mail & Guardian*, where a call for papers was made. The advert advertised the launch of the Club on May 3rd 2006 (**see Appendix 1**). Part of the advert titled, "*Where are the Natives? The black intelligentsia today"*, read;

> The term intelligentsia holistically refers to home-grown/local/native African intellectuals, meaning those who use their intellectual prowess to further the interests of their people…and the department of Arts and Culture are hosting a conference, the purpose of which is to provide a platform for home-grown thinkers/intellectuals to exchange ideas on this timely noble cause.

Before the Native Club debate ensued, the advertisement had already introduced areas of potential conflict, in this case questions about the definition and the role of intellectuals. These provocative phrases and terms include "home-grown/local/native African intellectuals…"

The *Mail & Guardian* (May 5 to 11 2006 edition) then took up the issue by running two big articles to fill one whole page in the *Comment and Analysis* section. The first article was authored by Sandile Memela from the department of Arts and Culture. This article, *"Black Brainpower"* explicitly advocated for the existence of the Native Club, and the justification was that it could be an alternative public sphere where issues could be debated because the media had become a hostile place, according to Memela. In addition, Memela justified the existence of the Club by saying certain or "so-called" intellectuals had abused the media space, which is critical for public debate, by using it to criticise the government at every opportunity. The article also labelled specific individuals negatively, calling them "coconut" intellectuals who are "black outside and white inside" and always against government policy and stance. These according to Memela comprised Xolela Mangcu, Sipho Seepe, Rhoda Kadalie, Vuyo Mbuli, Tim Modise, Console Tleane, Themba Sono and Aubrey Matshiqi amongst others. Memela also explicitly said these intellectuals whom he calls "celebrity public-opinion makers" and "dial-a-quote intellectuals" think they are more intellectual than others simply because they are given a lot of space in newspaper columns and other media **(see Appendix 2).**

Memela's article appeared alongside one by Ebrahim Harvey's *"Where are the Black thinkers of the left?"* This article acknowledged the need for intellectuals of colour to participate widely in public debate, saying, "Black poverty and unemployment are still at alarmingly high levels, and the resultant social crisis demands much greater black intellectual involvement". However, what's worth noting is that Harvey used the term "black" rather than "native" to refer to such intellectuals. Harvey also emphasised the importance of these black intellectuals to be independent thinkers rather than toe a certain party line "We urgently need black intellectuals whose horizons are not constrained or compromised by party political loyalties, and who can boldly confront elitist domination and the neo-liberal policies" (**see Appendix 2).**

Two days after Memela's article, and four days after the launch of the club, a news report written by journalist Xolani Xundu was published in the *Sunday Times* dated May 7 2006. This report, like most of the hard news articles written by journalists, reported on the various reactions of people to the launch of the club. It focused on giving the varying views made by attendees of the launch, and some of the presentations made by those who attended the launch. Some of the participants, according to the report, questioned the role of the intellectual and where they should position themselves whilst fulfilling that role. Briefly, *"Black intelligentsia stirs*" highlighted the complexities of public intellectual engagement that had been stirred by the launch of the Native Club (**see Appendix 3).**

Responses to the formation of the Club started coming in through the Afrikaans press only a week later (after the launch), the first one appearing in the *Rapport.* This 'delayed" response to the formation of the Native Club suggests that Afrikaans media like the *Rapport*, may have picked up the debate from other media like the *Mail & Guardian*, rather than having been informed of the launch by the club.

The first article in the *Rapport* came in the form of an opinion piece by Tim Du Plessis, an editor at *Rapport* who described himself as an Afrikaans media veteran. In the opening paragraphs of "*A brotherhood for Africans"*, Du Plessis raised concern about the exclusivity of the Native Club, its link to the presidency and its choice of using the term "native" to label itself. He said"A whole bunch of people are up in arms because

president Thabo Mbeki's political advisor took the initiative to open a club exclusively for African intelligentsia…the Native Club is the idea of Mr. Titus Mafolo, or Mr. Mbeki's for all we know, as it is exclusively for black Africans...even though blacks are the only South African group that can claim African status, a Native Club for white people is strictly forbidden". He added that, "For minister Alec Erwin, an intelligent cabinet member, former trade-union activist and passionate struggle intellectual, are those Native Club doors shut?...in the Native Club it doesn't matter how well you can think or how articulate you are, race and skin colour hold sway". To emphasise this point, Du Plessis likened the Native Club to the infamous Afrikaner Broederbond (Brotherhood), which was criticised for its racial discrimination (**see Appendix 4).**

Jan-Jan Joubert's *"Native Club: Mbeki must explain"*, (*Beeld*, May 16, 2006) sees the Native Club debate enter the corridors of the national parliament. This article was a hard news story, which also reported reactions to the launch of the club. The article centred around the intentions of the official political opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA) to question then president Mbeki, in parliament, about his alleged involvement in the formation of the club. The article then pin-pointed the main areas of contention about the club including the implications of its racial exclusivity with the use of the word "Native" as well its source of funding/ perceived link to the presidency (**see Appendix 5).**

The following day (May, 17 2006) *Beeld* carried an editorial comment which referred to the previous day's story about the DA's intentions to question the president about the newly launched Native Club. *"Racism"* questioned the motive of "this blacks only" Club particularly since the South African constitution states that everybody is equal and will not be racially excluded. It also questioned the criteria used in accepting academic qualifications of eligible members i.e. who qualifies to be called an intellectual? (**see Appendix 6).**

In the May 19-25 2006 edition of the *Mail & Guardian*, the late John Matshikiza, a playwright and newspaper columnist, interrogated the relevance of the term "native" in

describing the club and especially in the new South Africa. "Didn't we struggle so that natives could stop being called "natives" and get butter on their bread? Apparently that is a non-issue. The issue nowadays is that you have to earn the right to be a native". In his article *"Natives are regrouping"*, which appeared in the *Comment and Analysis* section, he also noted the apparent exclusion of some intellectuals based on what the club had used to define the intellectuals that should belong to it. "…he like me and all the other dinosaur friends, including the venerable Esk'ia Mphahlele, had not been invited to join the Native Club, in spite of his interesting credentials, and in spite of his visibly intellectual, black native hide". Matshikiza also took issue about what defined an intellectual saying "…according to well-placed self-proclaimed intellectuals of the new dispensation, the whole struggle about refusing to be treated like a native has been turned on its head. Nowadays, to be a native is cool" (**see Appendix 7).**

The perceived (racial) exclusivity of the Native Club, the implications of this, and its links to the presidency continued to be a constant feature in articles to follow. In "*A Club straight out of Apartheid",* an editorial in the *Beeld* May 19 2006, it was noted that it seems that the club is a "secret" organisation, reminiscent of Apartheid era's Afrikaner Broederbond. In noting the "dangers" of the Club the editorial mentioned that a realistic reaction or counter to it, would be for Whites and even Indians and Coloureds to form their own race-based organisations, which would be strictly for them, marking a return to Apartheid and this would be sad because this is exactly what South Africans were trying to escape when they held democratic elections in 1994. The editorial noted "Maybe a Settlers club, San Club, what else? Living together was probably jumping the gun, this will take some time to get over, so let's not divide our people". This editorial based some of its responses about the Native Club on what it called "Sunday newspapers". At this point, Sunday newspapers that had carried articles about the club are the *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* (**see Appendix 8).**

The *City Press* carried its first article after the launch of the Native Club on May 21st 2006. *"Native Club will help us become better Africans"* was an editorial comment which called on South Africans to give the club a chance to pursue its goals and referred

to the forum as a "positive development" which was "trying to find useful gems from the past and build new knowledge on them" and that "those tasked with taking the Native Club forward will not be deterred by noises they should not bother about". In emphasising its arguments for the existence of the club, the editorial, in its opening paragraph, made reference to an article that had been earlier written by Ali Mazrui, whom it described as a "renowned African intellectual and writer", who wrote "about how African intellectuals and elites have failed this continent" and adding that the Native Club "…comes at a time when African intellectuals are asserting themselves". The editorial also addressed the issues raised around the definition of an intellectual that had been earlier raised by various authors in other publications. The *City Press* said, "We can differ on the definition of an intellectual or the intelligentsia, but we should remain committed to doing the right thing for ourselves and generations to come" (**see Appendix 9).**

In the same edition of the *City Press* (May 21, 2006) an opinion article by one of the founders of club Titus Mafolo appeared under the headline *"Native Club formed to redress imbalances of the past"*. This article, as its headline suggests, also argued in favour of the formation of the club. Mafolo said "those who belong to exclusive clubs use them to empower each other, network, share ideas and help one another to maintain their dominance over society". Although the debate about the club had erupted across all media especially with regards to its choices of name, interestingly Mafolo did not address this to a large extent and largely used metaphors to illustrate the need for the Native Club to be focused primarily on black intellectuals. "Of course, there are whites who don't belong to these groups and are not only opposed to the dominant neo-liberal ideology that drives many within this sector of our society, but are leading committed members of organisations that seek true transformation. However, it would be folly to use them as a standard bearer of the beliefs, behaviour, attitudes and world outlook of the majority of our white compatriots". In addition, at the end of the article Mafolo called on "all shades of intelligentsia…to engage this great challenge" (**see Appendix 10).**

After first covering the Native Club in the form of a hard news report, the *Sunday Times* had its first opinion piece published almost a month after the launch of the club on May 28th 2006. Professor Jonathan Jansen's *"Native Club a dangerous move to deflect attention from state failings"* dismissed the formation of the club and likened it to the Afrikaner Broederbond, and said the club promoted black-nationalism and looked dangerous because of its apparent link to power i.e. the presidency. "Both gained political prominence when their race held political power and have fuelled support through explosive rhetoric about racial marginalisation. Like the Broederbond, the Native Club has direct encouragement from, and connections to state power. Herein lies the danger". In addition to pointing out the racially exclusive nature of the Native Club, Jansen, the Dean of Education and Professor of Curriculum Studies at the University of Pretoria, also probed the academic credentials or basis on which people could be accepted as intellectuals giving support to arguments raised by some of those who contributed to the media debate about the club like the late John Matshikiza. The professor also questioned the role of particularly black intellectuals in South Africa saying, "Where, in this racially charged environment, does the responsibility of the black academics lie?" (**see Appendix 11).**

The issue of the Native Club being seen as a racist forum remained the core of the debate as was also addressed by Z. Venter in *"NP leaders govern from the grave"* (*Rapport*, June 4 2006). Like some of the opinion writers above, Venter likened the Native Club to the Afrikaner Broederbond which he said "did immeasurable damage before the winds of change made it obsolete. How much damage will the Native Club cause before history reckons with it?" Venter also likened former president Mbeki's administration (which he explicitly fingers for spearheading the formation of the club) to that of apartheid National Party stalwarts; D.F Malan, Hans Strijdom, Hendrik Verwoerd and John Vorster. Venter's main argument was the issue of race always being a dividing factor in South Africa and how Mbeki had consistently promoted racial segregation, the latest move being the creation of the Native Club. Venter asked, "And this new baby of Mbeki's? A Native Club (black brotherhood). It shows exactly how deep the ANC drank from Verwoerd's bottle and how racism makes them walk two sets of tracks." Venter's article

made some reference to an earlier article by Tim Du Plessis in the *Rapport* (May 21 2006) (**see Appendix 12).**

"*Any means to curb Zumafication*?"(*Rapport* June 4 2006) was an opinion piece by Koos Kombus. The piece highlighted the ironies of having an exclusive club in the democratic South Africa and said the Native Club smacks of colonialism and reminds many South Africans that Botha's legacy of racial discrimination lived on- in then president Mbeki, whom it was widely believed was involved in the creation of the forum (**see Appendix 13).**

The debate about the Native Club continued to feature prominently in the *Rapport* on June 4 2006 with Heindrich Wyngaard's *"Jordan defends Native Club"*. This article by the political editor of the *Rapport* was a hard news report detailing the response by Arts and Culture minister Dr. Pallo Jordan, whose portfolio was also widely believed to have funded the club. Dr. Jordan had been questioned during his budget speech in parliament. He was quoted as having said the Native Club was not exclusive to blacks. He asked, "Has anyone read the constitution of the Native Club that says so-and-so can't participate in the group?" Dr. Jordan further added that even if the club was exclusive to black people, he did not see why there was so much hysteria over it as the Native Club was just another way that South Africans could exercise their right to freedom of association, just like the Jewish people had done with the creation of the Jewish Board of Directors that permits only Jews and "the Afrikanerbond which still exists". Jordan was quoted "Why is it such a bad thing when black people stand together whilst there are plenty of specific groupings?" At the end, the article highlighted some of the public criticisms (made through the media) levelled against the club so far (**see Appendix 14).**

Human rights activist Rhoda Khadalie and her daughter Julia Bertelsmann's *"Is the Native Club another Broedorbond?"* in the *Business Day* (June 12 2006) credited the club for some of its objectives, but like Matshikiza, raised concern that apart from racial exclusivity which goes against the ruling party's policy of non-racialism and non-sexism, some black intellectuals were by default not eligible to become members of the club

because, in previous debates, they had already been labelled "coconuts" just because they were always seen to be criticising the government. Khadalie and Bertelsmann agreed that intellectual activity was somehow necessary in society, and to an extent belonging to an intellectual body where debate can be facilitated is a good endeavour but stated that the position of intellectuals as outlined by the Native Club was also a concern. They questioned the link of the Native Club to the presidency as one of its key founders was based there as well as the wide belief that some of its funds came from the government. Khadalie and Bertelsmann also took issue with the use of the term "native" saying if it was meant to "...liberate all its black members, then the title may signify progress" but added that "if it is meant to be exclusive, then it needs to be condemned in the strongest of terms"(**see Appendix 15).**

By mid-June the debate had spread beyond the mainstream newspapers into the web. The first article appeared as a news feature on a private website, *Buzzle.com*, published on June 15th 2006 under the heading "*South Africa's 'Native Club' stirs unease*". This article highlighted the key areas of debate about the formation of the Native club including its racial exclusivity, the use of the term "native", its similarities with the Afrikaner Broederbond and its apparent links to the presidency and government. (**see Appendix 16).** A day later another private website (*Monstersandcritics*) published a news feature about the club under the heading "*South Africans divided over merit of the Native Club*". This article also re-capped the prominent issues of the debate about the new forum by mapping out how the debate started and where it was so far, with reference made to articles in other newspapers (**see Appendix 17).**

Whilst the earliest debate in some of the newspapers, particularly the Afrikaans press, spoke against the formation of the club, the *City Press* up to this point seemed to carry mostly articles that advocated for the existence of the Native Club. In the *Opinion* page of *City Press'*s June 18th 2006 edition *"Native Club is not a black Broedorbond*", the author Sam Ratithlalo campaigned for the existence of the club saying it was unfair to liken it to the Afrikaner Brotherhood. Like some of the club's founders, Ratithlalo's argument was that it was about time that Africans assumed leadership in the area of

information and education. A self-confessed member of the Native Club, the author, an employee of the University of Cape Town, also took a swipe at the media, particularly print media (except for the *City Press*) whom he insinuated had not fully transformed as their reporting on the activities of the Native Club seemed to be biased against its existence. Unlike some who had queried the use of the term "native", Ratithlalo questioned the use of the term "club" saying it had reason to raise uncertainty about the forum's intentions. He suggested that this be revised, to perhaps "Natives Crossing" (**see Appendix 18).**

Outspoken satirist, playwright, entertainer and novelist, Pieter-Dirk Uys joined the debate with *"Exclusive Evita joins Native Club",* published in the *Mail & Guardian* (23-29 June 2006). Written under Uys' character Evita Bezuidenhout, *"Exclusive Evita joins Native Club"* was a satirical piece that addressed the exclusive nature (racially and intellectually) and objectives of the club, as pronounced by its founders where Evita writes "I was thrilled to be invited by the chairperson Titus Mafolo to join the Native Club. I said: 'But I'm not black'. He said: 'No Evita you're a white Afrikaner racist' I said: 'Not a racist, Titus, just a citizen.' He laughed. I said: 'But do you see me as an intellectual?' He said 'no'". The article also addressed the complexities of democracy by, for instance, highlighting the thin line between the right to freedom of association and discrimination. "…I know that to many, a blacks-only thing sounds terribly familiar, but in a democratic multiracial society, we have the right to decide. Jews choose their Kosher-only clubs; Muslims choose their halaal-only mosques, while gays choose their *slegs-pienk-en-leer* bars." Although this article was written in the form of a letter to the editor, it was used as part of this research because it appeared in the *Comment and Analysis* page of the newspaper (**see Appendix 19).**

In *"Each group must heal itself of racism's wounds",* (*Sunday Times* June 25 2006) Professor Herbert Vilakazi, a sociologist in the office of the KwaZulu-Natal premier, hailed the formation of the Native Club and stated that he thought every racial or ethnic group in South Africa needed its own "club" in order to reinforce and maintain its identity. The professor defended this statement by saying it was impossible for all

citizens in the country to expect that one body could address their emotional, spiritual and intellectual deformations and therefore the Native Club was important as it represented and provided a platform of expression for the needs of black intellectuals (**see Appendix 20).**

The premier of the North-West, Edna Molewa, also gave her opinion on the formation of the Native Club in *"Let's give the Native Club a chance"* (The *Star,* June 30 2006). As the headline of her opinion piece suggests, Molewa advocated for the club, saying many of those who have given negative criticism about it in the media based their responses on hearsay as they did not attend any of the club's activities. In addition, the premier, who wrote in her personal capacity, re-emphasised the objectives of the club as a body that sought to balance the past where the white people still contributed and controlled the lion's share of information production. Using such arguments, Molewa dismissed the escalating criticism of the club as a racially exclusive forum (**see Appendix 21).**

"The Native Club versus the status quo", (*Mail & Guardian* July 7-13 2006) is also an opinion piece, initially presented at a Native Club conference in May by Cape Town-based cultural critic Mandisi Majavu. The focus of his article was that black intellectuals needed to counter the current status quo with regards to information production, which the author said still lay largely in the hands of white people. Majavu stated openly that he supported the initiative of the Native Club but added that there was one negative element to it, and that was its political backing from the government (**see Appendix 22).**

"*Native Club: not president's project*" is a hard news report by Wyndham Hartley, which appeared in the *Business Day* on July 10th 2006. The article narrates parliament proceedings where the DA had questioned then president Mbeki about his involvement in the club and where Mbeki had distanced himself from it. Mbeki had been questioned during a debate on his budget vote. MP Pieter Mulder of the Freedom Front Plus, said white African natives would not leave the country, and the DA's Sydney Opperman expressed concern that the Native Club was being funded by the presidency and said that taxpayers' money should not be used on racially exclusive projects, while Koos van der

Merwe of Inkatha Freedom Party said he was happy to be a native of South Africa. Mbeki is quoted as having responded to them in these words, starting with Opperman "who clearly has problems with the Native Club and, for whatever reason, seems to have decided, quite wrongly, that this interesting initiative of the black intelligentsia is the property of the president of the republic. In this regard, like Koos van der Merwe, I am happy that I too am a native of South Africa".The article mentioned that former President Mbeki distanced himself from the Native Club and criticised its racial exclusivity, saying that he hoped that white Afrikaners would also be found in the club. From this article one picks up that in addition to racial exclusivity, the perceived link of the club to the presidency remained a large part of the debate at this stage (**see Appendix 23).**

Although the amount of media articles about the Native Club across the various newspapers was dwindling at this stage, the *City Press* stayed on with the debate with the publication of another article in its July 23rd 2006 edition. The article "*The Native Club needs to bat for Afrocentricity*" was in the form of an opinion piece by Professor Marcus Ramogale, deputy vice-chancellor (Academic affairs and Research) of the University of Venda. His opinion was that the Native Club was a good initiative, which would level the knowledge field as statistics showed that a majority of information production lay in the minority of white hands. However, Professor Ramogale warned the founders and members of the Native Club to be cautious not to present their views as the only "truth" (**see Appendix 24).**

The last article came through the *Mail & Guardian* as a hard news report. *"Presidency official free to join Native Club"* was a response by then deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, clarifying the link made between Mbeki's political advisor Titus Mafolo and the Native Club. In this article the fundamentals of democracy as allowing for various forms of freedom including freedom of association were highlighted as Mlambo-Ngcuka was quoted saying "Regarding Titus Mafolo, he is an employee of the presidency and he is free to join any organisation of his choice as a citizen". The former deputy president was responding to a question in the National Assembly from a DA member of parliament (**see Appendix 25).**

CHAPTER 4

4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1.1 Presentation of Data and Analysis

In attempting to answer the primary question of how the media engaged intellectuals and intellectual activity with the formation of the Native Club, I sought to probe firstly how the club got into the media agenda and subsequently what issues were raised in debates about the Native Club. This chapter of the study outlines and analyses the findings arising from the questions asked by this research**.**

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the methods I intended to use to collect data was to interview the key players in the founding of the Native Club. These interviews would help answer primarily questions about how the issue of the Native Club entered the media agenda, and how it stayed there. However, in our interview, Sandile Memela, who was portrayed in the media as being at the forefront of the club's existence, categorically denied that he was an official member of the Club, and said "Yes, I did write in its defence to amplify on the need for such an intellectual initiative, but I was not in any way involved in its planning, launch or its media campaign". On the other hand, in a telephonic discussion with the researcher, Titus Mafolo who was also the political advisor to former President Thabo Mbeki agreed to answer the questions via email. However he failed to respond to the questions which were first sent to him on June 5, 2007.

In a further attempt to answer the question of whether a communication strategy was used to put the forum on the media agenda, I asked the editor-in-chief of the *Mail & Guardian* Fariel Hafajee. However she said she was not the editor then and referred me to the then editor and now editor of the *Sunday Times*, Mondli Makhanya, who unfortunately did not come back to me with regards to the question raised.

Therefore, without answers from the key players involved in the formation of the Native Club, and the editors of the *Mail & Guardian*, it was difficult to answer the question of whether a communication strategy was used to put the forum on the media agenda. However, it appears, by following the chronology of appearance of media articles, that the forum, as mentioned in previous chapters, made its first public appearance through an advertisement in the *Mail & Guardian* (March, 2006).

With regards to the information retrieved from print media, a total of 32 articles were sourced and reviewed from various mainstream South African English and Afrikaans newspapers and other text-based media forms. Although they were not used as part of the analysis in the study, letters to the editor made up the larger number of items found in the Afrikaans press. Most of the articles found and reviewed came in during the month of June, a few weeks after the launch of the Native Club (See **Table D.**)

Table D. Articles ranked by month selected for study.

Month	Time Period	Number of articles
May 2006	03-31	11
June 2006	01-30	15
July 2006	01-30	6
Total		32

Table E. Articles ranked by source (Newspaper/Other text-based media)

Name of Publication	Language	Number of Articles
Beeld	Afrikaans	4
Business day	English	2
City Press	English	4
Daily Sun	English	0
Mail & Guardian	English	6
Pretoria News	English	0

Rapport	Afrikaans	10
Sowetan	English	0
Sunday Times	English	3
The Star	English	1
Other text-based media	English	2

As illustrated in **Table E**. above, most of the articles relating to the launch of the Native Club were found in the Afrikaans newspapers; *Rapport* had the highest number, with the *Mail & Guardian* (an English newspaper) having the second highest number of articles found about the Club. In the English press, most of the articles were found in weekly national newspapers. *Rapport,* in which the highest number of articles was found, is a weekly Afrikaans newspaper, distributed nationally with a readership of 160 900 people per day. The *Mail & Guardian* on the other hand is a weekly newspaper distributed nationally with a readership of 305 000 people per day (AMPS 2006). The newspapers' readership as shown by the AMPS 2006 survey ranges between LSM 7-10. According to the way LSM's are categorised, this reflects that people who read these newspapers are highly literate and affluent members of society. No reports were found in national dailies like the *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun* and their sister weekly publications the *Sunday World* and *Sunday Sun* respectively, so debate about the Native Club was not covered in these papers during the research period. Notably these are newspapers that have a readership ranking in the lower LSMs as compared to those in which articles about the Native Club were found. The *Daily Sun* for instance is in the LSM 1-4 category (AMPS 2006). These are also newspapers whose primary readership is classified as "black people". The ignorance by *Sowetan* and *Daily Sun* of the Native Club raises questions for further research on why some media producers ignored coverage of the Club. Could it be that media producers do not perceive their readership, which is in the lower LSM and black, to be disinterested in intellectual activity? This finding also speaks to what was discussed in the Literature review section of the study, as posited by Fraser (1991), that in stratified societies where relations are structured on the basis of dominance and subordination, equal participation in public debate and deliberation is not possible.

Although searches for articles about the Native Club were not found in some of the national and provincial weekly newspapers like the *Pretoria News*, *The Saturday Star*, and others, the fact that there were at least 32 articles found shows that there was an interest from certain sectors of the media in covering questions of current intellectual engagement.

4.1.2 Themes addressed

After mapping out the debate in chronological order I attempted to identify the recurrent or prominent themes of contention as well as establishing who speaks and in what capacity. However this proved rather challenging because the issues addressed by the various speakers were tangled-up as the authors addressed more than one theme in their writings. This reveals the intricacies of the issues brought up in debates about the Native Club and intellectual activity as a whole. However, it is important to note that one of the issues that arose consistently and prominently in the articles was the perceived exclusivity of the Native Club. This was both in terms of race and the "type" of intellectuals preferred to join the club. The club's motive and the position from which those intellectuals spoke, particularly since it was linked to the presidency, was also a major area of concern for many who participated in the debate. What was also a constant feature were the comparisons made by various authors of the socio-political conditions South Africans have lived in, pre and post-apartheid. Most of those who opposed the establishment of the Native Club seemed to agree that nothing had changed as initiatives like the Native Club reinforced racial discrimination. Various authors who dismissed the club likened it to the Afrikaner Broederbond.

The second key issue that arose prominently was the definition of what constitutes an "intellectual". However, it is important to note that debates raised around this issue did not centre so much around the popular and public ideas of what an intellectual is, but they centred around the criteria used by the Native Club to accept members into the forum, as the club had provided its own definition of the concept "intellectual" by calling for "black" and "home-grown" thinkers. Matshikiza (*Mail & Guardian* May 19th-25th 2006)

for instance noted "…like me and all the other dinosaur friends, including the venerable Esk'ia Mphahlele, had not been invited to join the Native Club, in spite of his interesting credentials, and in spite of his visibly intellectual, black native hide"(**See Appendix 7**)

Mapping out the chronology of the debate also revealed an issue that has always been fiercely contested in global debates about intellectuals; their position in society and who they serve or should serve. The popular and global idea about the position of intellectuals as supported by various scholars like Said (1994:7), Gramsci (1971:5) and Seepe (2004:6) is that they should be in a position where they can challenge authority by "speaking truth to power" and this is largely possible if they are independent of parties and governments. However after careful readings of the media articles chosen for the research, it became apparent that South African intellectuals, like African intellectuals as described by Mkhandawire (2005), continue to grapple with their roles and positioning in society. This analysis strengthens the argument narrated earlier in the Literature Review section of this study by Mkhandawire (2005) about the challenges faced by African intellectuals, where they find that during the struggle for freedom, their political positioning is "clear-cut" as they are part of those who are discussing for the "common good" even though they may hold differing views. But after liberation is attained, it is then that their differing views become louder and end up in conflict with those in power. This is the same position that South African intellectuals formerly of the liberation movement find themselves in, where it looks as if they are "betraying the brotherhood'.

The question of the position of the intellectual pre and post-oppression era proved to be a recurrent theme in a large number of the articles reviewed with some authors praising the formation of the Native Club but at the same time questioning its independence since it is an initiative of the office of the President of South Africa. One school of thought is that intellectuals should not allow themselves to be co-opted to those in power or to toe the party line but instead always seek the truth by raising questions and holding those in power accountable. One of such articles was authored by Rhoda Khadalie and her daughter Julia Bertelsmann under the title "*Is the Native Club another Broederbond*?" published in the *Business Day* (June 12 2006) (**See Appendix 15**)

An analysis of the chronological order of the debate also revealed that the role of the media in public intellectual life has been scrutinized by some authors of the articles reviewed. This is more so against the backdrop of the role that the media should play in democratic South Africa and in line with the transformation agenda. The analysis reveals that, in covering the Native Club, the media fulfilled its principal democratic role as viewed by Liberal theorists, of being the watchdog of society. However, the media only did this to a limited degree. While journalists highlighted the uncomfortable link between the presidency and the Native Club, they failed to probe or make it clear to the reader what this link meant. What journalists did in their reports was merely write articles based on responses by politicians to questions asked about the link of the presidency to the launch of the club. This finding tells us that the media did not satisfactorily live up to fulfilling its obligation as a tool for change, debate and participatory democracy.

After mapping out the debate in chronological order, I sought to establish the positioning of the articles by their placement in the newspapers. Arranging the articles in this manner helped answer agenda-setting questions-about the kind of prominence given to the subject of the Native Club. For this research the more practical way to categorise the articles was to use the publications' own categories and sections. This meant I did not have to use media theories to define the question "what makes news, a feature, opinion etc" as this is not the primary focus of the study. Categorising articles this way helped me to map the various responses by different media. It also helped in reflecting on which publications gave more space to the Native Club as an issue for debate, as opposed to those that simply reported on the initiative as an event. General news practices show that the more important an event is considered to be, the more prominence it is given by a publication. In this study the highest number of articles sourced, were placed in the *Opinion and Analysis* pages of newspapers (see **Table F**.). Such articles were found in notably the *Sunday Times*, *City Press, Business Day*, *Star*, *Rapport* and *Beeld.* This could be a reflection that the articles were written by individuals who were asked to write about the topic and their accounts are generally thought-through critical pieces. The density of articles in this format suggests that the media saw the Native Club as an issue for

discussion rather than a news story. In addition to the density, the diversity of articles could also reflect that the media was interested in diverse "intellectual" views about the implications of the formation of the Native Club.

Editorial comment is sometimes placed on the front page of the newspaper. It is a statement that expresses opinion rather than attempting to simply report news and is collectively, carefully organised and authored by individuals called the editorial board. The editorial comment represents the newspapers' official position on issues. This means that any material that is placed on that spot is held in high importance by the newspaper. Five editorial comments were found during the research period. One was in the English language weekly newspaper *City Press* and three others were found in the daily Afrikaans *Beeld* while the fifth was found in the website *Buzzle.com*. What this finding reveals firstly, is that contemporary South African media is interested in facilitating intellectual debate by taking part in it. Secondly, it tells us that the Native Club was treated as an issue of high importance in the Afrikaans *Beeld* where the highest number of editorials was found. On the other hand publications like the *Sunday Times* which is the best selling weekly newspaper and *Rapport*, which had the highest number of articles reviewed for this study, did not at any point have an editorial comment during the chosen research period. This tells us two things; that the Native Club was not considered sufficiently important for the newspapers to take an official position on or that the *Sunday Times* and *Rapport* preferred to let the intellectual debate play itself out by providing the necessary newspaper space rather than visibly engaging in it.

Of the two articles found in other text-based media, one of them was in feature story format while the other was an editorial. By definition, feature articles are longer, more literary in style and more indepth than news stories. An analysis of the articles found in the feature section of the placement categories reveals once again that the individuals who wrote them had carefully thought them through and have a high understanding of the critical debates around the Native Club.

Table F. Articles ranked by positioning in Newspaper/Other text-based media

Page Format	Number of Articles
Opinion and Analysis	20
Editorial Comment	5
General News	5
Features	2
Total	32

The formation of the Native Club created heated media debate around a number of issues. After doing the chronology of the articles, it became easy to judge from the issues raised by each author, the position of the writer in terms of their view of the Native Club. This to an extent answered questions about who speaks in the media on matters of intellectual activity. The findings reveal that those who responded to the launch and formation of the Native Club ranged from journalists who reported the issue as a news event, to individuals in different fields of expertise. These included academics, political commentators, human rights and cultural activists, musicians and government officials who wrote in their personal capacity. Some journalists also wrote in their personal capacity, and emphasised the seniority of their positions in their individual publications. Categorising articles in this way enabled me to establish where in society intellectual debate takes place.

The highest number of articles sourced fell in the *Opinion and Analysis* category with a mixture of the above mentioned professionals. A closer look at the articles reveals that even those government officials who spoke did so in their personal capacity and their articles were placed in the *Opinion and Analysis* pages of publications. What this tells us is that intellectual engagement in contemporary South Africa is of interest to both the media and those who can be regarded as intellectuals by virtue of their credentials, professional experience and the positions of power they hold in society. An important aspect of these findings is that a significant number of the weekly English language press did not have any coverage of the Native Club during the chosen period. These could be

because these are tabloid newspapers, which are not associated with critical reporting and debate. The readership of these newspapers is generally black and poor.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 CONCLUSION

5.1.1 SA Intellectual (re)defined?

The aim of this research was to investigate the issue of how intellectuals and intellectual activity was engaged in the media, by the formation the Native Club. This was done by analysing mainly newspaper texts, looking at how the Native Club entered public debate and tracking the issues around the reactions and responses to its launch. As noted in the previous chapter, the issues raised by those who responded to the formation of the Native Club were entangled with each other, in other words, the articles tended to deal with a number of themes and issues, sometimes conflating them. For the purposes of this research, I isolated 'strands' of themes that appeared throughout the debate and followed them, before looking at how they related.

One of the principle "issue strands" was the definition of the term "intellectual", which as stated in earlier chapters of the study, was examined not to try to arrive at a theoretical understanding of what constitutes an intellectual, but to track popular and public ideas of what an intellectual is. These definitions were discussed in the second chapter of the study and drawing from the findings of the research, one concludes that ideas about intellectuals in South Africa are in line with global trends, where intellectuals are defined as those deeply involved in books, cultural experts who use their expertise to speak in public, and those who hold titles through the kind of professional occupations they hold such as journalists, lawyers etc.

However, some intellectuals as illustrated by the Native Club still feel that the South African intellectual, like the African intellectual, needs to have a "local" definition of who they are. So, in probing the issues around intellectuals, one can conclude that questions around who and what an intellectual is, featured less prominently than the question of who and what a "native" or "home-grown" intellectual is, as stated by the Native Club. This contestation clearly revealed that race still features prominently as an

issue for debate in intellectual life as it does in broader societal debates. The issue of race was re-emphasised by some authors who wrote in favour of the formation of the club, by labelling other (black) intellectuals as "coconuts", simply because they did not seem to support a role that the Native Club saw fit to support i.e. backing government. Drawing from this, one can conclude that being of a black race was no guarantee for one to be a member of the club and that race by itself was not enough to guarantee "nativeness", but a certain kind of loyalty is required. This exclusion of some intellectuals even though they qualified, through their academic credentials and by virtue of being black, highlighted the broader exclusivity of the club; its lack of open access and therefore raising questions about the forums motive; is it really a space where private individuals can deliberate for the "common good"?

5.1.2 Role of the SA Intellectual

As noted in the findings, attempts to redefine the local intellectual subsequently unearthed questions about the role that they should play in society. In the case of the Native study the debate around the role of intellectuals was evidently crucial because of the forum's rumoured link to the office of the president. This debate supported global trends which have been in existence for years, where various authors are in agreement that the intellectual's role is to "speak truth to power" rather than be seen to be co-opted to those in power. It also supports studies of intellectual activity in Africa, where it has been noted that African intellectuals grapple with their position in society because of the history of their positioning in communities, which in most cases has been as part of the liberation struggles. The conclusion here is that South Africa is no different. During apartheid the position of specifically black intelligentsia was clear-cut, where they supported the struggle for the freedom of black people from white rule. But upon the demise of apartheid this has proved to be a challenge as those who continue to question and speak truth to the black government are seen to be sell-outs or labelled such names as "coconuts" or "celebrity" intellectuals.

With this revelation one can also conclude that in the post-apartheid intellectual debate, being black is no longer relevant in terms of providing clarity on the position that one

speaks from. Instead what seems to matter most is how clearly an intellectual defines their position when it comes to speaking for or against the government or those in power. The alleged link between the Native Club and the presidency will continue to cause conflict amongst many intellectuals because according to various scholars, "speaking truth to power" is impossible if one is co-opted into the government or toes the party line.

5.1.3 Intellectual life a space apart

Looking at this diverse structuring of intellectual life, it is clear that prevailing images of intellectual life tend to abstract it from relationships, conversations, feelings, and histories. The very attempt to discuss intellectual life can be perceived as an attempt to lay a burden of judgement and intellectual aspirations may be culturally marked as a betrayal of one's group, for example as "acting white" i.e. coconut. As discussed above the issue of grouping in Africa and particularly in South Africa has been complicated by history. Although there is some sort of acknowledgement among several of the authors whose texts were analysed in this study, that intellectual life requires a safe space, which can be among the like-minded, this is complicated by the history embedded in the life of intellectuals in their space as individuals. Several authors drew similarities between the function of the Native Club and that of the Afrikaner Broederbond, saying both were believed to be linked to the ruling government and both prioritised participation in these forums based primarily on race and ethnicity, an attempt which resulted in discrimination and promotion of their own needs and interests rather than fulfil the objectives of bringing the like-minded with similar backgrounds to discuss "for the common good". From this revelation, the conclusion that can be made is that intellectual life is diverse and it will always be embedded in history because, as argued by Warner (2002), intellectuals are firstly individuals who must first consider the understanding of oneself, which in turn influences their collective consciousness and their participation in collective spaces as they engage in debates for the "common good" which can be said to be made up of mostly their own interests and needs as posited by Fraser's theory of the public sphere . In addition, from this finding, the conclusion can be made that division among intellectuals is inevitable because intellectuals are to some extent a separate

society, and when they live by one another's judgements the divide between them is enlarged.

5.2 Notion of the Public Sphere

5.2.1 Role of the Media in Public deliberation

The core theoretical framework of the study was really the notion that the media should be an open forum for public debate and discussion, which is derived from Habermas's notion of the public sphere. As outlined in the first chapter of the study, in post-apartheid South Africa the idea of the media as vehicles of public debate, has been vigorously mobilised to reshape the political landscape. The conclusion that can be made about mainstream journalistic vehicles is that the South African media operated as if they were part of a public sphere as described by Habermas. The media fulfilled their role of providing factual, accurate and comprehensive news reports, through opinion columns and commentary which allowed citizens to widely participate in the dialogue about the Native Club. The media, in line with agenda-setting theories, was also able to tell its readers what to think about through editorials in the various publications. The *City Press* for instance, through its first editorial about the Native Club *("Native Club will help us become better Africans")*, not only raised the existence of the club as an issue that the public should think of, but also suggested a way of looking at the forum, which it described as a "positive development" that is "trying to find useful gems from the past and build new knowledge on them". It seems this angle of approach from the editors of the *City Press* may have prompted the influx of contributions which were all in favour of the formation of the Native club, in following editions of the newspaper. The same can be said for the editorials published in early May in the Afrikaans newspaper *Beeld* ("*Racism*") and ("*A Club straight out of Apartheid")*. These editorials may have been the result of the eruption of opinion pieces, which came through in both the *Beeld* and *Rapport* which come from the same media stable- Media24.

The intense interest and engagement of the media, particularly in setting the public agenda, also signifies that intellectual activity is an important issue for the media. The

study concludes that in fulfilling these above mentioned roles, the South African media was also able to fulfil its role of being a tool for change and being a promoter of participatory democracy as emphasised by the new government (post-apartheid).

5.2.2 Native Club: A Counter/Alternative Public sphere?

What was very clear even in the initial stages of the ensuing debate about the Native Club was the positioning of the forum. Some of those who had been said to be involved with the formation of the club like Sandile Memela had presented it as in opposition to the mainstream media, where Memela, in luring members to the forum stated in "*Black Brainpower*" (**see Appendix 2**) that "Inside the government there are many intellectuals who are giving their lives to the system. They do not occupy public spheres like the media because it is a hostile space". But does Native Club's positioning itself as an opposition to mainstream media make it a counter public? Drawing from understandings of the notion of the public sphere as posited by various theorists, this study concludes that the Native Club passes as a counter public only on the basis that the forum exists in a stratified society, where the bourgeois model of the public sphere as argued by Habermas is no longer relevant. In addition the club passes as a counter public because it allows participation. However, it fails to live up to all the characteristics of a counter public in that it does not allow "open access" and "social equality" as described by Fraser.

What one can also conclude from the formation and ensuing debate of the Native Club is that the engagement of intellectuals and intellectual activity in South Africa is robust. Moreover, there seems to be wide agreement on those who participated in the media debate about the club, that there is a need for intellectuals to operate in their own space, but there seems to be no agreement on how an "ideal" public sphere would operate.

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