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Afrikaner identity after Nationalism: young Afrikaners and the "new" South Africa

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AFRIKANER IDENTITY AFTER NATIONALISM

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The history of Afrikaner nationalism elicits a particular curiosity. A near ideal-typical nationalist movement achieved overwhelming dominance over a vast territory at the southern tip of the African continent and its diverse peoples against strong countervailing powers. After this triumph, political power painstakingly conquered was surrendered without the bloodshed many foresaw at the time. Dire predictions of a protracted civil war were based on a view of Afrikaner ethno-nationalism as a 'hard' nationalism, marshalling all oppressive forces necessary to maintain dominance. After the slow but enduring construction of an ethno-nationalist movement, Afrikaner nationalists seized state power and consolidated their dominance over the years. Riding on a wave of ethnic mobilization, the National Party (NP), the main agent of Afrikaner ethno-nationalism until the 1970s, gained political power in South Africa after World War Two. Under nationalist leadership, Afrikaners advanced economically and socially through state patronage. Afrikaner nationalism had grown into a pervasive political, social, economic and cultural force. As a national minority, Afrikaners dominated a diverse society. However, towards the end of the twentieth century, nationalism ceased to be mobilizing force. Some analysts even argued that Afrikaner nationalism was now dead for good. Based on the success and decline of Afrikaner nationalism, the central question that this thesis addresses is why Afrikaners deserted nationalism? The larger theoretical problem stemming from this question is why do people become national and why do they desert nationalism? This line of questioning invites us to analyze the formation and dissolution of identities in late modernity. What shaped Afrikaner identities in the past and what is shaping them in the present?

This thesis investigates the formation, dissolution and re-configuration of Afrikaner identities in order to understand processes of social and political change. While the study of Afrikaner nationalism based on a modernist conception of nationalism emphasized the

role of the state in shaping identities, such a state-centered approach struggles to explain how identities change. With the modernist focus on institutions and state structures in the formation of identities, the subjective dimension of identity formation has not received systematic attention. I intend to probe how subjective aspects of identity formation, as encountered in narratives of the self, can help us to understand social and political change, clearly apparent in the decline of Afrikaner nationalism. In this decline of a once powerful ethno-nationalist movement, the emergence of new subjectivities in our epoch of late modernity is of particular importance. Identities understood as multiple, contradictory and relational may have developed that were well beyond the narrow frame set by ethnic and nationalist ideology and mobilization.

The study of Afrikaner nationalism is significant because it allows us to analyze the decline of nationalism and ethnic mobilization. Up to now, the lessons for theories of nationalism from the decline of nationalism and ethnicity have not been studied in full. While Ernst B. Haas (1997) offers a complete theory for the decline of nationalism and the nation-state, he does so within a very restrained, functionalist modernization framework. The decline of Afrikaner nationalism offers an opportunity to study how individuals create meaning, how life-worlds and the social imaginary shape identities and relationships with the nation-state, nationalism and ethnicity.

Addressing the problem of contemporary Afrikaner identities leads us to consider the problem of "white" [1] identities or *whiteness*.[2] Whiteness in South Africa is often described as a monolithic essence with little room for change (Steyn, 2001). I intend to give a more nuanced portrait of whiteness which leads to an understanding of the possibilities for changing "white" identities. Often, Afrikaners (and South Africa's "white" citizens) are described as a group of people with little inclination for change,

[1] "White", as well as "black" and "white" are written in quotation marks (unless it is a citation) to indicate that it is primarily a social construct to which many stereotypes are attached and in this sense, "race (s)" do not exist, beyond the existence of physical characteristics and appearance.

[2] Ruth Frankenberg defines whiteness through "a set of linked dimensions. First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint", a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, "whiteness" refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed (1993, 1)."

reveling in self-pity, continuing with their old ways and by and large dropping out of an engagement with larger society. My research suggests that this perspective may only reflect the attitudes of one segment of the "white" population. In the face of the often encountered "white" recalcitrance to accept the need for redress, making amends and leaving "racial" exclusiveness behind, analysts regret such an attitude yet fail to offer deeper insights into the social dynamics of evolving "racial" identities. After having outlined the major problems addressed in this study, let me now proceed with an overview of the chapters.

In chapter two, I analyze how nationalism in general and particularly Afrikaner nationalism have been studied. This initial analysis of theories of nationalism and ethnicity sets the tone for the reminder of the thesis. In a advancing my theoretical argument built on previous theory, I intend to contribute to the study of nationalism with the aspiration to suggest further directions in the study of nationalism and ethnicity.

In this chapter, I do not offer a complete overview over theories of nationalism and ethnicity. Given the vast body of theoretical and empirical works published on nationalism every year, to take stock of this entire literature is beyond the scope of this thesis. Rather, I have selected the key works that deal with the problems of ethnic and nationalist mobilization. From my review of the literature, I want to suggest that the lessons from the demise and the dissolution of nationalism and ethnicity do not receive sufficient attention. I will demonstrate in this thesis that meaningful insights about national and ethnic identity can be derived from studying the decline of nationalist and ethnic movements.

Since the concept 'nationalism' is complex, I agree with the cautious approach that does not attempt to come up with one single definition. Rather, there is a whole field of nationalism studies that incorporates such concepts as identity, ethnicity, culture, "race"[3],

[3] "Race", as well as " is written in quotation marks (unless it is a citation) to indicate that it is primarily a social construct to which many stereotypes are attached and in this sense, "race" does not exist, beyond phenotype or appearance.

community, civic virtue, language, solidarity, citizenship and so on. Ethnicity and nationalism are phenomena that are located on a continuum and not in watertight containers. Moving on from defining nationalism, I analyze how nationalism has been studied as a consequence of modernity. The relationship between nationalism and modernity is arguably the most contentious issue in the study of nationalism and I argue that Afrikaner nationalism is a good case to support the modernist perspective that state makes nation. But besides the modernist focus on a political movement, socio-economic, historical and institutional factors, I also want to suggest that ideology and discourse, and more importantly, narrative deserve our attention. For it seems to me that from studying narratives of the self we gain a better understanding how identities change and how people develop attitudes that inform choices.

I then proceed in chapter two with studying three approaches to the study of nationalism (and Afrikaner nationalism): *primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism*. Firmly within a primordial paradigm, early approaches to Afrikaner nationalism saw nationalism as the expression of the inner selves of Afrikaners. A cultural canon of traditions and language was seen as the expression of a single and dominant Afrikaner identity. In its most radical form, primordialism essentializes culture and identity. In trying to answer why people become national and why they desert it, primordialism is not very helpful. Instead of considering change, primordialism focuses on stability and continuity. A further consequence of the primordialist perspective is that it serves to justify ethnic belonging. People may have strong feelings about their language, culture and so on, but how is this manifested? Or put it differently, should we not rather ask under what circumstances does ethnic belonging matter and when does it cease to do so? To take for granted the support, adherence to or adoration of ethnicity creates uncritical certainties rather than prompting a search for explanations. In the political realm, the primordial perspective serves to emphasize ‘natural’ and existential differences between peoples and hence supports claims that different ethnicities cannot coexist. Related to such a primordial approach is a focus on belief systems, such as the role of a *civil religion* in the formation of an Afrikaner national identity. Beliefs certainly matter but to overemphasize these runs the risk of assuming the existence of a static set of beliefs to which people

adhere to with little room for negotiation and change.

In contrast, *instrumentalism* looks at the role of interest and material benefits that are gained from belonging to a nation. Marxist analysis explains Afrikaner nationalism through the formation of a class alliance that served the interest of the bourgeoisie and capital. In this process, the state played a crucial role as an agent of capitalism. Nationalist ideology was able to win over Afrikaners of all classes. In my critique of this perspective I focus on three aspects. First, the over-reliance on materialism leads to a reductive, primordial view of ethnicity that does not help much in understanding issues of Afrikaner nationalist mobilization, particularly among workers. Second, discourse is reduced to carrier of ideology and as such is not more than a consequence of material relations. Third, the reliance on a positive sociology neglects the agency of subjects.

Besides this Marxist perspective, I look at an instrumentalist approach that has a liberal perspective but shares with the Marxist approach the focus on the state in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism. In my critique, I argue that the state-centered approach, whether Marxist or liberal, fails to adequately integrate subjectivity into its account while focusing on institutions and state structures in the formation of identities. Without overcoming the problem of subjectivity, these political-historical narratives cannot explain adequately what makes individuals to adhere to and to desert nationalism. For subjectivity is expressed through moral discourse, in values, thoughts and beliefs. While the authors of the state-centered approach make references to these, they cannot fully explore their significance for political change. In order to get a better understanding of the value-changes and the evolution of thoughts and practices behind the production of identities and political allegiance, I argue that we need to have a better understanding of subjectivities. Finally, there is the instrumentalist view that looks at the boundaries between different ethnicities and how they are maintained to separate in-groups from out-groups. While this instrumentalist approach makes some effort to integrate subjectivity closer with structural factors, it does not do so in a substantive way and hence has ultimately to rely on a state-centered perspective.

After a review of instrumentalist approaches, I turn to constructivism. Both are different from primordialism because they both do not work with essentialized identities. The constructivist perspective takes into account that identities are contingent, in flux and subject to change. Constructivism is effectively combined with notions of *invented traditions* and *imagined communities*. Together, they serve well to describe and to explain the development of the Afrikaner culture and language and its role in shaping an Afrikaner nationalist movement. Language, discourse and ideology were crucial in winning over workers and women to nationalism. Afrikaner women subscribed to nationalist ideology conveyed through popular Afrikaans literature that provided them with entertainment, a guide for proper behavior and personal improvement in changing times and ontological security through the discourse of national belonging. While subjectivity is combined with more institutional and structural analysis, the problem with some of these constructivist approaches is that the individual reception of discourse is not sufficiently explored. I want to suggest that the analysis of individual narratives is needed if we intend to understand better the formation of identities. Nationalist elites pronounced a discourse that gave meaning to the experiences of many white Afrikaans speakers and contributed to the social imaginary[4] of apartheid, institutionalizing the Other[5], insiders and outsiders. Subjectivity is found in the discourse of the elite. However, the structural-ideological framework dominates and the focus on elite discourse neglects how ordinary people receive ideology and give it meaning.

While the analysis of discourse, even if only investigating elite discourse, goes some way to integrate subjectivities in the study of nationalism and ethnicity, I argue with Damien Tambini (1998) and Thomas Hylland-Eriksen (1999) for an approach which explicitly focuses on individual experiences and life-worlds which allows for a better understanding

[4] I define the concept of the 'social imaginary' in more detail in chapter five.

[5] Throughout the thesis I use the term 'Other' to designate white perspectives on "black" people. Especially in chapter seven, I use 'Other' more extensively in my analysis and I use it interchangeably with 'the racial Other' or 'the "black" Other'. This term has its origin in Lacanian psychoanalysis, but in the more immediate South African context Sarah Nuttal uses it in her analysis of "white" writing (Nuttal, 2001). While the term has various meanings within the symbolic structure of Lacan's theory of psychoanalysis, in my usage of the term I follow Evans who understands it to designate "radical alterity, an other-ness which transcends the illusory otherness of the imaginary because it cannot be assimilated through identification" (Evans, 2001: 133).

of people's motivations to adhere to nationalism. In order to gain insights into the making of nationalist movements, we need a better understanding of the role of identities and emotional motivations. This means to take a closer look at processes of identification and how the individual creates meaningful relationships with others and the world. Subjective experiences can then be related to structures and institutions. Taking into consideration subjectivities in the construction of identities leads us to a view of identities that have agency beyond dominant structures. But I argue that the conception of the self-identity as fleeting and without markers is mistaken. Rather, the task is to show how the subjectivity of the self is responding to structural factors and how they create agency and identity. In the final analysis, combining subjectivity with structures leads to a better understanding of nationalist mobilization.

After the discussion of the different approaches to the study of nationalism and Afrikaner nationalism, I pointed out why it is important to turn to subjectivities – I believe that paying attention to subjectivities is warranted in order to gain better insights into emotions and motivations that led individuals to turn to nationalism or to desert it.

In the second part of chapter two, Jon Hyslop explains the decline of Afrikaner nationalism with the emergence of new subjectivities in our epoch of late modernity. Starting in the late 1970s, new identities appeared among "white" South Africans and Afrikaners that were beyond the framework provided by nationalism and ethnicity. They were in many ways a consequence of a capitalist, consumer society. The social transformation originating in an advanced industrial society went beyond the confines of an authoritarian state that was promoting traditional, conservative ethno-nationalist values and practices. In narratives of the self, Afrikaners reveal their subjectivities that can be related to larger, structural processes. The values and practices of a modern, globally integrated consumer society of late modernity have influenced in significant ways the formation of Afrikaner (and "white") identities. In late modernity, a combination of structural changes and evolving sensitivities led to the break-up of identities. Traditional markers of identity such as class, "race", gender, ethnicity and nationality have lost their defining powers.

In describing the specificities of late modernity, I look at the following five characteristics, *individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization,* to understand better the formation of contemporary identities. First, under the impact of *individualization,* traditional identities are displaced. With individualization, historical continuity has been ruptured. Time and space have become separated which weakened the hold of traditions and facilitated individualization (Giddens, 1991). Increasing individualization led to new forms of life and lifestyles. Independent from class positions, each individual claims control over resources, living spaces, the body and beliefs (Beck, 1992). The individual becomes preoccupied with her or his own personal ego and personal life. The conduct of the personal life is open to a myriad of possibilities and the individual is faced with many choices in all spheres of life. In the process of individualization, historically prescribed social forms are disembedding - traditional security in relation to practical knowledge, faith and norms is lost. And in the process of re-embedding, a new form of social integration emerges that gives priority to the individual who must choose between different lifestyles, subcultures, social ties and identities. Traditional ties of class and family are replaced by the rules of the market and consumerism of capitalist society. Individualization also means self-reflexivity as biographies are no longer produced socially but by the individual herself or himself on a continuous basis (Beck, 1992). While this emphasizes the role of choice in identity formation, individuals and their trajectory are still subjected to overall living conditions that are, among others, affected by state policy. But we certainly can no longer look at the state as the dominant force that shapes identities.

Second, modern society is becoming *post-traditional* (Giddens, 1994). Traditions are being problematized and society is detraditionalizing. We may live in a disenchanted age, yet we are also offered opportunities. Through institutional reflexivity, our life has become experimental. These everyday experiments involving decisions with whom to enter into relationships, how to conduct private and professional lives, what lifestyle to choose and so on, give a greater role to the individual in conducting her or his life – hence, our lives are self-reflexive. In late modernity, personal relationships require a

deeper involvement and engagement than pre-modern relations. In the transition from modernity to late modernity, traditions are changing. Previously, invented traditions, like Afrikaner nationalism, were a response to the break-up of local communities. Now, in post-traditional society, cultural pluralism requires the justification of traditions through discourse and therefore, relations and conflicts between the individual and the community are mediated.

Third, *consumption* shapes identities in late modernity in significant ways (Bocock, 1993). Consumption is part of the capitalist production cycle but more important perhaps, it is also participating in the reproduction of the social order. Culture, including education, ideology and family life are factored into the labor cost of capitalism. Hence, consumption, as a form of cultural expression, contributes to the regulation of society. With the development and refinement of capitalist society and consumerism, important social, cultural and psychological changes have taken place. Foremost, consumption plays a crucial role in the formation of identities. Previously, work roles in production processes were central to identity formation; now, under the labor regime of post-Fordism, it is consumption patterns of action that are central to post-modern identity construction. Culturally constituted lifestyles replace social structural categories such as class and gender. The individual is a consumer who learns to decode consumption-specific sets of cultural symbols and values through the mediation of mass media, such as television. Living in a consumer society implies that people learn to desire consumer goods. Many of these consumer goods in late capitalism are non-material, such as databases and knowledge systems, which has consequences for the demands upon the modern labor force. The whole individual has to consecrate her or his life and personality to work – work and consumption form a frightening unity. Consumption implies to desire specific goods and notwithstanding your class position, desire and consumption become central life-concerns. Consumption, as a cultural phenomenon, shapes personal identity. While it is a crucial debate how far consumerist identities are displacing class, gender and other social categories, it is more widely understood that identities have become more flexible. Equally controversial is if indeed consumerism has grown into such a socio-cultural and psychological force that individuals may choose identities and if any

personal emancipation is based on such consumer choice. Also, theories of consumption debate if individuals may choose their identities, in the same way they choose consumer goods? And finally, can individual emancipation be based on consumer choice?

Fourth, modern society is referred to as *risk society*. We are living in an epoch of reflexive modernization (Giddens, 1994). This means the risks associated with techno-economic development are a constant concern, creating even widespread and diffuse existential anguish. In post-industrial society, whose sophistication is now turning on us, the enjoyment of the fruits of technological development has given way to a preoccupation with risks. This constant threat and risk perception reverberates through our culture and social imaginary. Danger and risk are in our consciousness and in light of this threat we carry with us the existential question how we should live? Risk and individualization go together in that it is the individual who responds and deals with risk and its consequences. Fifth and last, we live in an epoch of *globalization* which is defined as the intensification of global interconnectedness. With a global economy and a global division of labor, risk is universalized. Globalization reorders time and space with the consequence that local communities are subjected to global processes of decisions regarding all aspects of life (Giddens, 1994). Ever since the triumph of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid, Afrikaner identities have been subjected to significant change. In this development, late modernity deserves particular attention because under the impact of individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization, identities have evolved and are in an on-going process of reconfiguration. The question arises then how is Afrikaner ethnicity affected by these changes?

In chapter three, I turn to the methodology that I chose for this study. The contribution that I intend to make to the study of Afrikaner nationalism is a systematic exploration of subjectivity in the un-making of an ethno-nationalist, Afrikaner identity. Hence, Afrikaner subjectivities are analyzed in narratives of the self. Furthermore, the experience reflected in these narratives is related to the broader, socio-political environment. Thereby, we gain better insights into ethnic and nationalist mobilization and the decline of Afrikaner nationalism.

To carry out my research, I use a pluri-disciplinary approach, applying historical and political analysis and most important perhaps, interviews with young Afrikaners, reflecting narratives of the self that give us insights into their life-worlds and how their identities evolve in late modernity. Narrative inquiry is useful to get a better understanding of the formation of identities. In analyzing narratives, we may explore the pluralistic sense of self of individuals. Also, narratives cover story and time - they have a temporal dimension. In doing so, they allow insights into how individuals relate to the nation, the socio-political institution that has an important spatio-temporal component. Also, narratives are well suited to track changes in cultural patterns and tradition. But foremost, narratives allow us to understand experience. Experience, in turn, indicates how people make choices and hold beliefs that inform their actions. Hence, we can acquire insights into how the individual relates to ethnicity and nationalism.

To study individual life-worlds, I conducted 32 interviews with young Afrikaners in a semi-structured style. They can be described as a combination of the episodic and the narrative interview. This permits us better insights into social change as experienced by the individual and connects the individual to his or her social background. Informants were recruited from the Greater Johannesburg area by way of purposive sampling. A focus on this particular segment was warranted by the objective to study those individuals that would give the most significant insights into effective social change among young Afrikaners.

In chapter four, I analyze the rise and decline of Afrikaner nationalism from a historical perspective. I explore the Afrikaner nationalist movement, its historical significance and what its study teaches us about nationalism and ethnicity. I want to suggest that Afrikaner nationalism shows well the *modernity of nations*. It makes sense to analyze the rise of the Afrikaner nation as an *imagined community* and even *invented tradition*, though I will caution against the most problematic aspects of the invented tradition approach. While the modernist credo, state makes nation, is clearly supporting the state-centered perspective of nationalism in which state policies and the political realm receive

particular attention, the subjective in the formation of nationalism is neglected. The problem of the state-centered analysis is to integrate subjective and structural factors. This can be remedied with the study of narratives of the self that are related to structural and macro-social processes. Identities, national, ethnic, and individual, are not only formed in relation to the state. Subjectivation, the formation of identities, also involves processes that are beyond the direct influence of the state and that are often contradictory. By turning to subjectivity, we can consider these contradictions more fully.

Afrikaner nationalism, as an invented tradition with its political mythologies, created a link between the past and the present, and allowed to smooth over the dislocations stemming from modernization and social transformation. The political mythologies of a struggling nation against British imperialism and later, triumphant white supremacy, under the ideology of apartheid, contributed to an Afrikaner, national consciousness. Advocates of an Afrikaner nation conceived of as an imagined community, sought unity for a dispersed people, with the help of culture and language. Afrikaner nationalism, as a modernizing movement, with the help of the state, empowered the in-group and discriminated against outsiders. As a near-ideal type, Afrikaner nationalism stands out with the following characteristics. Afrikaners were colonizers and yet they were subjected to colonial rule at the same time. Ridiculed as a backward people, they were subjected to the British Empire but kept their political influence. And finally, a nationalist movement was developed, based on resentment, language and culture, religion and historiography, directed against British dominance.

Having laid the theoretical foundations that inform this chapter, I describe the historical rise and decline of Afrikaner nationalism. I have identified the following four different periods in the history of Afrikaner nationalism: the development of a colony in the Cape between 1652 and 1850, the creation and promotion of Afrikaner ethnicity and an Afrikaner nation which was accomplished by the 1920s, socio-economic advancement through the state and the domination of the South African state and territory, and finally the undoing of Afrikaner nationalism and the abdication of political power.

An Afrikaner nationalist movement developed from the presence of white settlers in present day South Africa. Beginning with a small colonial outpost in 1652 on the southern African coast, settlers of Dutch, German and French origin and slaves, imported from West Africa and the Far East, began to spread across the entire territory of modern South Africa. From 1806 on, the colony fell under British dominance. The discovery of diamonds and gold in the 1860s and 1870s would lead to industrialization. It was in the course of industrialization that an Afrikaner ethnic awareness developed and a nationalist movement was created. To counter British influence, Afrikaner ethnicity was mobilized and a sense of nationhood was created through language, culture, religion, historiography, social and ethnic demarcation. After the South African War, which lasted from 1899 to 1902, and pitted Afrikaans-speaking farmers against the British empire, many Afrikaners came to believe that only as a united people could they ensure their survival. In a "whites"-only democracy, parties with an Afrikaner nationalist ideology were politically successful and managed to unite over time the various segments of the Afrikaner population. With electoral success, the state was now used intensively to protect "white" and Afrikaner workers and to advance Afrikaners socially and economically. Political, economic and cultural resources were mobilized to create a sense of nationhood and to advance Afrikaners. The state worked with civil society organizations to celebrate Afrikaners and their achievements and to give them wealth and prominence in the South African state and society. When the National Party (NP) was triumphant at the polls in 1948, Afrikaners were finally politically united and many had espoused a common sense of national belonging.

The NP in power set out to increase Afrikaner dominance of South African society. The state was used systematically to advance Afrikaners in all spheres of life. Public sector employment gave preference to Afrikaners and Afrikaner business was supported through public investment. They benefited from political power and patronage. The educational sector was geared towards imparting skills on Afrikaners. The nationalist movement controlled the state, religious, educational and communications institutions. Through the mobilization of state resources and with the help of Afrikaner civil society institutions that combined to shelter Afrikaner society within a pseudo-traditional complex,

Afrikaners made fast and significant, economic and social progress. State-led empowerment policies affected Afrikaner identity formation. Afrikaner ethnic awareness, forged with the help of the state, evolved into a common sense of white identity with English South Africans. The apartheid state was to protect the spoils awarded to a white oligarchy.

By the 1980s, Afrikaner unity began to unravel. Different class interests, but also diverging strategies how to deal with increasing "black" resistance eventually brought an end to national unity. Political and socio-economic changes led to the emergence of new Afrikaner subjectivities that were in contradiction with Afrikaner ethnic tradition. Emotional ethnic attachment among Afrikaners was reduced. Mutual dependence in a common economy undermined the apartheid separation of "races". As it became apparent that a political solution had to be found to end apartheid, Afrikaner dominance was bartered away for the protection of wealth and individual rights without power sharing between ethnic and national groups. In a common democracy, Afrikaners were reduced to a minority, albeit one that was in a strong social and economic position. With a "black" government and within a state with a majority of "black" Africans, Afrikaners needed to adapt to new social and political relations brought about in a short period of time.

In chapter five, I take a closer look at how Afrikaners and the civil society institutions that claim to represent them relate to the emerging African nation. I take notions of 'Africanization' as the new social imaginary which is contested within society. Among Afrikaners, the turn to a new social imaginary is based on the crisis of legitimacy of their traditions and institutions. I proceed by first explaining the concept of 'social imaginary' and how it can be used to understand better contemporary South African society. The 'social imaginary' is related to the idea of the imagined community since is defined as how people imagine the society they inhabit. It contributes to a common understanding that makes social life possible. As a society in transition, South Africa is defining a new social imaginary.

To better grasp this process of creating a new social imaginary, I turn to an analysis of the

nation building debate and contemporary discourse that imagines an African nation. The idea of creating a non-racial society lies at the heart of the compromise between "white" power and "black" contest that enabled a relatively peaceful transition and avoided a protracted struggle and civil war. Non-racialism and 'rainbowism' stand for an end to racial antagonism and an inclusive nation to which all "races" and ethnicities can belong to. However, they are in conflict with the demands for redress which require the acknowledgement of "race". The ANC's turn towards a more Africanist approach to nation building is a shift in emphasis from the primacy of reconciliation to accelerating redress. Symbolic and material redress can be understood as the aspiration of the South African liberation movements in the *longue durée* and redress reflects the nationalist project promoting and safeguarding a cultural identity, untouched by colonialism. Such an Africanist, culturally-based definition of the nation makes it basically impossible for those who do not fit this definition to belong to the nation. A nation-building project becomes problematic when it attempts to prescribe a dominant identity to which all members of the nation are supposed to belong to, as Afrikaner nationalism did. However, an African nation can still be inclusive if African is defined in an open and inclusive way.

Having analyzed the national identity debate, I turn to the relationship between, on the one hand, Afrikaners, and, on the other, state and society. Here, I am primarily concerned with how organized groups of Afrikaners relate to the ANC-led state. But first I follow Dani Goosen in identifying three dominant attitudes to the new dispensation among Afrikaners. First, the rightwing and *vervreemde* Afrikaners are alienated from society. They have retreated into the domestic sphere or left the country. Some analysts argue that emanating from this group, protracted ethnic mobilization, even organized resistance and violence against the new democratic order could emerge. This perspective is problematic as it neglects a coherent analysis of the factors that contribute to ethnic mobilization. Discontent and feelings of marginalization are not sufficient to mobilize ethnicity. Second, there are those who advocate the recognition of group rights for Afrikaners. Most organized Afrikaner civic (and political) organizations fall into this group. Although there are substantial differences among them, they share their dis-enchantment with the new dispensation. Third, there are those Afrikaners who remain suspicious of

ethnic politics. They may criticize the actions of the "black" government but they will argue that it is rather Afrikaners who have to make an effort to belong to an African society and they are less interested in preserving an exclusive ethnicity. It is important to remember that individuals shift between these attitudes or can even belong to all of the three at the same time, illustrating contradictions in the formation of identities.

The state of current Afrikaner (ethnic) identity is important because it informs any analysis of "white" politics and the potential for white (and Afrikaner) ethno-political mobilization. Indeed, political and civic organizations have attempted over the years to mobilize Afrikaners with little success. For example, voter behavior indicates little support for Afrikaner, ethnic parties. But I think that the key to explaining support or desertion of ethnic politics is found in an analysis of individual narratives that illustrate processes of identity formation. The little success in mobilizing Afrikaners lies in the emergence of new identities, especially among the younger generations. They have the 'luxury of moral choice' and most people I interviewed reject anything that has to do with ethno-national politics. Many Afrikaner leaders and intellectuals are out of tune with much of the young generation. While concerns for the Afrikaans language, employment equity[6] and the maintenance of Afrikaans language educational facilities are manifest among young Afrikaners, many young people I spoke to shy away from or are simply against mobilizing on ethnic grounds. Also, they are looking for other ways than ethnicity to express their identities. In narratives of the self, young Afrikaners express their views on ethnicity and the nation. In the second part of the thesis, I analyze in-depth these narratives that give expression to identities that are much more complex than promises of ethnic mobilization would foresee.

In chapters six, seven and eight, I analyze and interpret narratives of the self of young Afrikaners. While taking stock of how identities have evolved, the larger question that frames these narratives is how the "white" mainstream, and especially Afrikaners, deal with the loss of power and how they negotiate a common society in which racial privilege

[6] 'Employment equity' and 'affirmative action' are used interchangeably. While the former more specifically refers to national legislation, the latter is used widely in the media and in public and popular discourse.

is replaced with equality. How do “white” people and especially Afrikaners, fit into a post-colonial society that re-habilitates Africa and tries to come to terms with the colonial legacy? How do “white” people, for a long time dominant in South African politics and society, adapt to a common and equal society, a society in which Africa-ness is not a transient sojourner but an indispensable presence? Chapter six focuses on identities and how they evolve and adapt to new political and socio-economic circumstance or resist change. Chapter seven analyses how young Afrikaners exercise choice in many areas of their lives. Chapter eight is concerned with the effects of the past on the formation of identities and how young people live with the legacy of growing up in the shadow of apartheid. “Race” relations are constructed with the difficulty of antagonistic, historically developed relations and perceptions of the racial Other. In all three chapters, identity as expressed in narratives of the self is related to late modernity, defined by individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization. The formation of Afrikaner identities can be understood in the context of late modernity.

In chapter six, analysis and interpretation of narratives of the self of young Afrikaners reveal how they negotiate their Afrikaner ethnicity. Identity today, especially in an urban environment, is much less shaped by adherence to tradition but rather through stylization of the self by which individuals choose to create new identities. Many of the young Afrikaners interviewed see themselves as more liberal than previous generations. They understand that there are different ways of being Afrikaner and Afrikaans and they have a sense of opening up to people of other backgrounds. I first look at identities that are shifting and resisting, or even doing both at the same time. While a sense of being lost in an African society exists, there is also an understanding that as an Afrikaner, one could be closer to “black” Africans and leave ethnic exclusivity behind. For others, an ethnic and a “white”, racial identity are closely related. “White” identity is essentialized and racial difference is here to stay. But for most, the transformation of society has contributed to a flux of identities in which traditional identities and emerging ones conflict and collide with each other. I want to suggest that young Afrikaners do not have one dominant but multiple identities: speaking different languages and moving between different ethnicities, making personal and professional choices and so on, contribute to

creating and re-creating identities. Contradictions appear. Looking to the future, one wants to reach out and shape a new identity with the Other, but there is also a desire to value tradition, culture and language and take pride in it.

In chapter seven, I build on the earlier analysis of the role ideology of consumer society in which choice plays an important role. I analyze how making choices, an important aspect of democratic, capitalist consumer society in late modernity, is related to identity formation among young Afrikaners. Liberal and conservative Afrikaners are coming to terms with adapting to an Africanizing society and this also means that one chooses how much to be an ethnic Afrikaner. In this process, socialization certainly plays its part; young people from a family background that was skeptical of the apartheid order are more willing to embrace the emerging, but there are also individuals who break with their parental customs and traditions. In order to break with the ideology of *Afrikanerdom* of the past, some started to re-think their adherence to Afrikaner ethnicity and turned to choosing their identity. This also means that one is equally belonging to an Afrikaans community and to a broader, Anglophone world community. In fact, the complexity and variety of Afrikaner identity is such that throughout their upbringing, they belonged and continue to belong to an Afrikaner and an English ethnicity.

Modern society is a risk society and our daily lives are permeated with a sense of risk. Especially in the world of work, but also in private life, risk calculations are part and parcel of how life is conducted. To take a risk is also a challenge for the individual as it tests one's abilities. To have a sense of self, of being an individual, is then closely related to having a career. One seeks success and self-realization in professional life, but they are not guaranteed. There is always a risk in the choices one makes. Hence, living in South Africa presents a particular test for individual self-worth. In pursuing your career, your are no longer privileged. Often, this is acknowledged as an acceptable risk for it offers an opportunity to prove self worth. While being an individual is seen as more important than group belonging, especially in light of the injustice committed in the name of the Afrikaner nation, some want to claim the right to self-realization not only for the individual, but also for the group. Looking at other aspects of choice, the individual is

also a consumer and hence consumption competes with other life interests, such as politics. Despite the risk that South African society may hold, the comfort found in capitalist consumer society is an incentive to stay. Life plans reflect desires of consumption.

Young Afrikaners express their belonging to a global, cosmopolitan imaginary. Even those who feel attached to South Africa, the land and the people, intend to stay and work abroad. A stay overseas is seen as a good career move, but it is also indicates belonging to the wider world. For instances, global universal values of justice and human rights is part of the value system of the people I spoke to. With increasing connections between South Africa and the rest of the world after apartheid isolation, foreign influences are welcome and they are thankfully adopted. Identity is not only constructed at the local level, but also with what is happening worldwide, going beyond a single identity and national and ethnic affiliation. Emigration is then not only a racist rejection of an Africanizing society, but it is also expressing an attachment to the wider world. For young people, being Afrikaner and Afrikaans is an identity that is not confined to South Africa.

Finally, in the last section of this chapter I look a how young Afrikaners exert choice in the religious sphere. While attendance of traditional churches has declined, young people opt for different denominations and New Religious Movements. In late modernity, belief is a personal and individual affair. Traditional Afrikaner churches have lost membership. Religious pluralism reflects the pluralism of a democratic consumer society. Belonging to church or a religious movement is less matter of tradition and more of personal choice. It is also an expression to gain distance from *Afrikanerdom* as well an expression of personal choice and seeking individual fulfillment. The close relationship between traditional Afrikaner churches and political power led to a loss of credibility among the churches when apartheid came to an end.

In chapter eight, I analyze how young Afrikaners narrate their views of the past and their relationships to the “racial”, “black” Other. For most of them, the past has a direct

relevance for their daily lives as they feel that Employment Equity and other measures aimed at redress penalizes them without apparent justification and that they are thereby singled out and excluded from the new nation. In fact, most don't see the need for redress and suggest the past should be forgotten. Closely related to how to deal with the past is how they see their relationships to "black" people. While many try to find a way to relate to "black" people, others display a racist Othering discourse with little awareness of social and historical responsibility. Concerns for individual advancement seem to trump all other considerations. Often, the two conflicting discourses are told simultaneously. Hence, I argue that white identity is instable, contradictory and contingent.

I analyze the problem of dealing with a violent past. Here, I draw limited parallels with Germany. The German case of dealing with the Nazi past offers instructive comparison for like many young Afrikaners today, after World War Two, many Germans wanted to forget the past. Young Afrikaners claim innocence and want to downplay that they benefited from apartheid. At the same time, there is also a minority who acknowledges past injustice and wishes to make amends. The difficulty is how to create a sense of belonging and a common understanding among victims and beneficiaries that avoids superficial reconciliation and papers over differences. Besides seeking a new relationship between victims and beneficiaries, Afrikaners struggle to find meaningful ways to understand their own history of nationalism, racism and apartheid. As a collective, an imagined nation, Afrikaners are at pains to build on a past that can project them into the future and construct a livable present. Too much memory can render living in the present impossible and the crucial question is what is the meaning of being an Afrikaner in the present ?

After comparing South Africa's to Germany's dealing with the past, I study in more detail how young Afrikaners grapple with the past. How one sees the past affects identity choices today. For some, identification with the Afrikaner cultural milieu also means that one has to assume the past, but for others, it leads to denying that one is an Afrikaner. A sense of guilt for the injustice of the past is heavy to carry and hence the denial that "black" people can make a claim to victim-hood. Acknowledging a painful past through

redress would undermine self-realization and career opportunities in a competitive, capitalist society. Some want to forget the past. In fact, some observe that despite apartheid, in their personal experiences, they had good relations with “black” people and that their generation did not benefit from it. This absence of an understanding of the larger implications of apartheid is an argument for the need to create awareness and acknowledgment of the historical consequences of apartheid - for the legacy of that past is still alive, even if personal experience does not reflect it. Such different experiences of the same past make it very difficult to develop a common understanding of the past. But some express the desire to right the wrongs and to entertain a dialogue about the past.

In the final section of this chapter, I analyze how young Afrikaners reflect about “race” relations. Almost all of the people I spoke express the need to understand better “black” people and to find ways to relate to them. Expressing one’s views about the Other is also a reflection how one sees oneself and one’s ethnic group. From the interviews’ narrative about “black” people emerges a differentiated image of “white” identity or whiteness. Disagreeing with an important perspective in the literature, whiteness emerges not as a static discourse, but indicates contradictions, uncertainty, contingency and situatedness. “White” identities are re-negotiated in order to fit into an African nation. While a way to relate to “black” people has to be found and one also considers that one could learn from them, some temper this intention with an exclusive, stereotypical Othering discourse. Racial difference has been replaced with cultural difference that is almost impossible to overcome. Yet difference can also mean admiration and some observe and appreciate “black” people. In close contact with “black” people, “white” identity changes. Others refuse to change and maintain that racial difference is real and whiteness superior. But for most, even those who express such views, doubt creeps into their discourse. As they tell personal experiences of their interaction with “black” people, they believe difference and separation will not remain. Diversity is widely appreciated, even if only at a discursive level. For others, however, the end of apartheid has brought the opportunity to create new relationships between “black” and “white” and ultimately is a chance to establish a new and better society.

Finally, in the concluding chapter I report the findings of this thesis. In my answer to the question how to explain the desertion of Afrikaner nationalism, I suggest that we need to draw our attention to subjectivity in the formation of identities. Subjectivity has to be better integrated with political, social and historical accounts. In narratives of the self, we gain a better understanding of what young Afrikaners no longer get out of ethnic and nationalist mobilization. These narratives, relating their experience with regard to individualization, consumption, risk, globalization and religion reflect the formation of identities in late modernity.

AFRIKANER IDENTITY AFTER NATIONALISM

PART I

Chapter 2

THEORIES OF NATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY

1. Approaches to the study of Afrikaner nationalism

In following pages, I proceed along two avenues. First, I analyze theories of nationalism and ethnicity. In my overview of the field I try to identify some of the key issues pertaining to the definitions and approaches to the study of nationalism, ethnicity and Afrikaner nationalism. A key finding of this overview is that the demise and the dissolution of nationalism and ethnicity are insufficiently addressed in the literature. As this thesis shows, valuable insights can be gained from studying the decline of nationalist and ethnic movements. Proceeding along the second avenue, I investigate the implications of late modernity for the formation of subjectivities among Afrikaners. The ideas expressed by Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck about late modernity can be usefully applied to study nationalism and ethnicity. A better understanding about the relationship between late modernity and the formation of identities as well as subjectivization helps to understand the desertion and the decline of Afrikaner nationalism. In breaking with the dominant stream of the state-centered approach in the literature on Afrikaner nationalism, this thesis focuses on the subjective aspects of nationalism. The subjective construction of the Afrikaner nation has never been investigated in a systematic way.

1.1. Definitions of ethnicity and nationalism

Some analysts make a distinction between nationalism and ethnicity. I however suggest that it is more useful to consider these concepts together. Nationalism is a complex phenomenon and we need to consider a whole ‘family’ of concepts that together work towards a definition of nationalism. Rather than trying to come up with one single

definition, it makes more sense to me to look at the ramifications of the theoretical concepts that explain nationalism.

Scholarly debates about nation and nationalism remain as controversial as ever. Yet the field of academic investigations has increased significantly. The state-centered approach, with a focus on socio-economic and political issues, has been supplemented with new fields of study. It is now more and more accepted that ethnicity, nation, identity and culture have to be treated in relation to each other. Analysts now work with an entire family of 'nationalist' concepts such as ethnie, nation, identity, culture, and society.[7] Furthermore, recent developments combine the study of nationalism with interrogations about community, cultural canon, cultural practices, civic virtue, language, solidarity and citizenship.[8] Other approaches to nationalism highlight the role of "race" and racism in the shaping of the modern nation-state (Gilroy, 2002; 1986). Even if we reasonably insist that these concepts should not be conflated, it is today more difficult to consider them in isolation.

Some analysts make a distinction between ethnicity and nationalism. Craig Calhoun tries to locate ethnicity in "an intermediary position" between kinship and nationality (Calhoun, 1997: 40). For him, nationality is then the larger identity that encompasses kinship-based 'tribes' and ethnic groups. Yet the usefulness of a distinction between ethnicity and nationalism is not evident. If it is just a question of size and whether nations or ethnic groups are part of the larger nation, the distinction becomes blurred, especially if one tries to evaluate claims to nationhood (when is a nation or ethnic group justified to claim an independent nation-state). Size seems to be an arbitrary way to evaluate which group deserves recognition of nationhood. Avoiding this difficulty, Heribert Adam defines nationalism as the *politisation of ethnicity* (Adam et al., 1997). Ethnicity encompasses cultural, linguistic, customary, and other characteristics that a group possesses. The emphasis here is on process, on formation, articulation and disarticulation

[7] This conceptualization is applied by Tambini (2001).
[8] Included here is a whole range of empirical and theoretical work that deals with multiculturalism and diversity in contemporary societies.

rather than on categorical identities. Furthermore, the use of ethnicity, of ethnic markers in the body politic, takes centre-stage. This is an important aspect of nationalism: the mere existence of ethnic identities is never sufficient for nationalist mobilization.

We can add to this definition of nationalism a more elaborate one that encompasses three dimensions (Calhoun, 1997). Craig Calhoun argues that the multiplicity of nations and nationalisms makes it impossible to come up with one empirically verifiable definition that satisfies all existing phenomena that can be classified as nationalism. Rather, borrowing from Ludwig Wittgenstein, he states that we can identify a pattern of "family resemblance" (Calhoun, 1997: 5). Certain manifestations of nationalism have characteristics that others lack and vice versa, but when considered as a whole, each manifestation of nationalism can be identified as belonging to the same 'family'. He identifies three dimensions that make up nationalism. First, nationalism as a discourse produces the cultural understanding, thought and language that allows people to identify with such a culturally defined nation. Second, nationalism as a project focuses on the social movements and state policies that claim to act and advance the interests of the nation, as in the striving for national autonomy. Third, nationalism as a cultural and political ideology professes pride in one's nation and inherent difference and superiority. These three dimensions are encountered with different constellations and apply with different degrees to various nations.

1.2. The modernity of the nation

For modernists, the democratic and industrial revolutions that took place around the time of the French Revolution of 1789 led to the emergence of the modern nation. The most prominent advocate of this view, Ernest Gellner, claims that the shift from agricultural to industrial society required societal re-organization (Gellner, 1983). Only egalitarian nationalism with social mobility and an education system that trained people in an identical communication system allowed modern, industrial society to function. A nation-state is a homogenized society doing away with the parochial regionalism of pre-industrial society. Nationalists are modernizers, but speak the language of the *narodnik*, the Russian, intellectual admirer of the peasant-people. We don't have to accept Gellner's

functionalist view that the material demands of a modern society, a large and uniform communication system, a unified education system and so on, require the development of a common, national culture. In a similar view to Calhoun, modernity brought about new relationships between self, nation and state. The modernization of society and industrialization, the emergence of an administrative and managerial middle class, the creation of wealth and its distribution through the state, offers opportunities to mobilize on nationalist grounds and provides the means to distribute favors to members of the nation (Guindon, 1967; Adam and Giliomee, 1979).

Benedict Anderson also sees the nation as a modern phenomenon, but one that was brought about through the proliferation of print capitalism that enabled large, impersonal societies to find a common, imaginary belonging to a nation. In contrast, perennialists such as Philip Gorski locate nationalist discourses in pre-modern times and argue that nationalism appeared before the dawn of modernity (Gorski, 2000). According to this view, it is not so much an ethnic core that pre-existed the modern nation-state, but the existence of a discourse of nationalism in pre-modern times that served mobilization.

The modernist view of the nation that connects the development of the state with a nationalist discourse is rightfully criticized for its overt functionalism. And yet, the relation between modernity and nation is hard to ignore. Some proponents of the modernist view guard against a too overt reliance on functionalism through focusing on ideology that is articulated and transmitted through nationalist discourse. Besides material developments and social organization, ideology and discourse figure prominently in the establishment of nationalism. In my view, this is an important aspect of the modernist perspective if we want to understand why individuals adhere to nationalism. In discourse, feelings, perceptions and motivations are articulated. Discourse contains the rationale why individuals find a discourse of nationalist mobilization worthy of their support or why do they retreat from doing so. For this reason, I look at narratives of the self of young Afrikaners that reflect everyday experiences and that hence are crucial for our understanding of nationalism. I will elaborate on this rationale in more detail farther below.

Discussions about the modernity of nations also address the problem of the decline of nationalism. Gellner posits that nationalism will be of reduced virulence as modernity progresses, but does not foresee the demise of the nation and nationalism (Oezkirimli, 2003: 342). The strongest argument, however, for the demise of nationalism and the nation-state, once modernity has run its course, is made by Ernst B. Haas, arguing firmly from within a modernization paradigm. Haas suggests that the nation-state is in the long run no longer able to provide the goods and services citizens in a democracy demand and hence, the nation-state, and nationalism, will decline (Haas, 1997). He observes that increasing rationalization of economic, social and political processes can no longer be sustained by the nation-state:

> "[T]he more a desired standard of life depends on economic activities that, in turn, are highly interdependent with foreign trade, interstate flows of money, the deterrence of imported pollution, and desired or undesired patterns of migration, the less a modern nation-state is able to satisfy the wants of its citizens." (Haas, 1997, vol.1: 59)

Haas' functionalism is indeed problematic for all the difficulties associated with modernization theories but especially for its teleology in which the end of the nation is a consequence of the course of history. While he is one of the rare theorist who is concerned with the decline of nationalism, his functionalist perspective leaves out what the citizens, on a normative level, get or do not get out of nationalism. It neglects the consequences for the creation of meaning of living in a modern society in which consumption is an important aspect of society. In order to understand better nationalism and ethnicity, I suggest not only to look at the state system and rational-economic requirements for human progress, but also how discourse, values and beliefs shape our world. Furthermore, Haas' state-centered approach neglects the subjective dimension that undermines national belonging. While Haas states that the creation of a progressive world system requires "constitutive norm creation" (Haas, 1997, vol.2: 453), he fails to consider, beyond the state, how citizens are already contributing to this process in their everyday lives.

In the following section, I look at key approaches to the study of Afrikaner nationalism that I grouped into three categories: primordialism, instrumentalism and constructivism. I take the view that constructivism offers us the best explanation of Afrikaner nationalism and addresses well the crucial question why ordinary people did become national. Notwithstanding the strength of constructivism, no approach to Afrikaner nationalism has yet explicitly focused on individual narratives to understand how and why people find meaning, or rather fail to do so, in nationalist discourse and mobilization. The reason for this absence is a focus on a state-centered view of nationalism and ethnicity that neglects subjectivity and subjectivization, as I will show below in my discussion of instrumentalist approaches.

1.3. Primordialism

According to the primordialist perspective, national belonging is a fundamental, human attachment. In this view, the nation is a set of cultural characteristics and institutions that elicit feelings of belonging because they reflect our inner self, our identity. Bonds were created through "blood, speech, custom and so on" and were seen to "differ from person to person, from society to society and from time to time" but there was a natural or spiritual affinity always present within an ethnic or cultural group (Geertz, 1963: 109/110). Much historical and political science writing about Afrikaner nationalism operated with such a conceptualization (Kenney, 1990; Vatcher, 1965). Isabel Hofmeyr observes that such studies assume "a deeply rooted organic 'Afrikaner identity'" meandering through the centuries and uniting a "monolithic volk" (Hofmeyr, 1987:95). These approaches work with an essentialized and timeless nationalism that emerges and dissipates according to political and socio-economic conjecture. The existence of a "national sentiment" is accepted as a given and based on such a sentiment, policies were devised to provide "for one's own" (Vatcher, 1965: 28). The phenomenon of national (and ethnic) identity is then a "self-generating perception, independent of state designs and social conditions" (Adam and Moodley, 1993: 28). It is a static concept in which ethnicity is seen as a tribal identification, a sectarian essentialism without much space for change and evolution beyond the periodic resurgence and abatement of nationalist mobilization. But there is also a larger, epistemological problem with primordialism. It is

a limited concept to explain change. If we emphasize the mere existence of an ethnic identity over time, little do we add to an understanding of the conditions of ethnic change – why is ethnic identification strong or weak, why can it lead to genocide, why it is present in one case but absent in others? And it seems to me that this is one of the major reasons why we want to study nationalism and ethnicity – how can we explain its different forms? Why do people become 'national' and why do they turn away from it? How do we relate ideological discourse of the nation as articulated through elites to individuals? Looking at individuals' experience and in their narratives, we gain insights into the process of ethnic identification.

Anthony D. Smith's *ethnosymbolic* approach combines primordial with constructivist approaches (Smith, 1995). He suggests that nations have a primordial, ethnic origin but this does not imply a static conception of the nation. For him, the primordial approach can incorporate change with the development of the nation. He concedes that the "nation may be a modern social formation, but it is in some sense based on pre-existing cultures, identities and heritages (Smith, 1995: 13)." The contemporary nation uses the past to construct the present. Rather than assuming a perennial, static core that makes up the essence of a nation, Smith argues that nationalists actualize the nation based on the past.

Afrikaner nationalism is often described as an ethnic nationalism which formed a movement aiming for political power based on language, religion and other cultural characteristics. These cultural characteristics are said to nurture a national sentiment and to constitute the ideological foundations of nationalist mobilization (Suzman, 1999: 16). With this perspective, what is much less known is *how* this process of ethnic identity formation or perhaps even ethnic consciousness formation is taking place. From the ethno-symbolic perspective, an ethnic consciousness springs. We may acknowledge that there is a primordial origin of a national culture, but what is crucial is the effort made by various entrepreneurs in mobilizing ethnicity for political ends. Hence, to claim that the Great Trek beginning in 1838 reflects the existence of an Afrikaner ethnic consciousness is quite implausible (Suzman, 1999: 31). Before we witness the emergence of an ethnic or national consciousness, we need to see the ethnic entrepreneurs at work. Only with the

development of printing technology, with pamphlets and newspapers, with the creation of a written Afrikaans language (and the spread of literacy), in short, with the onset of modernity, were the conditions present for the development of a nationalist discourse and the propagation of an Afrikaner nationalist ideology.

Lawrence Schlemmer attributes much relevance to primordial explanations. Although he states that the need for community (and ethnicity) is not primordial but ineluctable, throughout his thesis he privileges ultimately explanations that give credence to primordialism (Schlemmer, 1999: 65). For instance, his claim that ethnic belonging is a human need is supported by his preference for primordial explanations. Although he states that he recognizes the necessity of different approaches irrespective of their normative aspects (and he uses different approaches in his study), he supports a primordial approach that assumes an 'ethnic core' that eventually developed into an 'ethnic consciousness' among Afrikaners. It can indeed be true that individuals attach "fundamental meanings" and "strong emotional investments" (Schlemmer, 1999: 27) to ethnicity, but the larger question is when and why do these meanings and emotional investments matter, when do they become political (Schlemmer, 1999: 27)? Their historical existence alone does not tell us much when and why they become relevant. Primordialism may help us to understand a certain quality in nationalism that eludes clear identification; hence we talk of the resurgence or abatement of nationalism. Even Heribert Adam (1971; 1979), applying an instrumental approach, which pays attention to class and interests, nonetheless locates the resonance of ethnic factors within psychological needs, perhaps even primordial attachments, of groups and individuals. However, I would like to suggest that the primordial perspective is easily used to underline the perennial presence of an ethnic core with an ethnic consciousness, and, in the political arena, serves to underline 'essential' differences between people of different culture, language, and so on. This also underplays the importance of mobilization, of opportunity structures, of ideology and socio-economic factors, of power relations that contribute to the success of ethnic mobilization. Primordialism may explain why Afrikaner nationalism used certain folkways that were based on its Dutch-European origin (and that resonated with people who had certain characteristics in common) but it

fails to contribute to an explanation why ethnic and nationalist mobilization appears at a specific juncture in time and why it is successful or not. To merely emphasize the historical origin of an ethnic consciousness does not contribute much to explain its presence. Finally, it suggests the existence of deeply felt, 'thick' beliefs and traditions rather than looking at the circumstances that lead individuals to adopt and 'use' such beliefs and traditions.

Going beyond the existence of a nationalist or ethnic core, Dunbar Moodie focuses on the role of a belief system, an Afrikaner civil religion, as a primary explanation for Afrikaner nationalism that breaks with the essentialism of previous approaches but he falls short to explain how changes in ethnic and national allegiance occur.[9] Moodie defines civil religion as the religious dimension of the state. State power, political power, is "connoted in the symbols of the civil faith and re-enacted by civil ritual" (Moodie, 1975: 296). The meaning created through beliefs and rituals and embodied in the state, shaped national identity. In this sense, his is a state-centered approach. Although he acknowledges that these beliefs are being constantly modified, he cannot really account for the changes and evolution of Afrikaner identity, since he places the emergence of a particular, national identity on an established set of beliefs. The question that needs to be answered is why do beliefs change? Also, if the influence of the beliefs of Afrikaner civil religion on individuals is viewed in a strong sense, then alternative markers of identity can hardly be seen to resist or even emerge. The dominant identity that he describes may be part of an ideal typical description of the Afrikaner civil religion, but such a totalizing view of the formation of identity leaves out the nuances. He writes:

> This civil ritual [the celebration of the day of the Covenant] provides the civil faith with positive content. It unites Afrikaners in their sense of unique identity and destiny, inspiring the faithful, converting the skeptical, and even reminding them of their sacred separation from English and black African.

[9] In a later re-evaluation of his approach to Afrikaner civil religion, he intends to "dispel any misconception of a static doctrinal system which my initial exposition might have implied (Moodie, 1978: 221)". But I think the problem is not only a static belief system but also the assumed existence of an "old Afrikaner identity" (and its institutional supports) that "would have to be demolished and dismantled" (1978: 225). The identity and the support system did change but it happened over time, through gradual erosion in a common consumer society based on mutual black and white (Afrikaner) dependence.

> Certainly by 1938, the ordinary Afrikaner had made the main themes of the civil religion part of his own emotional identity. Most Afrikaners believed that they belonged to an elect People, most believed that at some time in the future, and sooner rather than later, God would give them another republic, but that this would come only through patience and faith. (1975: 21)

This description of an emerging identity is still closely related to a primordial perspective. A set of beliefs can easily be conceived of as the natural or spiritual affinity that remains as a core for ethnic and national identity, as Geertz described it. Moodie may concede that "beliefs and rituals constitute a dimension of reality for individuals and groups" and are "continually modified in response to conditions" (Moodie, 1975: 295), but little we know how pervasive these beliefs are and why, in the end, they elicit a following. People may celebrate rituals but it is not given that they are internalized and become a lasting and pervasive marker of identity. A dominant identity may be imposed by elites, but why do people follow, obey and accept these dominant identities?

1.4. Instrumentalism

Primordialism, either in the form of a historical-political account of a nationalist movement with an inner, ethnic core or as the prevalence of a belief system, was challenged by instrumentalist approaches that focused on interest, the material benefits that people derive from 'becoming national'. According to Dan O'Meara's Marxist analysis, the political success of Afrikaner nationalism is based on a class alliance. Petty bourgeois ideologues managed to convince the working class to join the nationalist ranks with promises of economic betterment. Nationalist ideology promoted by the petty bourgeoisie served as cement for this class alliance. Workers joined the nationalists because they believed in the promise of material benefit that were to be delivered through the state once the NP was in power in 1948. In short, the petty bourgeoisie used nationalist rhetoric or ideology to win over the workers. This alliance broke up due to the embourgeoisement of a majority of Afrikaners in the 1960s and 1970s. The political and economic elite, in tune with a newly emerged middle-class majority, protected their blue-collar ethnic brethren. The leaders of the latter marched out of the NP in the light of looming reforms that chipped away at "white" workers' racial protection. Afrikaner nationalism was split beyond repair. The unity of Afrikanerdom had definitely come to an end.

The success of Afrikaner business is phenomenal if one remembers that at the turn of the century, roughly a third of Afrikaners were counted among the poor whites. It is the merit of Dan O'Meara's *Volkskapitalisme* to give an incisive account how Afrikaner nationalist organizations strove to acquire a significant position in the economy and no longer considered themselves victims but agents of capitalism. The economic movement managed to overcome initial aversion to capitalism. After all, proletarianization into an industrializing economy was a traumatic experience that marked the end of *Boer* rural communities and was overshadowed by bitter class conflict (O'Meara, 1983: 152). However insightful and detailed his account is, he relies unnecessarily and exclusively on a materialist conception of social reality in which it is the material basis that explains all social and political processes and struggles. All human action, thought and expression is ultimately motivated by material conditions. In answering our central question why Afrikaners became national and later deserted nationalism O'Meara uses uniquely class analysis and analyzes material conditions.

For our purpose, I focus on three problems in his reliance on class analysis. First, in accordance with O'Meara's reliance on the material basis of class forces, ideology is directly derived from class-consciousness. Ideology or discourses that articulate an ideology reflect class interests and serve that class in the pursuit of power. He argues that during the 1930s and 1940s, as a nationalist movement expanded with the objective to elevate Afrikaners to new heights within a capitalist economy, the Christian-national ideology was used by the emerging capitalist class to create a class alliance of the petty bourgeoisie and workers (1983:165). Hence, ideology or discourse does not carry much meaning beyond the instrumental view that it serves the intentions of an elite that stands at the helm of a class. Elite manipulation is not a useful explanation as it depicts individuals as powerless recipients of discourse. Also, the satisfaction people gain from discursively created realities is not confined to the promise of material benefit. Individuals may also gain moral and emotional satisfaction from discourse that is bound up with individual and collective identity formation. Contrary to O'Meara's contention, discourse *does* explain identity. Identity is a subjective concept and it is through the

analysis of its significance that we can gain a better understanding why people prefer a certain ideology carried in discourse over others.

This brings us to the second problem of O'Meara's approach: his reliance on positivist sociology in explaining Afrikaner nationalism. Although his view of ideology goes beyond crude class reductionism, as Dickie-Clark's critique aptly points out, ideas, ideologies, values, beliefs systems, etc., O'Meara argues, do not constitute our world through reflections, as in an interpretative approach, but imply "a kind of bluffing of themselves by actors in the sense that it could imply that we can, of course, think of reality in this way if we like (and it might even be helpful), but things are not really like that at all! (Dickie-Clark, 1983: 110)." His social agents interpretation of reality is "little more than self-delusion" (Ibid., 112). Beyond the fog of perceptions, ideas and ideologies, O'Meara seems to argue that we can know "reality". Knowledge of this reality is based on non-ideological thought processes through the study of the "real underlying, relations" (O'Meara, 1983: 12) and the "conditions of existence" (Ibid., 13). The study of material conditions delivers us the real causes of human action. In the end, social agents do not own much agency. They are manipulated by elites or their thoughts and actions reflect objective structures and class forces.

The third critique of O'Meara' Marxist approach is his focus on the state in shaping ethnic and national identity. He shares such a state-centered approach with Herman Giliomee and Lawrence Schlemmer, although the latter two write from a liberal perspective (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989). All three look upon state policy as the dominant influence in shaping and promoting an Afrikaner ethnic identity. While they combine the analysis of political, social and economic factors with concerns for culture, the two sit uneasily together. Within the historical-political narrative, the cultural realm with its concern for subjectivity leads to conflicting insights that cannot be resolved, and in the end, prominence is given to an instrumentalist, state-centered analysis. I will provide a detailed critique of their approaches in chapter four describing the rise and decline of Afrikaner nationalism.

Another instrumentalist perspective focused on boundary maintenance between groups and nations (Barth, 1969). National belonging was a manifestation of creating and maintaining a sufficient consensus represented through ethnic markers that distinguished the in-group from outsiders. While material interest matters, the representations of these interests receive particular attention. Ethnic markers develop a set of rules and meanings that mattered beyond interests. In the process of ethnic mobilization, "particularistic interests become a common cause" to which all group members subscribe against the outsiders (Adam and Giliomee, 1979:61). Different cultural practices based on language, religion, race, ancestry, and sex (sic), the markers that define ethnicity, form a common bond (Adam and Moodley, 1986:32). The concept of ethnic mobilization as proposed by Adam (Adam and Giliomee, 1979:61-82) focuses on the evolution of ethnic self-perceptions. It attempts to analyze how ethnic identification has been modified over time. Groups keep ethnic attachments "as long as they serve a purpose" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 63). The extent and the manner in which ethnicity is mobilized depends on how it is used by ethnic entrepreneurs and their need for ethnic identification. This latter subjective aspect points to the group-psychological dimension of the ethnic mobilization approach. People may turn to the ethnic group for status enhancement and kin support based on the familiarity of ethnic markers. Ethnic appeals are attractive because they tap into a shared socialization experience and may reflect ultimately the yearning for a utopia of primordial harmony against a rationalized world (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 61). This is what this perspective adds to the instrumentalist approach with its focus on the state that plays a crucial role in providing for the interest for the in-group, appeals to ethnicity evoke an imagined community and are heeded because they are based on ethnic markers that constitute a common bond.

1.5. Constructivism

The third major approach is constructivism. It goes beyond the uses of difference and instead tries to explain how shifts in manifestations of national belonging occurred. At the basis of constructivist approaches is the idea that ethnicity and nationhood are "socially constructed, …products of human thought and action" (Yeros, 1999:1). As Crawford Young writes:

> The constructivist sees ethnicity as the product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as speech code, cultural practice, ecological adaptation, and political organization become woven into a consciousness of shared identity. Once a threshold is reached, the consciousness may become to a degree self-reproducing at group level but continue to be contingent for the individual, who remains engaged in an ongoing process of transacting and redefining identity. The constructivist thus places higher stress on contingency, flux, and change of identity that the other two major approaches [primordialism and instrumentalism] would concede. (1994: 79)

While his emphasis on contingency, flux and change as characteristics of identity is sound, Young's view that primordialism and instrumentalism share the presumed "existence of communal consciousness", is mistaken (Young, 1994: 79). Instrumentalism shares with constructivism a view that identities are not essentialized. Instead, they both allow for identities to be constructed. Yeros observes that "there is no necessary connection between instrumentalism and essentialism" (Yeros, 1999:6). Primordialists claim the existence of a natural, inner core whereas for instrumentalists and constructivists, national identity is open to profound change. Especially Fredrik Barth's instrumentalism, as Yeros points out, was the first to break with primordialist ontology (Yeros, ibid.). We would rather follow John Comaroff's (and Yeros') lead in opposing on the one hand, inventionism[10], Andersonian 'imagining'[11], and instrumentalism, as different manifestations of constructivism, to primordialism. (Yeros, 1999:4).

Within the constructivist framework, Isabel Hofmeyr (1987, 1988) looks at the Afrikaans language movement that spread at the turn of the century and that provided the crucial cultural and linguistic coherence for the development of an Afrikaner nationalist movement. In her analysis, the nationalist movement is very much based on an invented tradition, largely supported by the Afrikaner petty bourgeoisie. She also offers an explanation why working class Afrikaners, especially women, followed suit. A burgeoning popular literature in Afrikaans advised mothers and wives on social

[10] Inventionism refers to the view that ethnic and national traditions are primary invented. They are human creations and lack an inner, self-sustaining core.

[11] Andersonian imagining refers to the view that ethnic and national identity is imagined and that an imagined sense of belonging characterizes these modes of identification best (see T.Ranger, 1993)

improvement and linked the household, the domain of the Afrikaans language par excellence, with the "broader issue of 'Afrikaner identity'" (Hofmeyr, 1987:114). The work of the writer Gustav Preller who made a large contribution in popularizing Afrikaner history played an important role in this process. (1988). In an insightful analysis of Preller's method, Hofmeyr addresses some criticism levied against the 'invention of tradition' approach. Since a focus on invention emphasizes the role of dominant agents in shaping traditions (and hence downplays the role of subordinate groups, such as workers and women) and neglects the plurality and flux of traditions that emerged, merged and developed, she rather conceives of the Afrikaner tradition (and identity) as imagined. She writes:

> For Preller, to remember and, more to the point, so use memory creatively was always to recall something linked to a sense of nationhood. If, as others have argued, *nationalisms are often powerfully experienced in the realm of the imaginary and the creative* [my emphasis], and if indeed this accounts in some small measure for their appeal, then it is in Preller's use of memory and creative recall that one must also start seeking reasons for his appeal.

Hofmeyr pays attention to the crucial issue of adherence to a nationalist ideology and movement. In this process, people became national by subscribing to a nationalist imaginary. Since workers, and especially women, have no apparent interest in joining a nationalist movement dominated by male, petty bourgeois activists, she tries to account for the reasons that made them to join nationalist ranks. In this quest, she looks at the creation of an imaginary suffused with nationalist rhetoric to which individuals came to adhere. She offers three different explanations for why people became nationalist and why they came to accept a manufactured Afrikaans literary culture (Hofmeyr, 1987:95). At what she calls the personal level, women read Afrikaans popular magazines that contained messages about how Afrikaner women and an Afrikaner household should behave and look like. These women read the magazines because they wanted the entertainment, to fight boredom and to heed tips for self-improvement (Hofmeyr, 1987:113). Second, at a more structural level, warnings about the decay of the family and appeals to the role of women to reverse this trend were pervasive in these magazines and women accepted the ideology that they had to act against this decay in an Afrikaner way.

Third, popular literature created a nationalist imaginary that elicited emotional satisfaction and assurances amongst the readership (Hofmeyr, 1988:530). Together, these three explanations form a powerful reason why people adhered to nationalist rhetoric. At the same time, one would wish that the personal and how it relates to the ideological would be more explored. Popular Afrikaans literature certainly played its part in the creation of a dominant Afrikaner identity to which many wanted to adhere. Yet, we need to have more clarity of the role of discourse and ideology and how they relate to the individual that takes action and subscribes to nationalist arguments and supports nationalist parties. Indeed, how and why individuals adhere to ideologies remains a challenge to the explanation of nationalism.

We find a similar focus on discourse and ideology in Aletta Norval's analysis of Afrikaner nationalism that is, however, much more explicitly located within discourse theory. She tries to answer the question how apartheid discourse "institutionalised a certain vision of the world, of social and political reality" (Norval, 1996:4). The urbanization and industrialization of the turn of the century among Afrikaners led to the emergence of the new hegemonic discourse of apartheid. This hegemonic discourse was articulated through administrative and clerical Afrikaner elites that had to overcome differences and divisions. It offered the best explanation for the dislocations of this vast social transformation and made the formation of a new, nationalist identity possible. This identity rested on the social imaginary of apartheid that was widely accepted by white Afrikaans speakers. It created "novel images for identification through which new subject positions were constructed" (Ibid., 7). A crucial aspect of the success of a hegemonic discourse was the creation of outsiders, the Other within the framework of new, political frontiers. However, under the impact of the reforms of the 1980s, apartheid discourse entered into an organic crisis (Ibid., 10): apartheid discourse could no longer explain social divisions in a way that made sense.

Norval describes well how an emerging hegemonic discourse was contested and that eventually socio-political battles over the 'right' representation of Afrikaner identity brought about the success of a nationalist discourse (Norval, 1996: chapters 2 and 3). In

her understanding of the process of identification, it is not quite clear how and why the dominant discourse of Afrikaner nationalist leaders was accepted as valid and 'interiorized'. This is due to an analysis that is primarily concerned with the hegemonic discourse, as articulated by elites, at the expense of the receptivity of this discourse. Implied is also that we try to understand better how individuals give meaning to their lives, and make sense of the ideas, values and beliefs that surround them. The study of national identities and identification allows for the inclusion of subjectivity.

A recent study of Afrikaner identity demonstrates the problem of a positivist conception that neglects subjective perspectives. Courtney Jung's analysis of the politics of Afrikaner identity between 1978 and the 1990s shows the limits of positivist approaches confined to causal explanations. In her analysis of Afrikaner identity formation in the 1990s, it is dominantly a set of structures that are largely determined by elites and their ideology and discourse that determines ethnic mobilization. In this top-down approach, the agency and the making of meaning by the subject are neglected. Either the discourse of elites is uncritically adhered to or the choice of individuals to heed theses discourses is influenced by material conditions. Howarth sums it up well:

> political leaders employ mobilizing discourse instrumentally to construct identities so as to advance their projects, or the resonance of these appeals is ultimately determined by structural factors such as material conditions, available ideology and level of organization. (Howarth, 2001:261)

Jung's emphasis on top-down, elite driven ethno-nationalist projects and structural factors neglect that in the end, subjects need to be in a position to accept these elite discourses as valid and intend to follow them. It is for this reason that I suggest to analyze the formation of identities from a subjective perspective as told in narratives of the self of young Afrikaners.

The constructivist approach to Afrikaner nationalism, as we have shown above, turned to discourse and ideology. But even in light of the explanatory powers of this perspective, I want to suggest that it is foremost a focus on individual experiences and life-worlds

which allows for a better understanding of people's motivations to adhere to nationalism. Personal experiences and the construction of a nationalist imaginary are related when people make choices, that is, accept as valid and support certain discourses and the organizations and individuals that promote them. Damian Tambini writes that the aim is to make "systematic accounts of identity and emotional motivations in nationalist mobilization" (Tambini, 1998:150). In a similar vein, Thomas Hylland-Eriksen suggests to use the concept of life-world (Lebenswelt) in studying collective identity formations (Hylland-Eriksen, 1999: 45). He therefore argues that the study of "identification must begin with the individual and the meaningful relationships he or she enters into with others and with a world ordered through classificatory schemata" (Ibid., 55). But for individuals to choose their allegiances, be it based on political, economic, or symbolic considerations, they must get something out of it. At the basis for such a choice is an understanding of "the subjective experiences upon which people act" (Ibid., 61). In other words, Hyland Eriksen argues to study social life from within and to relate macro-processes to local-life worlds. According to this view, we also have a conception of identities that are not static or are uniquely reflections of dominant structures. Instead, individuals actively participate in the shaping of their identities and the individual refuses to adhere to one dominant identity.[12] Rather, multiple and even conflicting identities are the norm. Particularly in the post-colonial context, identities are conceptualized as multiple, fluid and changing (Mbembe, 1992; 2001; Erasmus, 2001). It would nevertheless be a mistake to conclude that the subject is generally accepted as fleeting, liberated from any structure that holds it in place. As Mbembe writes, conceptualizations of identities as changing and in flux easily neglect their materiality (Mbembe, 2001: 5). The twin forces of the homogenizing tendencies of globalization and the affirmation of local identities, the forces of "flux and fix" (Meyer and Geschiere, 1999: 23), are such that individuals find themselves nonetheless in the "grip of identity" (Howarth, 2002: 256). Indeed, there is the danger of underplaying the sedimentation of identity and the process of identification, that is, how individuals and groups come to identify with symbols and values and how they discard them or continue to live according to them

[12] This intent is also visible in Erasmus' (2001) description of the particularity of Coloured identities without reifying them.

(Howarth, 2002: 258). Constructivist approaches need also to look at forces and processes that keep identities fixated in order to avoid the dead-end of a boundless subject. Hence, subjectivities need to be better integrated with structures to form a coherent explanation.

2. Afrikaner identities and late modernity

Jon Hyslop's study of Afrikaner nationalism intends to explain its decline. In doing so, he integrates an analysis of the particularities of our epoch with questions of nationalist mobilization among Afrikaners. In two recent essays on Afrikaner nationalism, Hyslop locates the emergence of new Afrikaner identities in late modernity. I first describe these new identities and analyze how their emergence is explained. Second, with the help of five characteristics, individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization, I explain how conditions of late modernity are shaping the formation of contemporary identities.

Jon Hyslop's research on Afrikaner nationalism detects in the *Zeitgeist* of late modernity a major contribution to the emergence of subjectivities that went beyond the confines of a nationalist and ethnic group identity.

For him, the development of a capitalist, consumer society created the conditions for new subjectivities among white South Africans and Afrikaners that emerged in the 1970s (Hyslop, 2000; 2005). A crucial aspect of this approach is an analysis of the role of consumption in maintaining the nation and nationalism.

Hyslop accounts for the socio-political changes that took place among Afrikaners once they had secured a dominant position in South Africa from the 1950s on and he tries to answer the question why Afrikaners turned away from nationalism. For much of the twentieth century, the mobilization of an Afrikaner ethnic identity to assert control over the state and to uplift Afrikaners through exclusionary apartheid policies was successful. By the 1970s, a large number of Afrikaners found themselves in a comfortable middle-class position. This social transformation had significant political consequences. The

once monolithic party, the NP, was under strong internal pressures, pitting die-hard apartheid advocates against reluctant reformers. In the early nineties, a majority of whites and Afrikaners came to accept a democratic political system. What had happened? Hyslop argues that Afrikaners ceased to look upon themselves as a coherent group with unifying goals, enveloped in a "'pseudo-traditional organizational complex'", very much an invented tradition, but instead developed an "individualist and consumerist identity" (Hyslop, 2000:37). By looking at the formation of identities, Hyslop is studying subjectivization or how subjectivity is produced. According to Jean-Francois Bayart, studying how the human subject is constituted involves an analysis of "the production of modes of existences or lifestyles (Bayart, 2005: 153)." He suggests turning to the study of politics and the social imaginary because in analyzing the two, we take stock of processes of subjectivization and simultaneously study the cultural reasons for political action. In chapters six, seven and eight, I will explain in detail how a new social imaginary contributes to the formation of identities among young Afrikaners.

Building on constructivist approaches that analyze discourses of ideology and how they shape processes of identification, Hyslop turns to personal experiences that inform narratives of the self. These narratives help to explain the individual's relationship to social structures. But Hyslop is also making a broader argument on which I intend to elaborate below. He turns to cultures and values that became hegemonic in a South African, modern consumer society. In doing so, he pays particular attention to society in late modernity as a society of consumers and how this has shaped the formation of identities.

In what follows, I describe what sociologists understand under the term late modernity and how it is related to the formation of identities. According to Stuart Hall, theorists of late modernity argue that structural change leads to the break up of modern identities (Hall, 1996: 596). Consequently, "the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race and nationality which gave us firm locations as social individuals" is now fragmented (Ibid.). Our personal identities as integrated subjects are undermined and the subject becomes de-centered (Hall, 1996: 597). Hall argues that the traditional

sociological view of identity construction is being modified. According to this sociological view, subjective feelings are aligned "with objective places we occupy in the social and cultural world" and hence, the subject is stabilized (Ibid.). But this is changing (Hall, 1996: 598). In late modernity, a unified and stable identity is becoming fragmented – an individual is conceptualized as having several and even contradictory identities (Ibid.). For Ernesto Laclau, this shows a conceptualization of the self as dislocated and the center of the self is displaced by a "plurality of power centers" (Laclau in Hall, 599). For individuals, the prevalence of difference in modern society produces a variety of "subject positions" or identities, (Laclau in Hall, 600). Since stable identities have been detached, Laclau argues, a positive possibility of such dislocation is that new identities can be forged. With Laclau, but also Anthony Giddens, the emphasis is on discontinuity, fragmentation, rupture and dislocation as hallmarks of the formation of identities (Hall, 1996: 600).

2.1. Individualization and the displacement of traditional identities

In late modernity, as described above, identities are no longer confined to tradition. Ulrich Beck argues that in late modernity a wide social transformation is under way.[13] For him, increasing individualization and the break up of traditional identities or the social forms of industrial society, such as class, stratification, family and gender status, are important aspects of late modernity (Beck, 1992: 87). These traditional forms of the collective conscience recede and individualization increases. Beck argues that this process of individualization is different from previous ones in that it goes beyond the bourgeoisie, the middle class. Rather, the emergence of the 'free wage laborer' in modern capitalism affects all classes. Inequality remains, yet ties to a social class influence people's actions much less. Individualized forms and conditions of existence appear. The individual becomes the center of planning and conducting life. Moving away from traditional identities, the individual has to choose with which group or subculture she or he wishes to identify with. Beck sums it up by saying that

> "[I]individualization means the variation and differentiation of lifestyles and forms of life, opposing the thinking behind the traditional categories of large

[13] This section on individualization is based on Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991).

> group societies – which is to say, classes, estates and social stratification (Beck, 1992: 88)."

In a society of individuals, people demand the control of their own money, time, living space, and body - people want to develop their own perspectives on life.

For Beck, the development of individualization in the West[14] in late modernity is a crucial historical moment: the experience of historical continuity has been disrupted. Under the historical impact of individualization, "people have lost their traditional support networks and have had to rely on themselves and their own individual (labour market) fate with all its attendant risks, opportunities, and contradictions" (Beck, 1992: 92). While class analysis reveals that income inequalities and the structure of the division of labour have remained the same, the attachment to 'social class' has weakened. Ways of life are now individualized and for economic survival, individuals are forced to make themselves the center of their life plans and conduct. Furthermore, the consequence of this historical disruption, this discontinuity, is that forms of perception become private and ahistorical. Individualization colours the view of the collective fate. The temporal horizons of perceptions narrow more and more so that ultimately, history shrinks to the (eternal) present, "and everything revolves around the axis of one's personal ego and personal life" (Beck, 1992: 135).[15] In a similar way, for Anthony Giddens, late modernity is a particular historical juncture in the development of modernity at which profound changes in social practices and modes of behavior are based on the separation of time and space (Giddens, 1991:16). Prior to modernity, time and space were connected through the situatedness of place. Now, in modernity, space has been pulled away from place through

[14] Approaches to consumer society usually make it explicit that their particular description is confined to affluent, Western society. However, I would like to question the usefulness of such a distinction based on two reasons. First, there is affluence and consumption in developing countries as well. Second, globalization has brought consumer culture, its symbols, significance and desires to all corners of the globe. Differences between developed societies and developing ones exist, especially with regard to wealth and income, but in times of mass globalization, cultural and consumption-oriented practices are increasingly being shared across the world.

[15] Beck describes here a sense of a loss of historical awareness in modern society which is related to a loss of collective consciousness. Various governments around the globe try to counter such a loss of historical and collective consciousness through the promotion of the remembrance of the past glory of a collective identity intended to create a sense of belonging.

the development of an empty dimension of time which is reflected in the diffusion of the mechanical clock. This separation of time from space created the dynamism of human social affairs that contributed to the movement away from the hold of tradition.

In the realm of gender relations, increased equality between men and women has established new patterns of relationships. In fact, almost " 'anything goes' " (Beck, 1992: 115). Gender roles have to be negotiated and there is a wide variety of modes of relationship in terms of sex, parenthood, friendship and so on. Describing how pervasive the making of choice runs through our modern life, Beck writes that "[I]n all biographical dimensions, opportunities for and constraints on choice open up, as if forced upon us." (Beck, 1992: 116).

The progress of individualization in industrial society reflects sweeping changes in the relationship between the individual and society. Beck suggests that a new mode of societalization is emerging in what he defines as a triple process of individualization (Beck, 1992: 127). First, with disembedding, historically prescribed social forms are removed. Second, it involves the loss of traditional security in relation to practical knowledge, faith and norms. Third, re-embedding stands for the emergence of a new type of social commitment. In the process of re-embedding, class differences and family connections recede into the background. With re-embedding, the new mode of reintegration and control leads the *individual* to become "the reproduction unit for the social in the lifeworld" (Beck, 1992: 130). This focus on the individual has the consequence that even people of the same class must choose between different lifestyles, subcultures, social ties and identities. Traditional ties (social class, nuclear family) are replaced by being a member of the labour market and as a consumer which leads to standardization and increased social control. Thus, Beck deals with the world of work, production, and consumption. As I will discuss in more detail in the following section on consumption, how far being a modern consumer is a liberating or a restraining aspect of individual identity is contested. Beck seems to take a rather dim view of the emancipating characteristics of being a consumer. At the same time, under the process of re-

embedding, new types of social commitments appear in the political terrain, as with the emergence of new social movements (Beck, 1992: 184-235).

Finally, individualization means that each person's biography is open and dependent on individual decisions. Hence, late modernity is described as self-reflexive (Beck, 1992: 135). For Beck, "[i]ndividualization of life situations and processes thus means that biographies become *self-reflexive*; socially prescribed biography is transformed into biography that is self-produced and continues to be produced" (Beck, 1992: 135). This has the consequence that the individual has to conceive of himself/herself as the centre of action. Survival requires the development of an ego-centered world view. "One even has to choose one's social identity and group membership, in this way managing one's own self, changing its image. In the individualized society, risks do not just increase quantitatively; qualitatively new types of personal risk arise, the risk of chosen and changed personal identity" (Beck, 1994:14). However, individualization does not mean the free-floating individual, with limitless free decisions. Beck explains:

> Individualization is a compulsion, but a compulsion for the manufacture, self-design and self-staging of not just one's biography but also its commitments and networks as preferences and life phases change, but, of course, under the overall conditions and models of the welfare state, such as the educational system (acquiring certificates), the labor market, labor and social law, the housing market and so on (Ibid.).

To sum up, late modernity has made the strongest impact on society through the break up of traditional identities and individualization. Ways of life are now individualized and for economic survival under the labour regime of advanced capitalism, individuals are forced to make themselves the center of their life plans and conduct. This means that people want to develop their own perspectives on life. In the formation of one's life trajectory, one is forced to choose and to seize opportunities. A new perception of time emphasizes the individual and society moves away from traditions. In late modernity, detraditionalization has far advanced.

2.2. Detraditionalization

According to Giddens, the acceleration of modernity means that we are moving irreversibly to a post-traditional society (Giddens, 1994: 56). He argues that at the end of the century, our era is marked by the following characteristics. First, there is the spread of modern institutions through globalization processes. This brings about a connectedness between everyday decisions and global outcomes: even an ordinary action such as the purchase of an item of clothing may contribute to global, ecological decay (Giddens, 1994: 58). Second, there is what he calls the radicalization of modernity which involves "processes of evacuation, the disinterring and problematizing of tradition" (Giddens, 1994: 57). Modernity was seen as an opportunity to achieve progress through science, yet it was also tinged with disenchantment. In late modernity, however, "opportunity and danger are balanced in equal measure" (Ibid.). Furthermore, our life has become experimental, not only on a global scale in which man-made natural disaster force us to find new ways to deal with the havoc they create, but also in our everyday lives, through institutional reflexivity (Giddens, 1994: 58). These everyday experiments are very open and it is up to the individual to define the course they take. Such a constant examination and reformation of social actions, thereby altering their character, is at the core of the reflexivity of modern social life (Giddens, 1990: 38).

Late modernity involves processes of evacuation. They mean digging deep to clean out the debris of the past, as in archeology (Giddens, 1994: 73). By doing so, human interactions and modes of behavior that were founded on traditions in pre-modern times are carried into modernity. Several factors are involved here. With the attenuation of tradition, the past becomes emotional inertia. In the past, traditions involved repetitive behaviour. Compulsion, which reflects this emotional inertia, is the translation of tradition into modernity. Modernity is compulsive. Compulsiveness is tradition without traditionalism (Giddens, 1994: 70). Second, the past must be reconstructed in the present. Third, individual self reflexivity, a basic characteristic of everyday life in a post-traditional world, is based on emotional autonomy. Finally, Giddens suggests that "the prototypical post-traditional personal relation – the pure relationship – depends upon intimacy in a manner not generally characteristic of premodern contexts of social

interaction (Giddens, 1994: 74).” Evacuation and the problematizing of traditions also involves disembedding. Under disembedding, Giddens understands the evacuation of the traditional content of local contexts of action, and the reorganizing of social relations across broad time-space bands (Giddens, 1994: 85). Disembedding is also central to the emergence of an expert system. Experts are specialists and their competence is linked to specialization (Giddens, 1994:88).

Moving from modernity to late modernity, the role of tradition is changing (Giddens, 1994: 91). While during modernity, tradition continued at the local community level, with the nation-state and capitalism, greater social integration was possible (Ibid., 92). Hence, the local community broke up. Institutional reflexivity became the enemy of tradition. To counter these processes of modernization and detraditionalization, new traditions were created, such as the invented traditions well described by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Hobsbawm, 1983). To sustain identity, the authority of tradition was invoked. By doing so, collective rituals were maintained. The mobilization of Afrikaner nationalism from the 1930s on shows the processes at work in the invention of tradition. Traditions are used, with their formulaic truth and mystical notions, through rituals, to confer “integrity upon the present in relation to the past” (Giddens, 1994: 104). Also, within traditions, habits are tied to the formulaic truths that are professed by tradition. Tradition is used to protect against contingency (Ibid.: 101). Perhaps most important, “[t]radition incorporates power relations and tends to naturalize them” (Ibid.: 104). In contrast, in post-traditional society, we are faced with cultural pluralism and traditions have to be justified through discourse (Ibid., 105). This allows for the mediation of clashes between the individual and the community through discourse and dialogue. It is for this reason that the youth receives particular attention in the assessment of the continuity or discontinuity of traditions and this is also the reason why the existence of a dialogue between generations is important for the development of society.

In late modernity, the relationship between youth, authority and tradition can say much about the character of the epoch since there are no longer any determinant authorities, and the question appears, perhaps for the youths more acute than for adults, where from

to take guidance for conducting social life? However we look at the problem of generational difference, in late modernity, all individuals face the choice of lifestyle. The concept of lifestyle is usually associated with superficial consumerism, but it is also a set of practices that give material form to a particular narrative of self-identity (Giddens, 1991: 81). How consumerism and consumption is related to choices of lifestyle will be discussed in the next section.

2.3. Consumption

Consumption offers choices of lifestyle and thus becomes an important aspect of identity formation in late modernity. Consumption is not only recognized as an integral part of modern capitalist production, but it also plays a socio-economic role "in the reproduction of social order" (Slater, 2004: 204). In social reproduction, but also in the reproduction of labour, culture is instrumental because it organizes forms of consumption which include education, parenting and a gender division of labor, housing, policing, religion and so on. Don Slater argues that culture has to be understood in broad terms and that "issues of culture, education, ideology, family life all enter into the labour costs of capitalism" (Slater, 2004: 180). They are all seen as 'goods' that we consume and that are part and parcel of capitalist production. Hence, consumption goes beyond a technical, economic function and involves the regulation not only of capitalist economy, but also of capitalist society (Slater, 2004: 181). The expansion of capitalism and the all-pervasiveness of consumption and consumer culture values led to significant social, cultural and psychological change. In other words, "consumption has entered the processes of identity formation and identity maintenance that it has become so central to people's lives in western capitalism" (Bocock, 1993: 112). We might add that it has also become central to people's lives in South Africa, especially among the affluent citizens.

In late modernity, consumer culture and patterns of consumption have become increasingly important as capitalist society has evolved beyond mass consumption and mass production. To better understand this shift, we may distinguish between two periods of modes of production (and consumption), Fordism and post-Fordism. Under Fordism, capitalist accumulation shifted from producer to consumer goods and the work process

was transformed (Slater, 2004: 181). A more efficient, automotive division of labour emerged in the Fordist mass production plant. This process was marked by rationalization and reification (Slater, 2004: 182). The workers' labor was rationalized in the production process which in turn involved the reproduction of labor in consumption. As labor was transformed and rationalized, so was the worker's everyday life (Slater, 2004: 183). A mass culture emerged in which consumption was compensatory: consumer culture is a 'bribe' to workers, a compensation, for rationalization and alienation (Slater, 2004: 185). Consumption became a central social, economic and cultural process. At the same time, capitalism was becoming more global in its impact through multi-national companies (Bocock, 1993: 78). Furthermore, Bocock argues that consumerism developed into the hegemonic ideology of capitalism. However, the Fordist production system encountered difficulties and changed direction. The increasing production costs of large scale production, saturated consumer markets and an ever faster turn-over in fashion, trends and tastes, led to flexibility and flexible accumulation under the post-Fordist system. The management of labor moved from the Taylorist model to the model of human resources (Rose, 1991 in Slater,2004: 186). An altered form of consumption emerged. There were no longer standardized, demographic categories that defined the consumer groups but lifestyles, niche markets and target consumer groups (Slater, 2004: 187). For Bocock, under Fordism, *work roles* in production processes were central to identity formation. As we moved from Fordism to post-Fordism, consumption patterns of action turned central to post-modern identity construction (Bocock, 1993: 94).

In modern consumer society, culturally constituted lifestyles replaced social structural categories such as class and gender. Social, ethnic or age-grade boundaries were less significant in terms of consumption patterns than more individuated patterns. Identities became open to change. Self-definition, identity, pleasure, freedom and so on were associated with everyday life in consumption, and not in production. Being a consumer of capitalism's product entailed learning a specific set of cultural symbols and values (Bocock, 1993: 54). People learnt to desire consumer goods by accepting consumption-oriented values and they were linked to the process of consumption through social institutions, such as the mass media, especially television (Bocock, 1993: 93).

According to Slater, in late capitalism, non-material goods have an important place in the economy and consumption. Consumption includes information, advice and expertise, leisure events and activities, as well as entertainment. Much of the modern social world, with its relations and experiences, can be made in the form of a saleable commodity for consumption (Slater, 2004: 189). Commodities acquired a greater component of non-materiality. For example, the image of a product is crucial. But perhaps more importantly, Slater argues that we do not experience or see the real thing, but its representation. In a less material production process, non-material commodities such as databases, computer systems and software design, information, and specialist knowledge are sold by consultants, subcontracted management, planning and marketing functions, personnel and client relations management, etc. This sort of labor component requires a specific labor that encompasses all aspects of the individual. Employees today have to sell their personality.

> "[This] requires *work* – carried out through consumption – to dress well look right, be attractive, stay up-to-date on culture, news and fashion. *Personality* is exemplary of the dematerialized commodity and its culture: what you are, what you sell and what you consume seem to have formed a frightening unity" (Slater, 2004: 192).

Modern labour requires the full engagement of the individual with all her/his attributes in the service of employment. But beyond wealthy people and the employed, Bocock argues that those who cannot afford to buy consumer goods or lifestyle, are still part of consumer society through desire. Under an increased focus on consumption, the desire for goods to be consumed becomes an important aspect of society and it is such desire that includes also members of society who may not have the means to purchase them, but are still exposed to desire them. For Bocock then, "Style, enjoyment, excitement, escape from boredom at work or at play, being attractive to self and others, these become central life-concerns (Bocock: 1993, 81)."

With Bocock, we can recognize that consumption is a cultural phenomenon. As such, we need to understand "the role of consumption in shaping personal identity and the

character of the consuming subject" (Clarke et al., 2003: 13). According to Clarke et al., forging an identity has always been part of everyday life, but the consumerist nature of society has changed this task fundamentally (Ibid., 15). They are less sanguine than Beck and Bocock about the displacement of traditional identities, based on class, gender, ethnicity and so on. They argue that

> "[Consumerism managed to subvert to] extent to which identity is connected to class and other social categories; to elevate personal identity over collective identity; and even to undermine the logic of building a rigid identity – so that it increasingly makes sense to construct a flexible identity fit for an unstable world" (Clarke et al., 2003:15).

Hence, they agree that individuals may have several identities and that it is difficult to identify one dominant identity. They suggest that buying a lifestyle through consumption has replaced a more rigid form of identity, since consumers, and this is a very contested assertion, acquired the possibility to construct an identity as desired or were forced to do so. Nonetheless, Clarke et al. caution against dismissing the role of traditional identities. Such a dismissal attributes too strong a role to individualization and the supposed emancipatory possibility of consumerism[16]. Clarke et al. argue that there are still obstacles that prevent a 'free-floating' identity and a class background cannot be changed - class origin is still visible through tastes and dispositions. However, they observe "that how one spends one's money rather than how one earns it is becoming increasingly important" (Ibid.). For them, social class is no longer the sole determining factor of consumption patterns. Equally, the meaning of social categories, such as ethnicity and gender, has been affected by consumerism. While the construction of identity is increasingly an individual task (a personal task and a personal responsibility), they argue that identities are still sanctioned and validated socially (Ibid., 16). For instances, adherence to youth subcultures was independent from class and required merely adopting the 'right style'. But such self-styling has gone beyond subcultures and encompasses the entire consumer culture. The neo-tribal form of subcultures allows individuals to adhere to ready-made identities. By doing so, consumers assert their individualities. Finally, they argue that in consumer society, individuals are defined as consumers and producers (or

[16] For another critique of this view, see T. Edwards (2000).

through other identities such as mothers, fathers, lovers) *and* by being a particular kind of consumer (class, lifestyle, ethnicity) (Ibid., 20).

To sum up, consumption developed in late modernity with the change in production from Fordist to post-Fordist production methods into a constitutive part of hegemonic culture of capitalist society. As a producer and as a consumer, individual personality is emphasized. How far individualization processes related to the emergence of consumer society have displaced traditional identities is contested. Or how far consumption can be seen as liberatory is equally contested. What is however generally accepted is that consumption influences the formation of identities. Also, a focus on the individual in labor production but also the reliance on an individual life trajectory generates risk in everyday life. Let me describe below how risk is related to life in late modernity.

2.4. Risk

In modern society, the existence of diverse risks occupies people's minds (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991). Even though technological advancement provided a sense of mastery over nature, an unprecedented sense of risk proliferated (Joffe, 1999: 2). Lay people are constantly exposed to the existence of risks through the mass media which parade expert knowledge about risks that threaten society (Joffe, 1999:2). The widespread lack of trust in these experts creates an era of uncertainty and unease (Joffe, 1999:3). To gain control, every attempt is made to calculate and regulate risks and dangers. The impression emerges that these risks can be somehow regulated and predicted. It is thus that Giddens says societies attempt to colonize the future.

Beck argues that living in a risk society is the fundamental characteristic of late modernity. For him, at the root of the emergence of risk society out of industrial society is creative (self) destruction. Modern, industrial society is broken up and this leads to another modernity (Beck: 1994: 3). At this historical juncture, modernization is becoming reflexive, that is, "it is becoming its own theme" (Beck, 1991:19). How does he understand this reflexivity? At an overall level, it means that society has now to deal with the problems and the risks of its techno-economic development. Beck calls this process

reflexive modernization (Beck, 1994: 2). The most important aspect in this newly, emerging society is the existence of an all-pervasive, yet diffuse risk. Beck defines risk society as "a developmental phase of modern society in which the social, political, economic and individual risks increasingly tend to escape the institutions for monitoring and protection in industrial society" (Ibid.). As a society, we not only have to deal with the risks and problems we create, but we are increasingly unable to understand how to deal with these self-generated problems. Risk, a by-product from the production of wealth, is now defining society fundamentally and it affects society as a whole through the threat of self-destruction of all life on earth (Beck, 1991: 21). That is why it is a global risk, beyond mere personal risks, yet it does not exclude these. The risk that production carries for the well-being, even continued existence of humanity, is based on the effects of ecological pollution through industrial production. But the dangers from ecological pollution are not only secondary health problems, but also about "social, economic and political consequences of these side effects – collapsing markets, devaluation of capital, bureaucratic checks on plant decisions, the opening of new markets, mammoths costs, legal proceedings and loss of face" (Ibid., 24). Not only are these threats produced by society itself, but they also "exceed the foundations of social ideas of safety" (Beck, 1994: 7). Perceptions of insecurity have far reaching consequences for society. To comprehend that there is indeed a risk, albeit very diffuse, stemming from, let's say toxicity, risk "must always be imagined, implied to be true, believed. In this sense too, risks are invisible" (Beck, 1991: 28). Hence, everyday consciousness of risk remains theoretical and scientized. But the awareness of risk has become part and parcel of our consciousness. The danger that is carried with risk "is always a *cognitive* and *social* construct" (Beck, 1994:6). The presumed existence of such diffuse risks reflects a normative horizon of lost security and broken trust. They bring up the question: how do we wish to live? (Ibid.). As individuals and as a collective, we are constantly confronted with this existential question.

Risk society has important consequences on how the collective is lived. In late modernity, and in contrast to industrial society, "collective and group-specific sources of meaning" are being exhausted (Beck, 1994: 8). "[A]ll definition effort" is imposed on the

individual (Ibid.). Individuals move from industrial society "into the turbulence of the global risk society" (Ibid.). People live now with "different, mutually contradictory, global and personal risks" (Ibid.). Beck sees a liberating element in this process since only the individual is now a subject of entitlements and obligations (1994: 8). Furthermore, "[o]pportunities, threats, ambivalences of the biography,…, must increasingly be perceived, interpreted and handled by individuals themselves" (Ibid.). Through the existence of risk, individualization comes to the fore, and traditions inherent in the collective, recede. To sum up, living with risk becomes a ubiquitous feature of late modernity in which individuals have to ask themselves constantly how they should conduct their lives.

2.5. Globalization

In late modernity, the risks of modern civilization are globalized. Through the global division of labor, hazards are universalized (Beck, 1992: 36). But it is not only through the spread of risk around the globe that globalization, defined most basically as the intensification of global interconnectedness (McGrew, 1996: 467), manifests itself in late modernity. In a globalized world, there are also much more profound processes at work. According to Giddens, globalization leads to a reordering of time and space (Giddens, quoted in McGraw, 1996: 471). For Giddens, global networks of communication and global systems of production reduce the influence of local conditions on people's lives. Social relations are lifted out "from local contexts of interaction" and recombined across time and space through the forces of modernity (Ibid.). The global and the local are interlocked. Globalization, for Giddens, "is best understood as expressing fundamental aspects of time-space distanciation. Globalization concerns the intersection of presence and absence, the interlacing of social events and social relations 'at a distance' with local contextualities (Giddens, 1991:21). There are then two interrelated dimensions to globalization (McGraw, 472). First, the existence of a multiplicity of connections between societies around the globe is the spatial dimension. Hence, events, decisions and activities in one part of the world are felt in another (Ibid.). Second, the 'deepening' of levels of interactions has the consequence that, even though "…everyone has a local life, phenomenal worlds for the most part are truly global" (Giddens, quoted in McGraw,

1996: 473). The global human condition is thereby interpenetrated by the particularities of place and time (Ibid.).

In late modernity, identities are being reconfigured under the impact of processes based on five characteristics, individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization. Stable identities are dislocated and new ones are emerging.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Before I explain how I carried out my research, let me briefly restate the research problem. The end of Afrikaner nationalism offers a good opportunity to understand better why individuals adhere to and desert ethnicity and nationalism. As we have seen in the previous chapter, theories of nationalism grapple with the problem how individuals become national. In order to answer this question, we have to look at the experience that informs emotional motivations, ultimately leading to adherence to or desertion of nationalism. In other words, how is the subjectivity of individuals, their preferences and decisions shaped by experience? We need to take a better look at processes of identity formation in which individuals acquire a national or ethnic identity and deem it meaningful for the conduct of their lives. Hence, we are compelled to study the role of emotional motivations in nationalist mobilization. In the formation of identities, individual life-worlds play an important role because they describe how an individual sees and understands her or his environment. Furthermore, the study life-worlds allow us to gain insights into the subjective experiences upon which people act. In this study then, to understand experience, narratives of the self are analyzed.

My research is an original contribution to the study of Afrikaner nationalism in that for the first time a greater emphasis is placed on exploring systematically the subjectivity of nationalism and ethnicity. In narratives of the self individuals tell their life experience. This individual experience is placed within the larger social context by analyzing them in the following way. First, narratives of the self are related to the environment of individuals, the political and social structures within which their life worlds take shape. This contributes to an understanding of the making of subjectivities by relating the subjective to the structural environment. Second, in order to understand the particularities of experience as reflected in narrative, the current epoch of late modernity and its

characteristics is drawn upon to see how the *Zeitgeist* shapes subjectivities. This study claims that individual identity formation among Afrikaners in late modernity went beyond traditional ethno-nationalist mobilization.

1. A pluri-disciplinary approach

I have decided to use a pluri-disciplinary approach. Given the complexity of my research question, I deemed this the best way to carry out my research. I draw upon the following approaches:

First, from a *historical-political* perspective I suggest that Afrikaner nationalism is a recent phenomenon. Afrikaner nationalism, like any other nationalist movements, is a product of modernity. An ethno-national movement, drawing upon language, culture and ideology has been constructed within a relative short period of time. At the heart of the movement was the empowerment, the political and economic advancement of the Afrikaners, who were constituted as a group and began to look upon themselves as a nation by the beginning of the twentieth century. In chapter four, I describe the rise and decline of Afrikaner nationalism. Besides providing the necessary historical background of Afrikaner nationalism, it is also a critique of the state-centered approach and draws mainly on secondary sources. South African historical and political writing has an extensive engagement with Afrikaner nationalism. Much of the analysis is state-centered and insufficiently address the role of subjectivity in the making of Afrikaner ethnic identity. A critique of these state-centered studies is a meaningful starting point for re-evaluating how we study Afrikaner nationalism.

Second, I analyze the *politics of identity and nation building* in the post-apartheid period. In chapter five I study how Afrikaners, as individuals, but also how Afrikaner organizations claiming to represent them, relate to a changing socio-political environment in which *Africanization* is a crucial aspect of the emerging social imaginary. To do so involves the study of primary texts, such as policy documents and statements by organizations. Furthermore, to understand better the evolution of the social imaginary,

especially among Afrikaners, I draw upon literary and journalistic works that reflect upon the place of the Afrikaners in post-apartheid society.

Third, I study *narratives of self* in order to understand how individuals relate to society. These narratives were generated in semi-structured interviews with young Afrikaners. While narrating and reflecting upon their lives and sharing their perspectives on contemporary society and their place in it, young Afrikaners reveal their views and experiences of ethnicity and nationalism. Often, they do so in an indirect way. Narratives of the self show how they negotiate between accommodating traditions that have come under stress (or even have become obsolete) and finding a place in an emerging society marked by continuities and discontinuities of these traditions. This process of negotiation and the formation of identities are shaped in significant ways by the characteristics of late modernity.

The analysis of the historical development of a nationalist movement, its culture and ideology, and the policies that benefited the in-group, as well as a close observation of the debates on minority relations and nation building, are the nuts and bolts of the study of nationalism and ethnicity. The turn to narrative analysis, however, is recent and emerged from the theoretical developments of the study of nationalism, in particular out of concern for the central problem how to explain adherence (and desertion) of nationalism, as I explained in the previous chapter.

2. Why narrative inquiry?

The very nature of narrative inquiry makes it a particularly useful tool to conduct research as outlined above. Based upon the cultural and linguistic 'turn' within the social sciences, narrative inquiry is concerned with language and representation as well as the detailed analysis of texts. This development, under the influence of postmodernism and cultural studies with "a stress on change, diversity, and uncertainty…opened possibilities for new accounts of the individual (Roberts, 2002:5)." This 'new' approach is based on the conception of a pluralistic sense of self (Rappoport, et al., 1999: 93). According to this view, changes in culture brought about changes in self understanding and hence,

pluralism has become a fundamental characteristic of personality or the self. Such a conception of the self is a consequence of our epoch, late modernity. In the analysis of narratives of the self of young Afrikaners, the plural self is well reflected, as I will show in chapters six to eight.

Roberts further argues that narrative inquiry involves the dimensions of story and time (Roberts, 2002:5). For this reason, narrative inquiry is of particular relevance for the study of ethnicity and nationalism. Nationalism is as much about how the individual negotiates time and belonging as it is about politics, policies and group relations. Changing identities indicate how individuals relate to ethnicity and the nation. With the study of narratives of the self, we can gain insights into the processes that shape identities while connecting story and time. In a similar vein as Roberts, Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000) argue that in narrative thinking, temporality is central. In thinking about events and things, human beings place them in time. Events are seen as happening over time. As revealed in narratives, all things, including the nation, as Benedict Anderson argues, has a past, a present and an implied future.

Another dimension of narrative inquiry is highlighted by Barbara Czarniawska who argues that a narrative draws its power from a contrast between the ordinary and the 'abnormal', the expected versus the unexpected (Czarniawska, 2004:9). Therefore, she argues, the narrative contributes to rendering the unexpected intelligible by helping *to* find an intentional state which makes comprehensible a deviation from a canonical cultural pattern (Czarniawska, 2004:9). Narratives of young Afrikaners can help us to understand how ethnic belonging is negotiated. For my purpose, in order to get a grip of the vast and thorough political, cultural and socio-economic changes Afrikaner are dealing with, turning upside down traditions and learned, cultural behavior, narrative captures the experience of these changes and allows for their interpretation. On a more extensive scope than for any other of South Africa's population groups, cultural traditions, with their ramifications into politics, economics and so on, have been fundamentally challenged for Afrikaners. Narrative inquiry helps to understand change discontinuities in people's lives from their own, subjective perspectives.

But perhaps the most important aspect of narrative inquiry for our purpose is that, as Clandinin and Connelly suggest, it is an ideal way to study experience (2000: 17). Through looking at narratives of the self, the researcher gets to know continuity (and discontinuity) as well as the wholeness of individual life experience. This is all the more important as life, the very fabric of which experience is made of, is stored in narrative. Summing up the relevance of narrative inquiry, Clandinin and Connelly identify four directions in narrative inquiry: inward and outward, forward and backward (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 50). Inward means looking at feelings, hopes, aesthetic reactions and moral dispositions. Outward requires the study of the environment, the existential conditions, or to put it in another way, the historical, political and socio-economic conditions. Backward and forward refers to the temporal dimension, the past, present and future. In most of the interviews with my informants, I touched upon all four directions of narrative inquiry. Asking young Afrikaners about their view of an Africanizing state led to considerations about one's place and future in South Africa. It meant to reflect about one's hopes and expectations from state and society while relating individual aspirations to broader, societal developments. The temporal dimension of human existence emerged from considerations about the apartheid past and the contemporary policies to redress it, such as affirmative action.

Despite these positive aspects of narrative inquiry there are two problems that have to be taken into consideration. First, in the interpretation of narratives, the problem arises how to distinguish between facts and fictions. In the evaluation of narratives, there is no 'objective' means to evaluate the difference between fact and fiction. Unfortunately, there are hardly any 'objective' means to prevent this problem from emerging. The suggestion that one can make is that a cautious and critical analysis will have to guide the interpretation of narratives. The second problem is related to the values individuals express in narrative. For example, how is the researcher to respond to racist statements? Obviously, an ethic of human rights and anti-racism requires criticizing such views, but in an interview situation, a continuous flow of listening and dialogue requires to be silent on these issues. And more difficult perhaps, how does one interpret such racist statements

within the context of a sixty minutes interview? Are there mitigating circumstances that shed light on such enunciations? In addition to this moral dilemma, the problem of interpretation remains. What does the contradiction encountered in a single narrative, such as the declared intention to be more African and to find a way to relate to "black" people which coexists with the belief that "white" and "black" people are fundamentally different say about the future of "race relations" in South Africa and the degree of resisting whiteness of young Afrikaners? In the end, it is the writer's subjective, sociological imagination that interprets the narrative. My understanding of these narratives of young Afrikaners and "race" relations is influenced by my own experience of living for the past six years in South Africa and Botswana, having grown up in Switzerland and lived for six years in Canada. This experience has certainly influenced my interpretation. While a certain degree of empathy with the people one is investigating and talking to seems necessary, the danger of being too close to one's subjects and wanting 'to help' them as they develop their narratives and arguments is real. Hence, rather than talking about empathy, I suggest to use Max Weber's concept of *Verstehen*[17]. This implies a degree of goodwill towards the subjects of study but no more than necessary to get a good grasp of the complexity of peoples' lives as they express it in their own words.

3. The qualitative interview: episodic and narrative approaches

I have chosen qualitative interviews, of a semi-structured type with a single respondent. This kind of interview is located between highly structured survey interviews with strict adherence to a preconceived questionnaire and the more informal conversation that takes place in participant observation or ethnography (Gaskell, 2000: 38). Having said so, the interviews I conducted for this study shifted between the two poles. At times, the interaction with respondents was very much like a conversation. At other times, I followed question after question and did not much deviate from the questionnaire. Usually, I adapted my rhythm of questioning to the narrative flow of my respondent.

[17] '*Verstehen*' can be rather unsatisfactorily translated from German as 'understanding'.

Qualitative interviews are well suited to understand better individual life-worlds. The social world is actively constructed in everyday life and in the process of in-depth interviewing, we gain insight into the relations between social actors and their situation. As George Gaskell puts it: "The objective is a fine-textured understanding of beliefs, attitudes, values and motivations in relation to the behaviours of people in particular social contexts (Gaskell, 2000: 39)." Gaskell further argues that the insights produced by qualitative interviews are useful to improve the results of other kinds of methods of social science research (Gaskell, 2000: 39). In this study, they provide support for historical, political and socio-economic analysis. Furthermore, the interviews are an empirical test for theoretical conceptualizations that seek to answer why identities change.

The qualitative interviews I conducted can be described with more detail as *episodic interviews* containing elements of the *narrative interview* and *narrative inquiry* as described above. In asking how young Afrikaners are relating to contemporary, Africanizing society, I am inquiring about the social representation of political and socio-economic change in everyday life. Social representation, as a form of social knowledge, gives us insights into the views of a particular social group. Political and socio-economic changes have been pervasive and affected more or less every part of everyday life. Narratives that allow us insights into the views of everyday changes are, all together, an indicator of the general changes taking place and the attitudes towards it. Living as an Afrikaner today is completely different than in previous decades because of significant political and socio-economic changes. Episodic interviewing is then "sensitive to concrete situational contexts in which small changes occur, and to the broad, general accumulation of such changes (Flick, 2000: 76)." In order to understand better social change, the episodic interview meets the following criteria: it offers the opportunity to recount concrete events while also addressing general problems pertaining to the issue(s) and it is open enough for the interviewee to choose episodes or situations her or she wants to recount and to select the form of representation, such as description or narrative. Thereby, narratives of different types of situations are obtained (Flick, 2000: 86). The episodic interview, by generating what people choose to recount, is paying attention to the expression of subjective meaning. By doing so, the subjective viewpoint, how people

make sense of the world around them, can be compared to the very real materialities that constitute their world. Experience and events are contextualized from the perspective of the interviewee. This allows for unexpected narratives, statements and observations to emerge. According to Flick, the episodic interview

> "gives space to the interviewee's subjectivities and interpretations in the principle of situational narratives; it does not reduce and classify them immediately, but instead discovers the context of meaning in what is recounted (Flick, 2000: 87)."

This is particularly relevant for the study of racism and prejudice since young Afrikaners, talking about their experience of a changing and Africanizing state and society touch upon these subjects. David Sears argues that we need to know more "about self-perceptions of inner conflicts, ambivalence and one's own racism (Sears, 2005: 356)." Through narrative inquiry in which the respondent also influences the direction of the interview, we come to understand how she or he creates meaning out of the totality of information, contained in the lifeworld, that is available.

In the narrative interview, interventions by the interviewer are in general much more limited. The focus is on obtaining a narrative in which the informant tells a complete story, from beginning to end. In contrast, the episodic interview is more geared towards small-scale, situations-based narratives. But in the interviews I conducted, some interviewees developed long and detailed narratives about their lives and in this sense, touched upon the narrative interview. The narrative interview is particularly well suited to study the individual in his or her environment. Instead of looking at an individual detached from the social background, the point of interest is how the individual is related to her or his surroundings, place, people, discourse, and so on.

To sum up, narratives bring the following to my research project: they relate the reality as it is experienced by the interviewee, they offer particular representations and interpretations of the world, they cannot be judged as true or false but express the truth of a point of view, of a specific location in space and time and they are embedded in the

socio-historical. In the end, the narrative voice can only be meaningfully understood in the larger context as it relies on a system of referents (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000: 72).

4. Selecting respondents/sampling

In order to understand how young Afrikaners relate to the South African state and society today, I chose to interview 32 young Afrikaners, age 19 to 33, who were residing, with the exception of three, in the Greater Johannesburg area at the time of the interview. Another three informants, residing in the Western Cape province, were sent questionnaires by email and they gave written responses. The duration of each interview was between 45 minutes and 90 minutes. All interviews were fully transcribed by the interviewer himself. While most were interviewed individually, on two occasions I talked to two informants together.

As is common with qualitative studies, I used a non-probability sample for selecting the study population. Informants were not chosen at random. Within the qualitative approach, to choose a population that has particular features or characteristics is called *purposive sampling* (Gaskell, 2000). Informants were chosen through snowballing. People I had already interviewed were asked to recommend other young Afrikaners. In addition to snowballing and to guard against the problem of lack of diversity, I asked people I encountered in my daily life to grant me an interview. In this way, I was able to access individuals from a range of different socio-economic segments. The quantity of 32 respondents is sufficient to explore the range of opinions and to get a perspective of the different representations of the issues (Gaskell, 2000). The recurrent question that emerges from snowballing as a method of selecting respondents is if one can be assured to truly have been exposed to the full range of different viewpoints in a social milieu, here, young Afrikaners residing in South Africa. This requires ensuring that different members of a social milieu are interviewed. At the same time, in any given social milieu, the number of views and positions on a topic are limited. Gaskell argues that the researcher has to consider the segmentation of the social milieu on the issue that is beign investigated. Some segments might be the focus of the study while others can be

neglected. Ultimately, Gaskell suggests that the social scientific imagination is essential for making such choices (Gaskell, 2000: 42). Following this logic of sampling, I have limited my pool of people with whom I conducted interviews according to the criteria below.

In order to assess the nature of social change among Afrikaners, I found it particularly relevant to talk to young, urban and middle class Afrikaners. It is usually this segment in society that sets future social trends. They also reflect the mainstream of Afrikaner society, the milieu that carries on the dominant tradition of Afrikaners. These young and urban Afrikaners are neglected in popular and academic (English language) writing for they seldom conduct themselves according to the traditional, stereotypical pattern of behavior, well known from apartheid history, to which audiences are accustomed to. In selecting this particular segment of the population for interviewing, I chose to focus on Afrikaners among whom social change is the most visible and who can be expected to set trends for mainstream developments. Before I analyze their narratives of the self in chapters six, seven and eight, I want to turn to the history of Afrikaner nationalism.

Chapter 4

THE RISE AND DECLINE OF AFRIKANER NATIONALISM

In the previous chapters I was arguing that a better understanding of how and why individuals adhere to or desert nationalism and ethnicity requires us to look closer at lifeworlds. Through the study of narratives of the self, we comprehend how people create meaning and relate to their environment. As I will demonstrate in this chapter, the history of Afrikaner nationalism has been dominantly studied from a modernist perspective that attributes pride of place to the state in shaping an Afrikaner ethnic identity. Indeed, this perspective goes a long way to explain the historical development of the Afrikaner nation. This modernist perspective, especially in its manifestation as an invented tradition and an imagined community allows us to understand how culture and politics coalesced to create a nation. However, as we try to explain the decline of nationalism, that is, the change of identities and the emergence of new subjectivities in late modernity, the modernist, state-centered approach faces difficulties in adequately explaining these changes.

This chapter describes the historical development of Afrikaner nationalism while keeping the following objectives in mind. First, I want to suggest how we can re-think our understanding of Afrikaner nationalism. The history of Afrikaner nationalism shows well the modernity of the nation. Afrikaner nationalism is a near ideal type of a modern nationalism even though it developed *after* the European democratic and industrial revolutions of the eighteenth century, the 'high times' of the modern nation and nationalism. While emerging from a different modernity than eighteenth century Europe, Afrikaner nationalism demonstrates well, in tune with Gellner's modernist perspective, the crucial relationship between state and nation: state made nation. As I will show in the following pages, the advancement of the Afrikaners with the help of the South African state was tremendous. In the process, the Afrikaner nation was created and I analyze here

how ethnic and national identities were formed. My second objective is to show that the modernist perspective in historical and political writing about Afrikaner nationalism over-emphasizes the state-centered perspective. Such analysis is dominantly concerned with state policies and their material consequences for Afrikaner nationalism and identity formation. This chapter is a critique of the state-centered approach to Afrikaner nationalism. In the study of nationalism, I suggest that material or 'objective' factors have to be better integrated with the subjective.

1. Re-thinking Afrikaner nationalism

Afrikaner nationalism, like the phenomenon of nationalism in general, emerged with modernity. Craig Calhoun argues that changes in political organization, the move from a godly ordained, absolutist state to a republican and democratic form of government, and evolving modes of production, especially during industrialization, went together with changes in culture and political theory (Calhoun, 1997: 69). A new way of thinking about the relationship between self and society developed. According to Calhoun, new discourses about identity began to proliferate that were bound up with state and nation. Culture, as a carrier of discourses of identity, played a particular important role in defining belonging to the nation. With the nation-state and industrialization, culture, the conveyer belt of a 'national culture', became a key mechanism of social integration (Finlayson, 2000: 283). In the realm of culture, the nation is invented and imagined. Rather then emphasizing a unified territory, ethnic homogeneity and political institutions, the most crucial aspect of the modern nation is, in my view, the existence of a sense of belonging as expressed in discourse.[18] Such discourse is manifested in the social, political and economic domain through policies and institutions, such as welfare services, health and employment insurance, public education, employment programmes, business incentives and so on, benefiting the members of the nation. The state is mobilized to care for the nation.

[18] This is not to say that all the other enumerated aspects of a nation are not important (see chapter two for definitions of the nation). Rather, it is to say that without a unifying discourse with which members of the nation identify and imagine themselves as members of the nation, there is not much of a nation.

As I showed in chapter two, the literature on Afrikaner nationalism largely reflects the modernist perspective of the importance of the state in engendering the nation. These historical-political narratives primarily explain the success of the nationalist movement and the creation of a dominant, national identity based on the acquisition of state power while, at the same time, looking at developments in civil society, in cultural circles, among intellectuals and in literature to create a rich tapestry of social and political processes. This is their way of integrating the subjective with a more structural narrative. In my critique of these state-centered approaches I argue that they do not have a coherent narrative. The subjective and the structural sit uneasily together. Rather, I want to suggest that the subjective has to be more fully integrated through the usage of narratives of the self. Personal narratives, by giving expression to subjectivities, help us to understand why individuals adhere to or desert nationalism. Equally important is that the focus on the state detracts from processes of identity formation that are much less visible in their relationship to the state. These processes can develop their own life beyond the direct influence of the state. They involve processes of subjectivization. Among Afrikaners, state-sponsored enrichment and empowerment, paired with fast economic growth and advances to membership in a capitalist consumer culture, developed a social dynamic with socio-political consequences not foreseen by agents of the state. State centered perspectives fail to consider these processes sufficiently and consequently cannot explain adequately the desertion of nationalism. In order to fully comprehend the contradictory nature of these processes, we have to turn to narratives of the self that express thee contradictions.

According to the modernist perspective, the modern Afrikaner nation was promoted and kept together through an *invented tradition* and through real policies that benefited Afrikaners and "white" people first. Invented traditions establish the relation between the old and the new, and can hence be seen as a socio-cultural technology to overcome the ruptures brought about by modernity and industrialization. Eric Hobsbawm defines 'invented tradition' as practices, governed by accepted rules of a symbolic or ritual nature, "which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm, 1983: 1). Nationalist

political mythologies helped to establish such continuity and contributed to the creation of a national consciousness. For Leonard Thompson, political mythologies are, as a cluster of myths, tales told about the past to legitimize or discredit a regime that reinforce one another and jointly constitute the historical elements in the ideology of the regime or its rival (Thompson, 1985:1). Such myths perform a necessary function in society. Quoting Bronsilaw Malinowski, Thompson argues that myths express, enhance and codify belief; they safeguard and enforce morality and are a vital ingredient of human civilization (Thompson, 1985:7). Furthermore, political mythologies are linked to the state and serve the interests of those with control over it. Thompson claims that the state exerts "profound effect on popular consciousness through its use of official symbols and rituals" (Thompson, 1985:9).[19] Yet, they are also extremely flexible. Official symbols and rituals are open to manipulation to suit changing interest (Thompson, 1985:23). As the structures of local and global societies change, political myths change as well. According to Thompson, there are two major themes in the political mythology of Afrikaner nationalists that correspond to two distinct time periods (Thompson, 1985:26). Until 1948, the dominant myth was the liberatory struggle against British imperialism. Yet this ethnic and anti-imperial element became less relevant the more the Afrikaners achieved dominance and independence from Britain. After 1948, the dominant myth was based on the racial superiority of the Afrikaners. While the distinctiveness of Afrikaners was still part and parcel of the mythology, a focus on "race" allowed for a rapprochement with English South Africans. The importance of Thompson's analysis is that political mythologies contributed to the maintenance of a national consciousness or a social imaginary. Political mythologies belonged to invented traditions that shaped a social imaginary marked by a struggling nation prevailing over British imperialism and maintaining white supremacy.

[19] Sigrid Baringhorst cautions of a too all-encompassing view of public rituals. She observes that "their main function can be more adequately described as creating a sense of solidarity and collective identity without presupposing conformity with the goals and manifestos of political institutions, organizations and movements." (Baringhorst, 2000: 296-7). This gives credence to historians who are dissatisfied with the description of the high years of Afrikaner nationalist mobilization, roughly from the 1940s to the 1960s, as a period of unity with little dissent and debate.

Beyond the modernity of the Afrikaner nation and its usage of invented traditions, I want to highlight the following particularities of the historical development of Afrikaner nationalism. While the concept of 'invented tradition' introduced first by Terence Ranger and Hobsbawm in 1983 has been re-evaluated by Ranger, it remains useful in drawing our attention to cultural developments, the re-interpretation and adaptation of tradition when a society is faced with rapid changes that weaken social patterns.[20] South African social history describes well the dislocations brought to rural communities through industrialization and urbanization. Within a short period of time, Afrikaners transformed from a dispersed, rural people with an exiguous sense of mutual belonging, to modern urbanites and nationhood. Beginning in the late nineteenth century, they embarked on the construction of an *imagined community* with a strong coherence and unity. In the imagined community, the modern nation, "the search was on, so to speak, for a new way of linking fraternity, power and time meaningfully together" (Anderson, 1991: 36). With the spread of literature and newspapers, the nation found its place where it could be imagined. It is here that the role of language is so important. The development of Afrikaans as a language of daily usage, of literature and of administration, was aptly used to support nationalist mobilization (Hofmeyr, 1987). State power, but also civil society and civil institutions, were mobilized to care for the nation. Through very real social policies and practices aimed at material and status upliftment, and here, some argue, the role of the state was crucial, but also through ideology and discourse, a dominant Afrikaner identity was created. Afrikaner nationalism was a very successful movement that acquired state power in South Africa, declared an independent Republic in 1961 and brought members of the nation to positions of wealth and power. Its success was also its demise. With wealth and power, national unity faltered. When the successor of the National Party, the party that had implemented and defended apartheid was dissolved in 2004, Afrikaner nationalism may well have declined for good.

[20] In his re-visitation of the invention of tradition, Ranger (1993) admits that to assume invented traditions presupposes the existence of 'real' traditions and hence they are reified. He argues that he would rather look upon traditions as imagined, as Benedict Anderson suggests in his seminal 'Imagined Communities' (1991).

Nationalism, nationality and nation-ness, as a product of modernity, may have arrived late for the Afrikaners, but Afrikaner nationalism is nonetheless a perfect example of a modernizing nationalism that excluded the Other and empowered the in-group. Among modern nations, Afrikaner nationalism stands out for the following aspects. First, and paradoxically, "white" settlers of primarily Dutch, German and French origin were agents of colonial rule and they were also subjected to British imperial aggression and conquest. This struggle of "white" settlers against the British imperial power lent itself to the nationalist discourse of mobilizing and defending a nation in order to guarantee its survival. The forceful incorporation into the British colony with a history of humiliation and defeat motivated nationalists to see themselves as a downtrodden people rising against oppression and struggling for survival. As Liah Greenfeld observes, resentment against the conquering power is an important component of nationalist discourse (Greenfeld, 1992). Second, Afrikaners were forcibly incorporated into the British colonial system with secondary status as a 'backward' people, with little access to educational and economic resources; yet they simultaneously retained crucial political influence based on the demographic constraints of a settler society and in their role in maintaining military supremacy over indigenous peoples. Third, an emerging nationalist movement developed a linguistic and cultural movement and constructed a people with the help of religion and a nationalist historiography directed against English economic and political dominance. Subsequently, political dominance and economic advancement was achieved through successful ethnic mobilization beginning with the post-World War Two economic boom and state development. Although Afrikaners were dispersed across South Africa, there was no territory within the country in which they were a majority; yet they nonetheless assumed power over the entire country and society.

Afrikaner nationalism has faltered in the 1970s because, among others, of a class cleavage that emerged after successful economic advancement had been achieved. The successful middle class elite found it too costly to continue to protect their ethnic, working-class brethren, protected from the competition of black labour through apartheid laws that went against its own interests. Afrikaner nationalism shows how a dedicated movement was able to acquire state power and ensured the advancement of the in-group.

Perhaps the best proof of the success of economic advancement of the in-group through state intervention is that in the end, the fragile class alliances that had gathered around the common, nationalist project, came under stress. Under nationalist leadership, a successful, capitalist class developed. This conflict based on class interest is very pronounced in the case of the Afrikaners, where transitional post-apartheid arrangements secured the acquisitions of the middle class and hence, the "white" working class was no longer protected through exclusionary policies based on a nationalist consensus that had unraveled. Political power had shifted to the Afrikaner and English-speaking South African middle class.

In what follows, I describe the rise and decline of Afrikaner nationalism. In tune with the modernist perspective, I tried to focus on the role of the state in advancing Afrikaner interests and contributing to an Afrikaner ethnic identity. Afrikaner ethnicity was constructed in a relative short period of time, demonstrating well invented traditions and Andersonian imagining. I take the historical perspective over the *longue durée* starting in the seventeenth century with the settlement of Europeans in the territory that we call today the Republic of South Africa.

2. Colonial Settlement (1652-1850)

Europeans had contact with Southern Africa and its people since the late fifteenth century. Portuguese sailors explored the African coast, sailed round the Cape of Good Hope for the first time in 1487 while searching for a way to South East Asia and established bases in East and West Africa (Mostert, 1992). It fell, however, to the Dutch through the Dutch East India Company (VOC, *Vereenigde Oost-Indisch Compagnie*) "the premier capitalist corporation of the seventeenth century" (Ross, 1999:3), to install a trading post at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The European settlers did not have a sense of a common, ethnic identity. As the initial settlement developed into a proper colony, the social order rested on two kinds of residents (Ross, 1999: 23). First, there were the free immigrants of European origin, to a large extent, Dutch and German, most of who had served with the VOC, as soldiers, sailors and artisans. They were joined by the roughly 200 Protestant refugees from France who established themselves as farmers,

artisans, innkeepers and merchants. Second, there were the un-free immigrants, the slaves, imported from South East Asia and from the east coast of Africa. Cape Town developed as the social and political centre of the colony, while farms were established in its surroundings in two tiers – the more secure and rich farms in the vicinity and the settler farmers, the *trekboers,* farther away, predominantly occupied with cattle farming and practicing the transhumance, relocating according to the seasons (Ross, 1993: 25). In the beginning, the free population only grew slowly. In 1717, the free population numbered about 2,000, including 350 women (Guelke, 1979: 41). Yet with the expansion of the *trekboers,* the free population increased from 5,000 in 1751 to 10,500 in 1780 (Guelke, 1979: 41). In this process of expansion, the indigenous Khoikhoi, pastoralists who practiced the transhumance with their herds of cattle, were defeated and incorporated into colonial society as dependent laborers. The other indigenous group that the settler encountered, the San, hunter-gatherers, was severely decimated in military campaigns and the survivors were pushed to the outer fringes of the colony.

In 1806, the colony was incorporated into the British Empire. Under the British governors, a pattern of oligarchic rule was established as the officers, drawn from the landed aristocracy, favoured the large landowners over ordinary *burghers* (Thompson, 1990:54). Also, British officials asserted control over the eastern frontier through several military campaigns against the indigenous African tribes. Previously, under an open frontier, *trekboers* and African people were living in relative independence. British immigrants arrived in large numbers for the first time in 1820. From then on, political and socio-economic developments were marked by the changing relationship between British immigrants and Dutch-Afrikaner settlers. A series of events and processes led to a vast movement, a trek of Dutch-Afrikaner settlers inwards. The consequences of British rule which entailed the removal of legal disabilities on free people of colour in 1828, the emancipation of the slaves in 1834, the destruction caused to frontier farmers in the war with the amaXhosa, the African tribe of the border region, in 1834-5 and the lack of land for young farmers, all caused the Great Trek, “the movement out of the colony of several thousand of its Dutch-speaking inhabitants, now known as Afrikaner” (Ross, 1999: 39). Years later, at the height of Afrikaner nationalism, the events that took place at the time

of the *trek* leading to the settlement of "white" people in the centre of modern South Africa, would constitute a foundational mythology extolling and justifying Afrikaner dominance.

In the territories where the settlers decided to stay, republics were founded. But the British intervened. The Afrikaner settlement in Natal was annexed by the British in 1842. Disparate groups of Afrikaner farmers founded the South African Republic, also known as the Transvaal in 1852, and two years later, the Orange Free State. In this period, under the control of the British empire, the process of state formation was taking shape yet the *Voortrekkers* or *boers*, as they also called themselves, were still "poor, scattered, disunited, politically inexperienced" (Thompson, 1990:96). By 1850, by and large the territory of modern South Africa had been occupied by "white" settlers. Small towns appeared in the territory throughout the colonies, usually located around a church and offering commercial and artisanal services. The mainly farming economy was linked to settler expansionism and European merchant capitalism (Thompson, 1990:107). Throughout Southern Africa, there were small scale industries which were able to take advantage of the onset of industrialization through the discovery of gold and diamonds (Thompson, 1990:108). It was also in the course of industrialization that ethnic entrepreneurs would begin to propagate, in a systematic way, Afrikaner ethnicity. During industrialization, beginning in full swing with the discovery of minerals in the late nineteenth century and extending into the early twentieth century, the political process of integrating the Afrikaner working class into the state as wage earners and the cultural formation of an Afrikaner identity based on the Afrikaans language put the ingredients in place for the development of a mass based nationalist movement.

3. Modernization and the formation of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism

The development of an Afrikaner ethnic consciousness is in the existing literature closely related to socio-economic changes related to industrialization and modernization. While there were previously various communities in different regions that shared cultural traits such as "endogamous marriage patterns, membership of the Dutch Reformed or Lutheran churches, and a common language" there was no awareness of a common ethnic

belonging (Giliomee,1989:23). An Afrikaner ethnicity, including an awareness of difference, was constructed in the late nineteenth century, out of which developed a full blown nationalist movement. Most analysts agree that there was hardly a national 'awakening', as F.A. van Jaarsveld (1961) claims, nor that a sense of ethnic unity was forged as a consequence of the experiences of the Great Trek, as Suzman (1990) would have it. In trying to explain the emergence of Afrikaner nationalism and ethnicity, it is certainly right to look at the socio-economic context and the political and cultural framework of Afrikaner ethnic mobilization, as Giliomee suggests (1989). At the same time, if we do take the *invention or imagination of tradition* approach seriously, we need to look very closely at culture. For it is in the realm of culture that the nation is imagined and in which discourses are conceived that create awareness of an ethnic consciousness. The materiality of ethnic identification certainly matters, but often analysis of such a material basis gives an exaggerated importance to the state and neglect alternative locations of identity formation.[21]

Before the 1850s, Giliomee argues, the development of an ethnic consciousness was prevented by a host of socio-economic and political factors such as the dominance of British merchant capitalism, British cultural imperialism, internal Dutch-Afrikaner class conflict, decentralized power structures and regional rivalries (Giliomee, 1989: 24). In the years thereafter, the political situation began to change with the intensification of 'liberal tendencies' and British cultural imperialism that threatened Dutch-Afrikaner religious and educational traditions (Giliomee, 1989: 27). In response, Dutch-Afrikaner churchmen and educationists began to establish schools that taught in Dutch and included religious instruction. (Giliomee, 1989: 28). While Dutch was recognized as the more literary language and hence possessing a higher status, Afrikaans was later identified as the ordinary language with the necessary mass appeal. As is often the case with ethnic movements, what was perceived as a cultural, political and economic aggression of a

[21] My study aims to show that this state-centered view of identity formation is too reductionist. Rather, in the study of Afrikaner nationalism, and nationalism *tout court*, we need to look at micro-processes, at narratives and how people makes sense of discourse in their daily lives. If we want to understand nationalism, we have to move beyond the top down approaches according to which ethnic entrepreneurs are followed because people believe their promises. We are then still left with the question why 'ordinary' people are doing so.

more powerful group served as a rallying cry for ethnic mobilization. In this mobilization, the creation of a people through language and history was instrumental. The 'new' Afrikaner nation was to have its own language, Afrikaans, and a heroic history of struggle for survival in a country replete with enemies. In what can be described as a 'proto-industrial' situation, marked by the disintegration of rural communities and the movement of landless farmers to the urban centers, "middle class moral brokers" began to worry about the falling-apart of the Afrikaner community and family (Hofmeyr, 1987: 100). They believed that, what they began to see gradually as an ethnic group, was threatened with economic and cultural degeneration.

These moral brokers realized that they could reach the poor and uneducated much better if they made moral texts, like the Bible, accessible to them in the vernacular, Afrikaans (Giliomee, 1989: 33). In the Cape Province town of Paarl, S.J. Du Toit, (1847-1911), a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) founded *die Genootskap van regte Afrikaners* (Society of true Afrikaners) in 1875. Besides launching the newspaper, *Die Patriot*, the *Genootskap* also published the first history of the Afrikaners in the Afrikaans language (Thompson, 1990: 30). For the creation of ethnic awareness, Thompson argues, the writing of such a history was important, for "[i]t was the first book to treat all Afrikaners, dispersed as they were among British colonies and independent republics, as a single people." (Thompson, 1990: 31). This national history outlined the rudiments of a national mythology encouraging Afrikaners to think of themselves as a people. As in the Cape, the government of the Free State sponsored the writing of a national history intended to promote national sentiments among the citizens (Giliomee, 1989: 29). Also in the Free State, H.A.L. Hamelberg, the editor of one of the first journals, *De Tijd*, composed a folk song to cultivate a sense of citizenship (Giliomee, 1989:25). Afrikaans, as the language of the people, was to become "the cardinal ethnic symbol which encapsulated the history and the singularity of the Afrikaner people" (Giliomee, 1989: 34). The success of the language movement was institutionalized when in 1925 Afrikaans became a third official language besides English and Dutch. At the same time, Afrikaans was to become a respectable language by eliminating reference to its Coloured users. In this endeavor of purification of the language and ethnic mobilization, the cultural

movement was supported by political developments, a heightened awareness of ethnicity stemming from the activities of welfare organizations that catered to poor "whites", the split of the National Party in 1914 and the resulting radicalization of Afrikaner ethnic politics, and from the fallout of the repressed rebellion of 1914 (Hofmeyr, 1987: 109).

Not only was a language and literary movement initiated, but Afrikaner ethnic entrepreneurs also created an Afrikaans-centered cultural industry with its icons and events (Hofmeyr, 1987: 108). A cult of personality around Piet Retief, the slain trekker leader, emerged and that a veritable "Voortrekker industry" was created (Hofmeyr, 1987: 109). In order to beat the English competition, Afrikaner journalists and writers redefined everyday life (Hofmeyr, 1987: 110). Editors of newspapers and popular magazines aimed at developing an Afrikaner identity through the usage of Afrikaner history and the heroism of the *Voortrekkers* as well as the *boer* commandos and their fight against the British (Giliomee, 2003:375). A magazine like *Die Huisgenoot*, first published in 1916, reached by the 1930s one-fifth of Afrikaner families (Giliomee, 2003:375). Consumer goods were not chosen for their usefulness, but because they were Afrikaner goods. Whatever one was to buy, the point carried home by nationalist newspapers and magazines was that what mattered most, was the Afrikaner origin of consumer goods (Hofmeyr, 1987: 111). The foremost successful popularizer of history with a nationalist conviction was Gustav Preller. He was a driving force in the "cultural fabrication of history" (Hofmeyr, 1988: 523). At the core of his work was the fusion of personal experience and popular memory into a gripping and instructive, historical narrative (Hofmeyr, 1988: 524). Hofmeyr writes that Preller focused on ordinary lives and recorded the experience of ordinary Afrikaners which allowed for their remembrance and enactment at cultural festivals. The recording of history went together with the organization of cultural festivals (Hofmeyr, 1988: 527). These festivals celebrated a 'rediscovered' and reconstructed Afrikaner history. Consequently, the fabrication and construction of Afrikanerness through popular history was very successful as people found "emotional satisfaction and assurance in his work" (Hofmeyr, 1988: 530). The movement that the ethno-cultural entrepreneurs had launched was eventually successful. Many of the Afrikaans speakers began to think of themselves as Afrikaners (Hofmeyr,

1987: 115). To be an Afrikaner became a taken for granted identity like being a man, a woman, a worker, teacher, and so on. The dominance of an Afrikaner identity with ethnic characteristics was eventually accepted as a social and political necessity to ensure Afrikaner survival.

The creation of a counter movement in reaction against English cultural imperialism was, however, never a matter beyond contest among Afrikaners. For Leonard Thompson, Afrikaners reacted in two different ways to the evolving environment, marked by British commercial and cultural dominance, modernization and industrialization. In the more idealistic way, as described above, J.S. du Toit saw the Afrikaners as God's chosen people, a nation that had to forge its destiny (Thompson, 1990:135). In contrast, the likes of Jan Hofmeyr, also a member of Cape society, advocated a more pragmatic approach that "worked for harmony between the Afrikaner and the British elements in the colonial population by removing Afrikaner grievances" (Thompson, 1990:135). However strong Afrikaner ethnic enclosure developed, the relationship, even connivance, with "white", English speaking South Africans was always present, albeit with changing emphasis.

Besides the creation of a language and cultural movement, religion was also mobilized to forge a people. Like the cultural movement, Afrikaner religious self-identity is a recent historical construct (Ross, 1993:183). Political Calvinism, the belief that Afrikaners were a chosen people, did not emerge before the nineteenth century and was only widely accepted among Afrikaners by the 1930s (du Toit quoted in Ross,1993: 184). Paul Kruger, the legendary *boer* leader and president of Transvaal Republic, combined political ambition for self-determination with religious mythology. In his *Paardekraal* speeches, regular celebrations of the 1881 *boer* victory over British imperial troops, he skillfully articulated the ideology of Afrikaners as chosen people (du Toit, 1983:951), with a litany of grievances against the British. In the construction of a dominant Afrikaner identity, religious and political identities were fused (Giliomee, 2003: 234).

After a violent confrontation between *burgher commandos* and troops of the British Empire, the Transvaal was recognized by the British Crown in 1881 as an independent

republic for the time being. Nonetheless, British pressure to assert supremacy in South Africa, and to ensure efficient exploitation of the gold and diamond mines, led to a renewal of conflict. In 1899, the burghers of the Transvaal, allied with the Free State, went to war with the British Empire, in what became known as the South African War. Resistance against British imperialism has been a useful mobilizing myth among Afrikaners. In a powerful polemic of Afrikaner anti-imperialism, *A Century of Wrong*, Jacob Roos and Jan Smuts wrote after the outbreak of the war, that Afrikaners would now be able to fight back against British interference in a decisive battle. They wrote that the Afrikaners, would like other nations, after this ultimate struggle, reach liberty (Thompson, 1985:33). Thompson sums up the consequences of the war: "The very excesses of British imperialism evoked and enhanced a sense of national consciousness among a high proportion of the people of Afrikaner descent in all parts of the country" (Thompson, 1985:33).

The South African War brought much devastation and suffering and mobilized vast resources. By March 1900, the British had 200,000 troops in the field "to conquer two Republics with a total white population (women and children included) of 300,000. And by the end of the war, a tenth of that population had died." (Ross,1999: 72). But it was foremost the imprisonment of women and children in concentration camps under appalling conditions that "were to form part of the justification for Afrikaner nationalism" (Ross, 1999: 73). But the war also brought another experience to the fore that held lessons for Afrikaner leaders. Under the strain of the war, Afrikaner unity was broken (Ross, 1999:73). The landowners were more willing to hold out, while the *bywoners*, the labor tenants, were more likely to surrender or join the British forces (Ross, 1999: 73). Demoralized and divided, the republics surrendered in 1902. For Afrikaner leaders and ethnic entrepreneurs, the political and social unification of "white" Afrikaans speakers became the dominant concern. Afrikaner nationalism was to take up this ambition, bringing it to fruition in the post-World War Two period. The heavy losses among the Afrikaner civilian population built up much resentment against the British. Afrikaner nationalists were able to exploit this for many years to come. In addition, the antagonism of the war, socio-economic structures contributed to ethnic polarization.

People of British origin usually occupied managerial and skilled positions, while Afrikaners were impoverished. There was also the poor white problem, consisting of mostly Afrikaners, who were driven off the land, as agriculture capitalized (Thompson, 1985: 155). But in addition to the rationalization of agriculture, demographic pressures, the decreasing availability of land for a growing population and the war against the British between 1899 and 1902, led to the impoverishment of many Afrikaners, especially in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

After the war, the plan of Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner, to swamp the Afrikaners with British settlers and firmly integrate them as anglicized subjects into a British colony, had failed. The British efforts to reign in the Afrikaners had the contrary effect and turned into a strong factor supporting Afrikaner nationalism. In the Transvaal, *Het Volk* (the people) under the leadership of wartime generals Jan Smuts and Louis Botha was able to mobilize many Afrikaners behind a political movement. In the Orange Free State, J.B.M. Hertzog did so under the banner of *die Orangia Unie* (the Orange Union). At the national level, the *boer* generals, Botha and Smuts, who steered in a conciliatory direction with the British, came to power in the elections after South Africa became a unitary state in 1910. The dominant political theme was the relationship between the Afrikaners and the British and the generals intended to ensure that the two "white" cultures would merge (Giliomee, 2003: 355). With the idea of 'one South African nation', a national bourgeoisie was developing (Bozzoli, 1981: 136-137. However, Hertzog was more concerned with the political and socio-cultural advancement of Afrikaners first. His promotion of the Afrikaans language, and the resulting nationalist mobilization was increasingly incompatible with the generals' 'two stream policy' of treating English and Afrikaans as equal. He was dismissed from the cabinet and founded in 1914 the National Party. In the same year, Afrikaners in the Free State and the Transvaal, under the leadership of generals of the South African War, rebelled against the country's participation in World War One on the side of Britain. They were motivated by the failing promise of economic betterment under the new Union and the resentment that the Union chose to side with the former enemy in new war. While the rebellion was put

down, as a consequence, in the following parliamentary election the NP garnered the majority of Afrikaner votes (Giliomee, 2003: 384).

The political consolidation of the South African state was paralleled by important socio-economic developments. Afrikaners moved from rural subsistence farming into the urban, industrializing centers. While this was a complex process, as Charles van Onselen has shown, in which former Afrikaner tenant farmers resisted proletarianization through self employment as brick layers and transport riders in the urban centers until they eventually joined the proletarian reserve army (van Onselen, 1982). They formed a political constituency that persistently mobilized to protect their interests and that was coveted by socialist and nationalist mobilizers (van Onselen, 1982: 111-170). In the end, Afrikaner workers were won over by the nationalists. Progressively, the Afrikaner urban population increased. Jeremy Krikler writes that in the years after the South African War, there were only 5 percent Afrikaners of the total mining workforce employed in the mines on the Witwatersrand (Krikler, 2005: 26). The number increased rapidly, and by the first great white miners' strike in 1907, "around one in six whites employed on the mines was Afrikaner" (Krikler, 2005: 26). In 1913, when conflict again erupted on the mines, the proportion was one in three and during the rebellion of 1922, almost one in two (Krikler, 2005: 27). The labor struggles over the political influence over Afrikaner workers shows well the competition between different identities. That in the end, a dominant Afrikaner identity would win over other identities, was not evident. Discourses that articulated an ethnic identity did not immediately trump other referents of identification, such as class, for instances, but they did resonate with Afrikaans speaking workers and mobilized them into action. During meetings of the 1922 strikers, leaders invoked the *Boer trekkers* in their speeches (Krikler, 2005:104). They also spoke of Jopie Fourie, an Afrikaner nationalist martyr, executed by the Union government for his participation in the 1914 rebellion. The strikers and their supporters also sang *die Volkslied*, an anthem of Afrikaner nationalism (Krikler, 2005: 105).). In the end, at the crucial election in 1948, Afrikaner workers were won over by the nationalists.

Despite the Great Depression, the economy powered ahead between 1910 and 1948 – the national income increased threefold in real terms in this short period (Thompson, 1990: 154). Consequently, the state disposed of the necessary means to lead post-war reconstruction which included the upliftment of poor whites, predominantly Afrikaners. In 1924, the Pact government came to power, bringing together the Afrikaner Nationalists under Hertzog and the Labour Party. The aim of the coalition was to protect civilized labor, that is, "white" workers. Thus, the interests of "white" workers and those of the Afrikaners, forced out of the countryside by poverty, were united (Ross, 1999: 105). From then on, the civilized labor policy and Afrikaner nationalism were interlocked. But Hertzog decided to advance Afrikaner interests on a more symbolic level as well. In 1926, the intention of the Hertzog government to introduce a new national flag let to bitter disputes. Since the Union of 1910, the national flag was the British Red Ensign. A cleavage opened along ethnic lines, pitting Afrikaners against English South Africans. After a year of "intensely emotional conflict", a compromise was reached with a new flag, displaying Afrikaner and British symbols (Thompson, 1985:38). The Pact government is also an important milestone in Afrikaner history in that from now on, after the traumatic experiences on worker and civil war-like unrests on the Witwatersrand between the 1900s and 1920s, the state was used extensively and coherently to advance Afrikaner interests.

During most of the industrialization in modern South Africa, Afrikaners were not in commanding positions within the changing economy. This was a concern for community leaders. Already in 1900, at a conference in Graaf-Reinet, during the South African War, calls were made for Afrikaners to enter business to support their own people and to mobilize against the imperial enemy (Sadie, 2000: 18). They reasoned that in light of the threat the war posed to Afrikaner survival, only the active participation of Afrikaners in the economy would allow them to survive and thrive. The idea to advance economically, to make a collective effort for one's own benefit, was launched with the *helpmekmaar* fund which began collecting contributions from rich and poor Afrikaners to help the participants of the failed rebellion of 1914. It espoused the idea that Afrikaners

constituted a classless nation (O'Meara, 1983: 98). The NP was able to capitalize on the sense of empowerment that such mobilization achieved (Giliomee, 2003:387).

The first concerted effort to create an "economic consciousness" that would allow Afrikaners to advance socio-economically, began with the First Economic Movement (Sadie, 2000: 18). A key development was the founding of the Cape newspaper *Die Burger* in 1915. Its foundation brought together various ambitions. From a cultural perspective, the paper was to advance Afrikaans as a language that could be respected. Politically, it supported Hertzog's agenda of promoting Afrikaans as second official language and his policy of South Africa first, which meant the reduction of links to the British Empire. *Die Burger* also advocated the economic advancement of the Afrikaners and it subsequently developed into an influential financial agent, creating a printing empire, but even more important, investing in various financial ventures, like SANTAM, a major finance corporation and SANLAM, a life and industrial insurance company.[22] The underlying and mobilizing strategy was the "evocation of nationalist sentiment" to attract business (O'Meara: 1983: 98). Between 1914 and 1922, 26 rural Trust Companies and Boards were founded, as well as a funeral insurance company, *AVBOB* in 1921 (Sadie, 2000: 19). Small credit institutions were founded with *Sasbank* and the *Spoorbankas*. In 1934, *Volkskas* followed, which grew into a major South African bank. First forays into mining were achieved by WP Boshoff, processing gold dust from old mines (Sadie, 2000: 19).

As a modern movement, Afrikaner nationalism pursued the economic advance of its members and used invented traditions to create a sense of belonging. At the start of the Second Economic Movement in 1939, the first People's Economic Conference, convened by the FAK (*Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge*), the front organization for the *Broederbond*, a secret organization to advance Afrikaner interests, was not only to create a spirit of capitalism, to foster entrepreneurs among the *volk*, but also to mobilize the community to aid each other for economic advancement and social upliftment (Sadie,

[22] The two companies' full names are Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Trust en Assuransie Maatskappy (SANTAM) and Suid-Afrikaanse Nasionale Lewens Assuransie Maatskappy (SANLAM).

2000: 21). This economic programme was supported by ideological, nationalist mobilization. Various organizations were to draw in Afrikaners, mobilize them and use their capital to create successful, capitalist enterprises. The conference was preceded by the monumental centenary celebration of the Great Trek in 1938, which reached enormous popularity among Afrikaners. This celebration serves well to illustrate the success of ethno-nationalist mobilization among Afrikaners. In the true fashion of an invented tradition, the Great Trek of the nineteenth century, the departure of Afrikaner ox wagons out of the Cape province, was re-enacted. Thompson describes in the following passage:

> Eight wagons, named after voortrekker heroes, such as Piet Retief, Hendrik Potgieter, and Andries Pretorius, traversed South Africa by different routes, to be welcomed by enthusiasts in practically every white town and village in the country, before they converged on a prominent hill overlooking Pretoria. There, on 16 December 1938, the centenary of the Battle of Blood River, which marked the defeat of the Zulu Kingdom, more than 100,000 Afrikaners – perhaps one-tenth of the total Afrikaner people – attended the ceremonial laying of the foundation stone of the Voortrekker Monument (Thompson, 1985:39).

The celebration was a popular event which served to demonstrate powerfully the existence of a nation. For all of South Africa to see, the Afrikaners as a people and nation existed. Ten years later, they would consolidate by acquiring political power.

While nationalist mobilization took off in the socio-cultural and economic sphere, political realignments led to the consolidation of Afrikaner nationalism in politics. In order to avoid a common government with Jan Smuts' South African Party, eighteen Cape members of parliament of the Afrikaner National Party left the party in 1934 and formed the Purified National Party under the leadership of D.F. Malan, a *dominee* in the Dutch Reformed Church and an erstwhile editor *Die Burger*, a nationalist Cape newspaper. For Malan, Afrikaner nationalism was ordained from God (Ross, 1999: 109). According to Thompson's distinction between idealists and pragmatists, Malan's ascendancy can be seen as progressive triumph of the idealists. Malan was successful in uniting the Afrikaner right in a series of hard fought battles, especially during the war years, as the ranks of the pro-Nazi *Ossewa Brandwag* (Ox-wagons sentinels) had

increased sharply (O'Meara, 1996: 40). Nonetheless, the now renamed National Party under Malan NP developed as the hegemon of the Afrikaner nationalist movement and won the elections in 1948. It had united various Afrikaner classes under the banner of Afrikaner nationalism. Again, war served to mobilize Afrikaners. Many Afrikaners were alienated from the Smuts government's enthusiasm for entering World War Two on the side of Britain and they felt that Afrikaners had been victimized during the war since many had supported the Germans (Giliomee, 2003: 479). Equally important was that the NP was able to win over two crucial constituencies, the Transvaal farmers and the urban workers of the Pretoria-Johannesburg area (O'Meara, 1996:36). Under the banner of an ethnic and populist nationalism, the leaders of the nationalist movement were able to attract disparate classes of Afrikaners. As Dan O'Meara suggests, the NP constructed

> a new nationalist alliance of Afrikaner farmers, labour, the petty bourgeoisie and nascent Afrikaner financial and commercial capital. The NP mobilized each of these constituent forces on the basis that they were discriminated against and oppressed as *Afrikaners*. Only concerted action by a united Afrikaner *volk* in control of the state could end this historic 'Century of Wrong'. The NP's Christian-nationalism was an overtly exclusivist and ethnic ideology, openly preaching Afrikaner favouritism (O'Meara, 1996:42) .

While the election victory was razor thin, its election slogan 'apartheid' was "to become the watchword of government" (Ross, 1999: 115). This nationalist movement led by the National Party took state power, albeit narrowly in 1948, and consolidated its grip on the state, with the support of Afrikaners.

4. Socio-economic advancement under nationalist rule

The healthy state of the South African economy, with an average growth of 4.75 per cent per annum between 1948 and 1975, made the creation of wealth and its distribution among Afrikaners possible. The National Party (NP) government was in a position to launch comprehensive, economic policies and programmes of which Afrikaners were the major beneficiaries. After World War Two, business development grew more ambitious and state-led economic development programmes supported the foundation of parastatals or public companies such as *ESKOM* (electricity) and *ISCOR* (steel) which provided inexpensive electricity and steel and played an instrumental role in supporting economic

growth. Particularly newly founded Afrikaner companies benefitted. A reliance on these parastatals and a policy of import substitution benefited infant industries and infant entrepreneurs, which were led by Afrikaners, employed Afrikaners and were accompanied by a socio-cultural milieu that espoused economic development (Sadie, 2000: 42). Hence, the interplay between state-sponsored development programmes and private enterprise benefited Afrikaner business men – the state supported the creation of an Afrikaner entrepreneurial class. The growth of parastatals shows well the use of political power and patronage that benefited Afrikaners. In addition to the two parastatals mentioned above, *Sasol* (oil refinery and chemical engineering), *Transnet* (Transport), *Telkom* (Telecommunications), the Post Office, the Industrial Development Corporation, the Development Bank of Southern Africa, the Rand Water Board, Denel (arms manufacture) and the Landbank (finance for agricultural development), all provided opportunities for Afrikaner workers and professionals (Sadie, 2000: 42). State support for agriculture, an employment sector in which Afrikaners dominated among the "white" workforce with 80 per cent, also benefited members of the *volk* greatly. Through the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1937, agricultural producers were subsidized through stable prices and guaranteed markets (Sadie, 2000: 40).

At the People's Economic Conference in 1939, the *Reddingsdaadbond (RDB)* was formed as a Christian-national *volk* organization, imbued with nationalist ideology. It served as a mass organization to ensure Afrikaner support for Afrikaner businesses by creating an economic consciousness among Afrikaners, mobilizing their savings power and spreading the idea that Afrikaners only buy from Afrikaners (O'Meara: 1983: 137). In this quest for creating a consciousness conducive to a common, economic activity, the RDB also organized cultural and social events besides the economic activities that included training centers and loan schemes (Ibid.). Initially, this ambition was met with success. Within five years, in 1945, it had 70 000 members in 400 branches (Sadie, 2000: 21). Yet, the idea of a collective spirit in mutual advancement soon made space for capitalist, entrepreneurial ambition in which personal gain dominated. The RDB disbanded in 1957. What however lasted from the economic movement, were institutions like the AHI (*Afrikaanse Handelsinstitut*, Afrikaans Commercial Institute) and the EI,

(the *Ekonomiese Instituut,* Economic Institute). They both provided research and entrepreneurial assistance to Afrikaner business. According to Sadie, the movement hardly produced riches in a collective enterprise, but it created an environment conducive to business. If one excludes the agricultural sector (where Afrikaners dominated), Afrikaner business activity saw fast growth. Between 1948 and 1975, Afrikaner share of business doubled from 9.6 percent to 20.8 per cent (Sadie, 2000: 28). In 1999, the Afrikaner share of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange stood at 33.9 per cent. Government supported Afrikaner business. Sadie argues that "….[g]overnment intervention can be depicted as, in part, an operation of helping people to help themselves by founding institutions which furthered the cause of self-empowerment" (Sadie, 2000: 42).

The control of political power had the most direct benefit to Afrikaners through the public sector (Sadie, 2000: 35). The strict application of the bilingualism rule for the civil service was a very concrete and effective measure to advance Afrikaners. But from the start of the Pact government in 1924, an overwhelmingly English-speaking civil service began to hire Afrikaners with the result that by 1948 already 60 per cent of Public Administration employment was occupied by Afrikaners (Sadie, 2000: 36). However, the process of the Afrikanerisation of the public service began in earnest when the NP came to power in 1948 (Posel, 2000: 43). English speaking civil servants were replaced by Afrikaner nationalists. Posel observes that by 1959, "of more than 40 departments and sub-departments, only six had English-speaking heads" (Posel, 2000: 44). By 1991, Sadie estimates that Afrikaner Public Administration employment had increased to almost 80 per cent (Ibid.).

The industrial labour policy of discriminating against black workers had begun in 1911 with the Mines and Works Act, renewed in 1926. Skilled occupations were reserved for "whites". A more decisive step towards a 'civilized labour policy' was taken by the Pact government in 1924 which stipulated that unskilled whites were entitled to higher wages since their civilized living standards required so. Black workers, on the other hand, were to rely on the benefits of subsistence agriculture from within the homelands (Sadie, 2000: 39). Hence, between 1924 and 1925, the number of unskilled "white" labour at the

parastatal *African Railways and Harbours* doubled from 5,115 to 11,159 (Pauw, 1945 quoted in Sadie, 2000: 39). In addition, "whites" also gained from public works programmes. When it came into power in 1948, the NP began applying the 'civilized labour policy' more strictly in the public sector (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989: 78). The native Builders Workers Act of 1951 prohibited Africans from working outside African areas. Hence, the statuary colour bar encompassed now secondary industry, not only the mines (Ibid., 79). In 1956, the Industrial Conciliation Act introduced job reservation. The government would now reserve jobs for a particular "race" group. Hence, from 1958 on, positions of ambulance drivers, firemen, most of traffic police and even lift operators were reserved for "whites". A politics of patronage benefited Afrikaners over other "whites" (Ibid., 103). Bilingualism, the compulsory knowledge of Afrikaans and English (and the apartheid exclusion of "black" people), led to a rapid Afrikanerization of the civil service. The higher ranks of most of the civil service were still dominated by English speakers in 1948; twenty years later, all senior positions were occupied by Afrikaans-speaking Nationalists.

Public and semi-state corporations also promoted Afrikaners. Between 1948 and 1968, Afrikaners in the state and semi-state sector had doubled (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989: 104). As a consequence, and partly through direct state aid and favoritism, the percentage of Afrikaner businessmen in the private sector increased between 1948 and 1975 from 10 percent to 21 percent. Farmers, of whom more than 80 per cent were Afrikaners, received generous government aid. Furthermore, the per capita income difference between Afrikaners and English-speakers diminished from a ratio of 100:211 in 1946 to 100:141 in 1976 (SJ Terreblance in Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 145-176). The social service was also geared towards supporting the Afrikaners. Although the previous regime (before 1948) began to deliver old age and blind pensions to black people, the NP reversed this trend (Giliomee and Schlemmer, 1989: 105). Pensions were paid out in the following proportions: coloured people were paid 40.2 per cent, Indians 35.9 per cent and Africans 14.9 per cent of the amount received by whites (Ibid., 105).

The state also improved the education of Afrikaners. Better education supported economic progress through a high rate of human capital formation (Sadie, 2000: 51). From the 1930s on, education among Afrikaners made a great push forward through the official language status attributed to Afrikaans, the creation of the *helpmekaar* fund that distributed scholarships and other support for secondary and tertiary education. By the 1990s, the category of 'unskilled worker' among Afrikaners had altogether disappeared and many found employment in government service, among which public administration and teaching were preferred positions. Throughout the twentieth century, the occupational positions in the working force of Afrikaners progressed. From 1936, employment began to shift from the agricultural sector to blue-collar positions. In the years after 1946, white-collar positions rose to two thirds of the Afrikaner labour force (Sadie, 2000: 54).

The poor "white" problem as a serious concern for government and society had disappeared after 1945 (Sadie, 2000: 39). Income redistribution towards poor Afrikaners must have occurred. As Sadie writes, there were differences, "between Afrikaners and other Whites, in average personal income (subject to progressive income tax), the tax on company profits (overwhelmingly owned by English speakers) and the high rate of indigence among the former" (Sadie, 2000: 38). Consequently, the average standard of living of Afrikaners increased by 2.8 per cent per year between 1946 and 1991 (Sadie, 2000: 56). Although it was still inferior to English South Africans, it had progressed significantly.

In order to maintain adherence to a national consciousness, the control over religious, educational and communications institutions was important. To give a coherent, nationalist thrust in Afrikaner politics and society, the *Broederbond*, formed as a secret think-tank in 1918. Since 1948, most leading politicians, heads of universities and churches, captains of public and private industry and so on, were members of the Bond. Since its inception in 1936, the South African Broadcasting Corporation has been controlled by the state and since 1948, the two Afrikaner myths, that the land they occupied in South Africa used to be empty and that they were there on a civilizing

mission to bring progress to Africa, were constant features in its programmes. Equally, the Afrikaans press was always deferring to government and rarely challenged the established myths. In the educational sector, Christian National Education (CNE) was the dominant paradigm which subjected Afrikaner children to powerful indoctrination (Thompson, 1985:51). According to CNE, the separation of "races" was godly ordained. It served as the educational ideology to buttress the politics of apartheid. In the oversight bodies of the schools, church members were a steady presence and ensured that there was no deviation from the dominant line of thought (Thompson, 1985:51). Educational syllabi were under strong ideological control. In 1965, F.E. Auerbach detected "negrophobia" in almost all the textbooks used in Transvaal high schools (Thompson, 1985:59). Education served to shed a positive light on white supremacy. To sum up, Afrikaner nationalism exerted control over many aspects of the social life of Afrikaners. The state cared for the material well being of the members of the *volk* and exerted control over the information and values Afrikaners were exposed to. Given the role the state played in Afrikaner advancement, the state-centered approach focuses largely on the state in the shaping of Afrikaner identities. Yet, how does this approach explain the decline of Afrikaner nationalism? I will look at this question in the following section.

5. The desertion of ethnic nationalism

Through targeted state policies Afrikaners were privileged and they made fast and significant, economic and social progress. At the beginning of the century, Afrikaners were dominant among the poor whites and when they abdicated power in the 1990s, only a small minority of Afrikaners lived in poverty. These state-led empowerment policies affected Afrikaner identity formation. In Giliomee's analysis, the state occupied a central role in the formation of Afrikaner nationalism and in the construction of Afrikaner identities. According to Giliomee, for the Nationalist Party, until it formed the government for the first time in 1948, the maintenance of Afrikaner unity was a prerequisite for the formation of Afrikaner interests (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 116). Only a united Afrikaner people were deemed to be politically and demographically strong enough to maintain dominance. The ideology to bring the people together was based on *volkseeinheid*, folk unity and *volksverbondenheid,* the realization of one's full human

potential through identification and service to the Afrikaner people. The aim of this ideology was to stress the utmost importance of "ethnic identity as a major determinant of political behavior" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 116). This ideology of Afrikaner unity evolved over time. In this first phase of state-sponsored identity formation, dating from 1948 to 1959, the middle class elite leaders strove to educate the lower classes in "a proper sense of colour to maintain proper behaviour" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 117). Second, during the premiership of Hendrik Verwoerd (1958-1966), separate nationhood was stressed over separateness as "race". Under Vewoerd's leadership, 'bantustans' as 'traditional' homelands for different African 'nations' were established. As an independent nation, South Africa severed the remaining ties to Great Britain. British symbols, on stamps, coins and official decorations were replaced through South African ones. *Die Stem* replaced *God Save the Queen* as the sole national anthem, and public holidays were Afrikanerized. The declaration of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 severed definitely the last symbolic tie with Great Britain. "White" South Africa was to be led by the Afrikaner nation. In the third phase from the 1970s, under Balthazar John Vorster, "ethnicity was now expressed in identification with the South African state and the symbols of the state which had become fully Afrikanerized" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 119). The state was now clearly perceived as the means to protect the newly acquired wealth for a majority of Afrikaners. Only as a privileged oligarchy could they "maintain separateness and purity of race" (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 117). Apartheid legislation with separation according to "race" was the *sine qua non* to maintain that position. The ideology of apartheid reified ethnic identity and its presumed differences by stressing that it was primordial and immutable, when in fact, it could only be maintained through state laws, such as the Mixed Marriages Act (1949), the Immorality Act (1950), the Population Registration Act (1950), the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953) and the Group Areas Act, and so on; and state patronage that channeled political and economic privilege to the Afrikaners. In that period, it emerged that for the majority of Afrikaners ethnic identification was more than language and culture, namely the maintenance of privileges and spoils (Adam and Giliomee, 1979: 121). Despite the previous and enduring success of Afrikaner nationalist mobilization, Afrikaner ethnic identity had began to wane.

The importance of the state for the formation of Afrikaner identities is also referred to as the *boereplaas* syndrome. According to Jannie Gagiano, the capturing of state power was a crucial aspect of Afrikaner ethnic nationalism (Gagiano, 1990: 194). All major organizations of the Afrikaner community were part of the project to acquire state power and this gave legitimacy to Afrikaner control over state, its symbols and institutions. Hence, the state was appropriated as if it was their own. In the same way, one would take possession of a farm (*boereplaas*). In this process, Afrikaner identity was shaped through the state. But the symbols of this power over the state, located in Afrikaner culture, language, folklore and tradition fell out of fashion with a majority of Afrikaners. In the end, as Adam and Giliomee (1979) argue, what remained of ethnic mobilization, was clinging on to state power to preserve the spoils of racial rule. Rather than seeing state power as a protector of Afrikaner culture and tradition, it was valued as the guarantor for continued prosperity. The crucial question is then how do we explain this shift of the role of the state in the views of Afrikaners? How can we explain that Afrikaners deserted state sponsored nationalism? In my critique below I argue that the state-centered approach to the formation of identities struggles to explain how identities change, that is, how the identities of Afrikaners were no longer contained in state-sponsored nationalism.

Herman Giliomee and Dan O'Meara both offer explanations for the desertion of Afrikaner nationalism. While they do so with different approaches, a Marxist one in the case of O'Meara and a liberal one with Giliomee, they both agree on the centrality of the state in the making of Afrikaner identity. In other words, the state, as a structural factor, bears a major responsibility in the formation of ethnic and national identity. This central role of the state is complemented by an analysis that incorporates different perspectives, such as a look at ideology and discourse, political and economic factors, as well as the international political arena and cultural developments. While such an eclectic approach does justice to the complexity of Afrikaner nationalism, it does not really manage to integrate closer structural factors with subjectivity, and how the two relate to each other. Such an approach also fails to take stock of the changing and evolving relationship between structural and subjective factors. Bringing the subjective and the structural closer

is necessary when addressing the problem of national and ethnic identification. In their political-historical accounts, Giliomee and O'Meara both struggle to integrate processes of identity formation, the rise and decline of an Afrikaner consciousness, with political developments. The subjective and the material-structural sit uneasily together.

The most prominent explanation for the end of Afrikaner nationalism, as we have seen above, is the emergence of a class split among Afrikaners which unraveled national unity and led to the split of the NP. In this, the consequences of the economic enrichment of middle-class business people was particularly important. In the 1970s, "white" business started to become detached from a nationalist, ethnic awareness and twenty years later, in the 1990s, there was no longer the "self-conscious Afrikaner ethnic group" (Giliomee, 2003: 638). The movement to empower Afrikaners economically, to create a spirit of capitalism and to enrich a majority of Afrikaners was eventually successful, but this was not without consequences for cultural traditions and communal coherence. Giliomee observes that "[i]f Afrikaners were beginning to capture capitalism, capitalism was also capturing more and more Afrikaners" (Giliomee, 2003:544). In 1975, even the *Broederbond* was alarmed that Afrikaners valued more materialist considerations than "freedom and sovereignty of the Afrikaner people" (Stals, quoted in Giliomee, 2003: 544). Adding to that, O'Meara writes that the rural and urban elites, dominant in Afrikaner civil society, had become *bourgeois* (O'Meara, 1996: 146). The advancement of some Afrikaners to middle class status had detached their interests from those of working class Afrikaners. Giliomee observes that it is primarily a conservative, nationalist rank and file that did not want to move away from the basic tenet of apartheid, the homeland policy of separated territories for "black" people and make the necessary sacrifice for the development of livable "black" homelands. The conservatives consisted of "white" workers who insisted on the color bar, less prosperous farmers who depended on state subsidies, and lower rank civil servants. They all suffered from the economic downturn (Giliomee, 2003:606). They refused to give up more land to enlarge the homelands and render them economically viable, as the Tomlinson Commission had suggested. In contrast, the 'enlightened' wing of the nationalists, including the intellectuals, writers and the leading politicians supported such reforms. These

'enlightened' circles also included the business elite. In contrast, those who supported reforms included businessmen who, for economic reasons, demanded less constrains on "black" labour, and academics, journalists, writers, and so on, and wanted to find a way to deal with "black", Coloured and Asian elites. According to the above argument, the break within the nationalist coalition was based on the diminishing ethnic awareness and the divergent class interest.

Describing another dimension of the class split among Afrikaners, Giliomee focuses on ideological differences. When the followers of Andries Treunicht left the NP in 1982 and founded the Conservative Party (CP), they were motivated in their actions by their refusal to share a common parliament with Indians and Coloureds. In contrast, Afrikaner businessmen and managers were primarily concerned with the economic bottom line (O'Meara, 1996:316). In "white" politics, an ideological and ethnicity-related change had occurred. While the CP garnered 30 per cent of all the "white" votes, including right wing votes, largely composed of the more conservative middle groups of Afrikaner rural and urban communities who wished to remain rich and pure (O'Meara, 1996: 312), the NP was consolidating English South African support. Between 25 and 40 per cent supported the NP's intention of cautious reform (Giliomee, 2003:607). The NP, with its reform policies, moved now to the middle, away from Afrikaner exclusivity and began to appeal to English South Africans.

Equally important, Giliomee argues that in the 1980s, the ideological unity of government was crumbling. But indications as to what the end of ideological unity amounted to were conflicting. On the one hand, institutions, like the Church, abandoned apartheid doctrine. Also, business was no longer convinced that apartheid was a useful way to run an economy and even the *Broederbond* suggested that "whites" could no longer hold on to power alone (Giliomee, 2003: 621-2). On the other hand, surveys indicated that a large majority of Afrikaners still supported key pillars of apartheid, such as a ban on inter-racial sex, segregation and black homelands. Students reportedly still believed in the adequacy and the moral and political purpose of the security apparatus

and many Afrikaners indicated preparedness to defend themselves. These conflicting social indicators reflect the contradictory views of Afrikaners.

Also, Giliomee looks at the role of the deteriorating economic situation (Giliomee, 2003: 563). Mostly the Afrikaner elite began to realize that apartheid was economically not viable and they were now forced to search for the political means to accommodate "blacks" on "white" land. Furthermore, demographics worked against separation. There was now a large "black" population, not only in homelands but also in the cities. This led to the realization that apartheid was not a solution to Afrikaner survival (Giliomee, 2003: 597). Other factors that chipped away at apartheid were external factors, such as large disinvestment and boycotts, and a "black", domestic rebellion in 1985, which contributed to a sense of insecurity among the regime and the white electorate (Giliomee, 2003: 611-615).

Besides the political and economic arguments, Giliomee turns to culture and how changes in the realm of ideas and sentiments affected Afrikaner cohesion and a sense of ethnicity. In the 1970s, the so-called '*verligte*' (enlightened) among the press, like Schalk Pienaar, the well known editor of the government mouthpiece, *die Burger*, a Cape Town based, daily publication, spoke out that the Church failed to condemn "white" and Afrikaner opulence within a sea of "black" poverty. For forty years, party, press and interest-based organizations stuck together. Now, the press was speaking out and hence signaled, according to Pienaar, the end of the popular movement that had united *Afrikanerdom* (Giliomee, 2003:559). A sense of moral outrage about one's own privilege sparked self-reflection and led to the desertion of ethnic unity. Also, in the so-called border literature, soldiers returning from war against the liberation movements in Angola described their experience of the injustice of their own socio-political system and related their awareness of the humanity of the black Other (Giliomee, 2003: 593). In a similar vein, O'Meara observes that "Afrikaner society as whole was etched with a profound sense of malaise and self-doubt" (O'Meara, 1996: 368). This was particularly apparent in the artistic expression of young Afrikaners. They gave voice to the widespread disgust for the hypocrisy and the inhumanity of the newly enriched Afrikaner bourgeoisie (O'Meara,

1996: 369). They also ridiculed nationalist culture and its political mythology, the pretensions of Afrikaner nationalism and the ethnic mission (O'Meara, 1996: 371). I think this turn to literature and music, and the observation of moral outrage about the system that is committing injustice in one's name indicates well how insights about people's motivation, their mental universe and life-worlds, can be gained from personal narratives as encountered in literary texts. Such narratives add a subjective perspective to structural factors. But the problem here is that in the absence of looking at how the subjective is related to the structural, political and cultural-subjective accounts just seem to run parallel to each other without really making a connection. The problem for O'Meara and Giliomee is to show how these different levels of analysis relate to each other.

But more serious perhaps, the role of morality in loosening the ethnic grip is not clear in Giliomee's account. He observes that "[a]mong the whites there was no collapse of political and moral will; that would only happen if the leadership's will caved in" (Giliomee, 2003: 636). While we read previously how the morality of apartheid was undermined, this is now no longer the case but it rather boils down to the position of the leadership. Giliomee argues that eventually the moral will of the leadership was weakened. He writes that "the issue of 'morality' was an important factor in the changing power balance", especially among the leaders, who resented the exclusion, through sanctions, from the West (Giliomee, 2003: 638). I want to suggest that Giliomee's struggle with integrating different subjectivities leads to his confusing account on the role morality. It seems to me that in his historical-political account, he cannot explain well differing moral view points among Afrikaners. His insistence that continued leadership, exhorting followers to stay the course, would have been possible, ignores and contradicts his observation that Afrikaners ceased to believe in and defend the ethnic apartheid project. While he acknowledges that due to television and a global cultural revolution Afrikaners became more materialistic and individualistic, he insists that if Afrikaner leaders would have stuck together and "imbued followers with a sense of both mission and threat" (Giliomee, 2003: 619), they could have avoided change, stayed in power and preserved things the way they were. This may well have been a possibility given the

superior military strength and the remaining resources that the regime could have mobilized. But is this not exactly the question: why did they no longer manage to impart a sense of mission and why did they no longer believe themselves in an Afrikaner mission? Even the threat, as a last motivation, to fight to the last man for white supremacy, Christian values, spoils and privilege and against communism, did no longer work – why? What had changed? Why were Afrikaners no longer receptive to this message? It is then perhaps at this stage that we want to look at evolving consciousness, how identities form and change and how a new imaginary emerges in explaining why Afrikaners deserted nationalism.

Let me here sum up the critique of the state-centered approach to the formation of identity. Giliomee and O'Meara describe how values attached to the spread of capitalism and consumer culture undermined ethnic awareness. Yet these changes in beliefs and thoughts, and their implications for ethnic mobilization, are not further explored. A deeper interest in the change in consciousness that would shed more light on why ethnicity had diminished would require a stronger analysis of subjectivities and how they reflect the emergence of new values and beliefs. Yet, in their historical-political narrative, subjectivity and a more structuralist analysis sit uneasily together. Without more personal narratives, we know little about peoples' deeply held motivations and beliefs. Giliomee and O'Meara construct different narratives, historical and political, they look at the artists, the writers, such as the avant-gardist *sestigers,* and account for some of the developments among them. But we don't get to know how the individual reflects and makes sense of politics as lived in the everyday. State-centered explanation cannot consider developments that are important for identity formation that are independent from the state. Ultimately, the most important factor in influencing identity formation is the state and other factors are considered less important. In what follows, I contrast Giliomee and O'Meara's state-centered approach with Adam's approach that gives more consideration to society and individuals and how they create meaning.

Afrikaners had developed subjectivities that were no longer centered on a modernist state-building project, but were more individualist and consumerist. Afrikaner

nationalism became the victim of its own success. Having acceded to economic well-being, the class alliance split and ethnic identity became less relevant. New identities had emerged. In his 1971 study, *Modernizing Racial Domination*, Heribert Adam explains the political, societal and socio-economic changes that eventually led to the emergence of new Afrikaner subjectivities. Adam not only looks at state policies but he also focuses on value and attitudes and they related to evolving socio-economic conditions. He manages a meaningful integration of the subjective with structural factors. Adam argues that many Afrikaners turned into a pragmatic race oligarchy since "white" South Africans were no longer ardent believers in racial superiority. The apartheid system was one "one of the most advanced and effective patterns of rational, oligarchic domination" (Adam, 1971:16). In the late 1960s, racial domination became a rational feature. Rather than based on an irrational ideology, racial discrimination was a crucial aspect of the system that resulted in a "tolerable domination over cheap labor and political dependents" (Adam: 1971:53). The defining feature of the system was coercion and it was to ensure the survival of the Afrikaner ethnic group and "white" civilization. Despite other cleavages, the Afrikaner and the English South African public agreed that such coercion and its 'collateral' damage, killings through police control, was unavoidable (Adam, 1971: 63). As a democratic police state, the regime moved away from *baaskap*, repression through brute force, towards gaining the acquiescence of the dominated. For Adam the "[t]he former racialists have realized pragmatically that the future of white South Africa depends on the extent to which it can gain the acquiescence of the African masses." (Adam, 1971: 82). In the late 1960s, in practice, nobody believed or acted out apartheid ideals, with the exception of the extreme right. Despite exhortations to live up to ideal of separation by editors in Afrikaans newspapers, people insisted on having their servants close to them, living in white cities and not in distant homelands. These "white" cities developed into the living ground of "black" people, a consequence of the fact that consumer interest began to override ideological concerns for racial separation (Adam, 1971: 84-85). "White" South Africans, as international outcasts, began to develop a "strong collective narcissism" (Adam, 1971:169). White guilt emerged as a consequence of increasing awareness of humanist standards in international law and "professional ethics … closely linked to universal values of equality and justice" (Adam, 1971: 63). As

race relations were de-ideologized and streamlined (Adam, 1971:159), there was no longer a unifying emotional bond among Afrikaners, but rather a diluted ethnocentrism and nationalism (Adam, 1971:178).

The unity of the Afrikaner *volk* began to crumble. Politically, Afrikaner dominance had arrived at a dead end. Under the premiership of P.W. Botha (1978-1989) the regime tried different strategies (O'Meara, 1996: 251-278). Stepped-up repression alternated with reforms. But the political, social and economic crisis did not go away. Militarily, the liberation movements, led by the ANC, could be held in check. Popular resistance spread across the country and negated attempts to co-opt the "black" subjects. With increasing internal resistance from civil rights organizations, the various liberation movements inside and outside the country, popular resistance and revolt, and pressure from the international community, it dawned upon the ruling regime that more decisive action was necessary. Even the *Afrikaner Broederbond* realized that Afrikaner dominance had come to an end and that a peaceful agreement with the ANC was necessary to ensure the continued existence of the Afrikaner nation in South Africa (Giliomee, 2003: 621). F.W. de Klerk succeeded Botha as Prime Minister in 1989 and year later he unbanned the ANC and all other proscribed organizations. In 1991, at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, substantive constitutional negotiations were held for the first time. The negotiating process developed its own dynamic and despite various violent attempts to derail the process, led to a lasting agreement. In a "whites"-only referendum in 1992, a majority voted for the negotiations and the peace process; however, many would not have expected that the NP would retain so little power in a democratic South Africa (After a short-lived Government of National Unity, the NP left the ruling coalition in 1996). South Africa had embarked on a peace process that would lead to the first democratic elections in 1994. While their support for the negotiations was motivated by the increasing internal and international political pressure, one should not underestimate the role of new subjectivities, especially among Afrikaners. Adrian Guelke observes that "the primary agency for political change in South Africa was the realization among whites that they had to come to terms with shift in power that was taking place in the country as a result of demographic and economic change" (Guelke, 1999:86). Behind the realization

that things had to change were new identities. These new identities were shaped through living in a consumer society in late modernity with all its changes in values and meanings. Afrikaner identities had moved beyond ethnicity. In the following chapter, I look at the debate about Afrikaner identity and ethnicity within the South African discourse on nation building.

Chapter 5

AFRIKANERS AND AFRICANIZATION: THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEBATE ON NATION AND IDENTITY

With the end of apartheid, South Africa's social imaginary has shifted within a short period of time from white supremacy towards a multi-racial society incorporating people of diverse backgrounds into one African nation. Partially by force due to the loss of political power and partially by their own volition most of the young Afrikaners interviewed in this study try to find ways to belong to the new South African imaginary. Among Afrikaners, questions of identity and how to relate to an Africanizing state and society are widely debated. In this chapter, I look into the politics of identity among Afrikaners. What has so radically changed within a relative short period of time is that a dominant Afrikaner identity, tied to the state, has given way to a multiplicity of identities among young Afrikaners. As is often the case, the political landscape is slow to follow this social process of change. Hence, in the political realm, Afrikaner ethnic mobilization has been diminished and reduced to little significance. Equally struggling, organized Afrikaner groups find it difficult to attract young people. Young Afrikaners adhere to an ethics that is beyond traditional politics. In doing so, they relate to global trends in the formation of identities.

1. A new imaginary: from Afrikanerdom to African nation

With the first democratic election in 1994, political power was handed over from the "white" minority, under Afrikaner political and military leadership, to the "black" majority. "Black" resistance certainly played a role in this abrupt, and in the end, astonishingly complete abdication of "white" political power. Besides popular resistance, equally important was that the apartheid order encountered a crisis of legitimacy. The crisis of the apartheid system extended to Afrikaner society with the threat of a breakdown of the system of meaning, that, crucial for the formation of identities, had lost its capacity for social integration. Traditions, symbolized in *Afrikanerdom*, were no longer transmitted. Afrikaner society was losing its identity as young Afrikaners ceased to recognize themselves in its traditions. Young Afrikaners, growing up in a beleaguered society, rejected the traditional beliefs that could no

longer explain what they saw as their own reality. The gulf between lofty ideals, conveyed by apartheid institutions and the bleak reality of a low-level civil war and widespread poverty among "black" people amidst "white" wealth, led them to question time-tested social and political beliefs. In this questioning, the search was on for a new social imaginary that would bring Afrikaners and "white" South Africans closer to the country's other population groups. While the political necessity and the strategic interest to do so was required for continued welfare and survival in the country, the big challenge was how to create the meanings that enabled imagining living together. This implied to come to terms with living in an African country.

The end of apartheid was facilitated through a negotiated hand-over, a short-lived government of national unity (1994-1996), and a vast reorganization of state and society, referred to as 'transformation'. Like the Eastern European countries, liberated from Soviet imperialism, discovering democracy and a capitalist, market economy, South Africa is a society in transition. One important aspect of this transition is the symbolic transformation of state and society. After the settler project of creating an exclusive, "white" and European society on the African continent had failed, South Africa is now to recognize its African-ness and blackness. A new *social imaginary* is in the making in which Africa, in all her symbolic manifestations, takes center stage. Especially Afrikaners have to come to terms with this new societal project and the attached reordering of meanings.

Before I look into this problematic in more details through debates about nation-building I want to describe more closely what we mean when we talk about the 'social imaginary.' Charles Taylor puts it very succinctly by stating that the social imaginary is "the way our contemporaries imagine the societies they inhabit (Taylor, 2004:6)." Such imagination is an integral part of society since it enables people to live together through the creation of common meanings. It is only through these common meanings that we can make sense of the practices of society. Taylor suggests that the imaginary includes the expectations people have of society which are normally met, and "the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (Taylor, 2004: 23)." These normative notions or social imaginary significations are created by the social imaginary. They describe the "common understanding

that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy (Taylor, 2004:23)."

Given its fundamental role in society, the social imaginary is society's creative ability (Gezerlis, 2001: 4). With this creative indeterminacy, the social imaginary cannot be managed - the social imaginary remains autonomous and can never be a totality (Bayart, 2005:160). The social imaginary has no clear limits, but it is the "unstructured and inarticulate understanding of our whole situation" and therefore eschews capture in an explicit doctrine (Taylor, 2004: 25). Rather, different figures of the imaginary emerge that are "necessarily fragmentary and polysemous: none of them absorbs the function of imagination (Bayart, 2005: 228)." Each sector of society is endowed with social imaginary significations that move at their own pace; hence, the resulting ambivalence and contingency of its significations (Bayart, 2005:229). Nevertheless, through their radical ambivalence, imaginary social meanings hold together, and thus hold together society (Bayart, 2005: 233).

The social imaginary significations have to be distinguished from ideas and ideologies that are manifest, for instances, in social theory. Included, however, are ordinary people's images, stories, legends that are shared by most people of society (Taylor, 2004:23). Through this common understanding, collective practices that make up social life are possible (Taylor, 2004:24). Practices, such as the organization of "the production of [society's] material life" (Castoriadis, 1987: 145) and symbolic, background understandings, are in a mutual relationship that give us an understanding of our location in time and space. Taylor (2004: 28) argues that

> "[t]he background that makes sense of any given act is thus wide and deep. It doesn't include everything in our world, but the relevant sense-giving features can't be circumscribed; because of this, we can say that sense giving draws on our whole world, that is, our sense of our whole predicament in time and space, among others and in history."

This background also involves a sense of moral order, based on images and through which we understand life and history and ultimately allows us to make sense of our actions (Taylor, 2004:28). Particularly in times of vast transitions, such as the movement away from apartheid

to democracy, our social imaginary is transformed as a new moral order emerges. With the new moral order, what was initially an idealization turns into "a complex imaginary" transforming traditional social practices (Taylor, 2004:29). A new dominant view emerges through the transformation of our imaginary. Since the end of apartheid, South African society is in the process creating a new social imaginary. The leaders of the South African state and the former liberation movements contribute to this process by emphasizing the African nature of South African society.

2. Nation building in South Africa

In the early 1990s, the secessionist threat of Afrikaner and Zulu nationalism was seen as the major obstacle to a peaceful transition in South Africa. For this reason, various institutional mechanisms, such as political federalism and the Afrikaner Homeland Commission, which in the 1996 Constitution evolved into the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, were part of the settlement. These were two important constitutional instruments to deal with the vexing question of the accommodation of ethnicity and nationalism. But above all, the notion of non-racialism defused divisive 'tribalism' and represented an effort to overcome racial antagonism. In a divided, plural society, Moodley and Adam argue the ideologies of non-racialism and "rainbowism" were designed to create a "common loyalty to the state" (Moodley and Adam, 2000: 51). Furthermore, they suggest that reconciliation at the expense of justice and retribution was part of the political compromise on which a new order and a society in transformation was based. Non-racialism reflects state nationalism, the civic nation, "based on equal individual rights, regardless of origin, and equal recognition of all cultural traditions in the public sphere (Adam, 1994: 17)." Rainbowism created the stability of a symbolically united nation, especially during difficult transition years. Such symbolic construction is an important ingredient of successful nation building because it evokes feelings of belonging (Adam, 1994: 37-51).

Neville Alexander, veteran activist and former head of the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB), is very critical of the rainbow-nation concept as it is apparent in government policy. He is particularly concerned that the state is not living up to the promise

of the constitution of truly supporting indigenous languages. For him, instead of overcoming differences through an active policy which advances minority languages and blends languages and cultures, "the Mbeki administration can still string the clamouring "minorities" along" with a *laissez-faire* policy that results in the promotion of English (Alexander, 2000:29). That the ideology of non-racialism has come under stress, and may eventually be discarded, cannot only be blamed on the new elite. Rather, it is the conflicting demands of non-racialism and redress that is problematic. To avoid alienation and the emigration of a skilled "white" minority, non-racialism has to be stressed. On the other hand, reconciliation demands redress for the disadvantaged majority. In short: "What lies at the heart of the South African dilemma is the tension between the ideal of colour-blindness and the need to recognize race in order to diminish the reality of colour inequity" (Moodley and Adam, 2000: 56). And yet redress is also a primary task for state and society, according to the ANC in government. But redress and reconciliation have so far failed to unite South Africans. The issue of reparations, an indicator of support for redress and an acknowledgement that the legacy of the past requires atonement and restitution for past injustice, reveals a significant difference of opinion between "black" and "white" South Africans.[23] And on the economic front, despite the progress made towards increasing the size of the African middle class, a large majority of "black" people remain poor. The successful reduction of widespread poverty is a generally accepted premise in overcoming the legacy of apartheid and building a nation. With such obstacles to building a nation, Steven Friedman's observation is salient: "Legal integration into common citizenship is broadly accepted, but a sense of belonging and togetherness has hardly veered beyond communal groups (Friedman, 1994: 176)." Ten years later, a South African Reconciliation Barometer Survey, conducted in 2004, reveals that 55 percent of respondents rarely talk to somebody from another population group and 77 percent say informal social contact between them and other groups is rare. In the urban centres, the level of interaction is higher. Also on the upside, 22 percent of all respondents reported medium to high levels of informal interaction at home with people from other population

[23] The reconciliation barometer of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation finds in a 2001 survey that a clear majority of more than 50 per cent of South African whites reject reparations funded by big business, the government or white South Africans. In short, a majority of white South Africans do not see the need for any reparations and/or redress at all. In the same survey, an overwhelming majority of black respondents supports reparations through all of the three groups/institutions.

groups. On the whole, one can observe that South Africans are beginning to have timid relationships with people from other population groups than their own.

3. Imagining an African nation

Since Thabo Mbeki took over the presidency from Nelson Mandela in 1999, the dominant South African discourse of nation building has changed. Under Mandela, the 'rainbow myth' of a diverse but united nation guided by 'Mandela magic' was the dominant rhetoric that glossed over a divided nation and diminished confrontation during transition. With Mbeki, the new discourse of nation building, launched at the African National Congress' (ANC) national congress in Mafikeng in 1997, changed towards a more decisive Africanist approach, asserting African hegemony in a diverse nation. This shift was supported by the governing party's analysis that South Africa was still a divided nation, one rich and "white", the other, "black" and poor. Hence, a new impetus was sought to redress the legacies of the apartheid past.

The Africanist approach to nation building of the Mbeki administration is so prominent because it is a modification of the symbolic construction of the South African nation as a non-racial, rainbow nation. In the end then, the "re-racialisation of society" (Posel, 2000) and "renewed ethnoracial consciousness" may indeed mean "the demise of the non-racial dream" (Moodley and Adam, 2000: 56). The Africanist turn in the ANC's post-apartheid nation-building discourse can be understood as the aspiration of Black Nationalism in the *longue durée*. Partha Chatterjee elaborates on anti-colonial nationalism in his critique of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities (1991)* and Ernest Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism (1983)*. He regrets that they do not pay enough attention to the role of culture in nationalist mobilisation. For Chatterjee, the crucial characteristic of nationalist movements in colonial and post-colonial states is "that anti-colonial nationalism creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its political battle with the imperial power (Chatterjee, 1993: 6)". This is achieved by dividing "the world into two domains – the material and the spiritual." In the material domain, the superiority of the West is recognised. Science and technology are the representatives of this world. The spiritual domain, seen as an 'inner' domain, bears "the essential marks of cultural identity." In this cultural domain,

anti-colonial nationalism imagines the nation (Chatterjee, 1993: 6). The resilience of this idea within the liberation movement – to preserve an inner domain that is untouched by the colonialist and other outsiders, even if united in the same struggle – emerges from an analysis of the tortuous path which led eventually to the acceptance of "white" and Indian activists within the command structures of the ANC (Bosch, 1999). Indeed, the view of non-racialism as an original and perennial, even dominant, companion of South African liberation movements (Frederikse, 1990), appears optimistic and distinguishes inadequately between strategic considerations, political and cultural aspirations. Neglected in this view is that an Africanist nationalist current was and is a constantly present in the liberation movement.[24] The shift from the rainbow nation to African hegemony is therefore not necessarily a reversal of policy, but a shift in emphasis. For if the South African nation-building project recognises democratic rights for all citizens, a *culturally* defined concept of nation building, even if it seeks mainly to redress the colonial legacy, is at pains to include individuals who do not share the culture of such a symbolically constructed nation. At the same time, a definition of African culture that is sufficiently vague can still be inclusive. The real problem with the ANC's concept of nation building is therefore not its African outlook but its aim of creating a single nation with *one* dominant identity for all its citizens.

In a document circulated before the 1999 general election, the conflicting aim of integrating non-racialism with redress is evident. On the one hand, people are to express their multiple identities. On the other, this has to be done to 'foster the evolution of a broader South Africanism as *their primary identity*' (African National Congress, 1999). It is further recognised that people have multiple identities, but the aim of the nation building effort is to foster *one* prevailing identity for all South Africans and hence to create a unified nation. Another ANC document lays out the rationale of African hegemony (African National Congress, 1997). In the face of South Africa's diversity, the document tries "to encourage the emergence of a common South African identity". This is based on the assumption that people have multiple identities and, more controversially, that one such identity should assume prominence. Therefore, the African identity has to exert hegemony "in the context of a multi-cultural and non-racial society". The aim of such an African focus is "to avoid being a

[24] For the presence of Africanist thinking within the early ANC, see Lodge (1983).

clone of the US or the UK" and to realise the liberation of "black" people and Africans, the majority and the poor. African hegemony reflects a more anti-colonial bent and a symbolic thrust towards a society and a state which are African. For some observers, Thabo Mbeki's Africanist turn symbolises the triumph of the Pan Africanist Congress's African nationalism and Black Consciousness ideology (Mthombothi, 2003). Hence, Mbeki is applauded for having united the different strands of the liberation movement, African-nationalist self-affirmation and non-racialism.

Adherence to a dominant, South African identity by all individual citizens is the hallmark of the classical state nation-building project. And such a South African identity is meant to reflect and incorporate African culture and give it pride of place in the symbolic reconstruction of the state. South African identity is to be inclusive, but the crucial question is how can African culture, promoted through the state, be an agent of such an inclusive identity? Especially for young Afrikaners and "white" South Africans, this is a crucial question. How can they belong to an African society? After all, over the years, they were the racial Other of indigenous, "black" society. Moreover, the current process of nation building focuses less on reconciliation and more on redress. Representations of the nation at state level especially reflect a symbolic redress. Mbeki underlines this emphasis in his speech launching Freedom Park, a commemorative place for past struggles and suffering, in June 2002. Freedom Park is to represent a new, inclusive history of South Africa, "a narration of the totality of the South African story" (Mbeki, 2003). Racist myths of "black" inferiority are disproven by showing that the beginning of humanity and human civilisation have an African origin, and "Africans begin to be visible" (Mbeki, 2003:6). The Black Consciousness aspect of the project is pointed out by quoting from Mandela's presidential inauguration speech that body, mind and soul have been freed to fulfil themselves. But besides redress through the creation of a proud, African history, a history which may compete in its dramatic content and civilising aspects with European history, reconciliation in a diverse, but unified, nation is sought. Mongane Wally Serote, the director of the Freedom Park Trust, states that Freedom Park is to celebrate, in the spirit of reconciliation, conflicts that inflicted pain upon South Africans (Serote, 2003). Hence, by taking the origins of humanity as a starting point and explicitly referring to the *Boer* victims of the South African War of 1899-1902, Mbeki

promotes a reconciled, inclusive remembrance and celebration of the nation. An attempt is thus made to achieve two seemingly contradictory aims: to achieve redress, on a symbolic level, for oppressed people, their history and culture, and to reconcile and unite a divided nation.

However, redress and reconciliation are difficult to balance. Not only is racial awareness still high but ethnic groups are also examined and evaluated for their peculiarities. While non-racialism was an important ideal of overcoming racial and ethnic difference and antagonism, real and perceived differences remain a problem of post-apartheid society. For instances, in recent publications, the Jewish community examines its particular relationship to "blacks"; "black" politicians applaud Afrikaners for not hiding their racism behind a veneer of liberal politeness; the national electricity provider *Eskom* studies the Jewish, Afrikaner and other ethnic minorities to learn lessons for "black" empowerment; and, finally, African ethnic politics emerge beyond the closed doors of internal party squabbles. Politics in the Limpopo province are marred by ethnic arithmetic. According to Tom Lodge, Premier Ngoako Ramathlodi, in order to rein in intra-regional rivalries, "scrupulously followed a policy of ethnic balance, appointing four Shangaans and four Sothos to his cabinet (as well as two Vendas)" (Lodge, 2002:45). The accusation by the late Steve Tshwete, Minister of Safety and Security, that Tokyo Sexwale, Cyril Ramaphosa and Matthew Phosa, high ranking members of the ANC and potential contenders for ANC leadership, were involved in plotting against Mbeki, brought the role of ethnicity in ANC politics into clear focus. Besides the issue of ANC power struggles, attention shifted to the alleged existence of the 'Xhosa-Nostra', a supposedly powerful clique in business and government consisting of ethnic Xhosa people (Makhanya, 2003). This issue points to a continued awareness of ethnicity, for the South African public immediately understood that the three accused were not Xhosa, and hence that the accusation could be related to ethnic politics. Affirming an African identity may be necessary to advance redress, but it can also contribute to the maintenance of a potentially antagonistic racial and ethnic awareness. Among some Afrikaners, especially the organized civil society groups that were closely related to the apartheid state, there is the perception that they are excluded from the rainbow, the large and diverse South African family and that the concerns of Afrikaners are now neglected as they face up to a hostile, "black" government.

3. Afrikaners and the new dispensation

In light of the previous decades of racial antagonism, Afrikaners struggle to find their place in an emerging, African society whose contours are only beginning to take shape. For Afrikaners, the social, political and economic changes that took place within a short time pose fundamental challenges to individual and collective identity formation. A new political, socio-economic and cultural situation calls for new symbols of identification for the entire South African nation and for Afrikaners in particular. Afrikaners have responded with different strategies to the new dispensation. Let me look first at how Afrikaner civil society and political organisations are managing the transition and how they respond to what they perceive as threats to the Afrikaner nation and ethnicity. The three areas that receive particular attention are language, education and affirmative action. While these issues are dear to many young Afrikaners, they do not elicit the ethnic mobilization one would expect. I argue, as I do in the following chapters, that young Afrikaners adhere to identities that are beyond the reach of traditional politics.

Afrikaner nationalism has been declared dead (Sparks, 2003: 133). The legendary unity of the *volk* is lost and there is little consensus about which form collective mobilisation or representation of Afrikaners as an ethnic group should take. For Sparks and other observers, a profound confusion exists about what it means to be an Afrikaner in the twenty-first century after the triumph, attrition, and death of Afrikaner nationalism (Vestergaard, 2001). For many Afrikaners civil society and political organizations, their role is to maintain an ethnic awareness and to fend off the undermining of Afrikaner ethnicity and culture.[25] In the political realm, Afrikaner ethnic representation has been reduced to little significance. After the end of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 1996, in which the ANC alliance and the New National Party (NNP) shared power, Afrikaner political representation has been in steady decline, reaching its nadir in 2004 when the remnants of the NNP joined the ANC. White votes by Afrikaans- and English-speaking constituencies, for the rightwing – the

[25] While Giliomee is right in pointing out that many Afrikaners try to be more inclusive by opening up language-based mobilization to Coloured people (Giliomee, 2003), the enthusiasm among Coloured Afrikaans speakers is much less than among Afrikaners. They fear to be taken for granted and being enrolled in a "white", Afrikaner language struggle. The necessary discussions and negotiations between Afrikaans speakers with different views about the role of the language, is neglected.

Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, Conservative Party and *Vryheidsfront* – was in steady decline between June 1993 and June 1997, from 25 per cent to 12 per cent (Schlemmer, 1997). This trend was confirmed in the 1999 elections, the *Vryheidsfront* received 1.37 per cent less of the total vote than in 1994, and the election in 2004 suggested no reversal of this trend. Furthermore, the Democratic Alliance (DA), at one time in alliance with the NNP, is now the biggest opposition party. It emerged out of the liberal opposition to apartheid and is now largely the party that unites minorities, "whites", Indians and Coloureds, against the ANC government. It also draws a considerable number of Afrikaner votes. The desertion of voting for an ethnic Afrikaner party might well have been motivated by the view that the DA has the best chances of uniting an effective opposition, or some might argue that political power is lost and electoral participation is no longer useful to advance one's interests. However the explanation one prefers, the turning away from party politics also points to the uncertainty of what it means to be an Afrikaner, what individual and collective Afrikaner identity entails, and if it can be mobilised.

Among Afrikaners, the spectrum of opinion about how and if power and rights should be given to ethnic communities and how to adapt to the new, Africanizing and changing society, is broad. Borrowing from Dani Goosen, we can distinguish the following three attitudes among Afrikaners towards the new dispensation (Goosen, 2002). First, the rightwing and *vervreemde* or alienated Afrikaners, have retreated into an inner *laager*. The terrorists of the *Boeremag* represent this extremist minority of Afrikaners and their opposition to a multiracial democracy. Also in this category are those who exiled themselves to Britain, Australia, Canada and other places (Van Rooyen, 2000). Second, there are those, primarily Afrikaner intellectuals, who are disenchanted with the new political order. They fear that the little political influence that Afrikaners have will lead to social and cultural insignificance, if not extinction. They argue that some form of group rights or other recognition is necessary to allow Afrikaners to take up their space in a democratic South Africa. Third, others do not subscribe to strong group rights and remain deeply suspicious of ethnic politics, but most of them are disenchanted with the ANC in government. They prefer to look at themselves and their fellow Afrikaners - they feel that "white" South Africans and Afrikaners are isolating themselves from other South African ethnic groups and the changing institutions of the state.

In a society in transition, it is understandable that the attitudes, thoughts and hopes of Afrikaners move between these three basic dispositions; they are not mutually exclusive but often individuals do, as the case of Van Zyl Slabbert[26] shows, move between them or embrace them at the same time, with all its contradictions. Such is the flux of politics and identity in contemporary South Africa.

Let me look first at these individuals and groups that are most adamant in advocating group rights for Afrikaners. The Group of 63 are Afrikaner intellectuals who are disenchanted with the new political order. The group was founded to make public interventions on behalf of Afrikaners and to stem the tide of a diminishing Afrikaner presence in nationwide public discourse. The group is an Afrikaner think-tank that advocates some sort of group rights and representation. They fear with the little political influence that Afrikaners still have, they will wither to social and cultural insignificance, if not extinction. To counter the lack of a common purpose, different strategies abound. Even within the Group of 63 no united position has emerged. In light of the South African past of apartheid and the separation of people, historian Herman Giliomee suggests that the advocacy of group rights *per se* will not be successful (Giliomee, 1996). Instead, he argues that democracy and respect for human rights justify the allocation of rights to minorities. Unity and stability are thereby assured. A different view is taken by Johann Rossouw, editor of the *Federasie van Afrikaanse Kultuurvereniginge* (FAK) aligned journal *Vrye Afrikaan* who proposes the creation of an Afrikaner Board of Deputies, taking the Jewish Board of Deputies as an example (Rossouw, 2002). In this latter perspective, Afrikaners are a minority like any other and they should defend their ethnic and cultural interests.

More important perhaps, Afrikaner intellectuals seek a 'succession-settlement' (*opvolgskikking*) that is to follow the negotiations during the transition and the first decade of democratic rule. They argue that the relationship between the state and Afrikaners has to be further negotiated. The Group of 63 has significant support among organised Afrikaner

[26] The case of F. Van Zyl Slabbert is interesting. While he is outspoken against ethnic identity politics, he has moved to a more supportive position of Afrikaner group rights, especially with regards to language and education policy (see Slabbert, 2006).

groups – such as *Aksie Hoër Onderwys (AHO)*, *Afrikanerbond (AB)*, *Afrikaanse Taal- en Kultuurvereniging* (*AKTV*), *Solidariteit*, and the *Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*, and the FAK – as the feeling of neglect by the state of Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture is widespread. The historical and political motivation for a renewed settlement between Afrikaners and the ANC government is reflected in Giliomee's analysis of the historical transfer of power from a "white" minority to a democratic majority and the treatment that Afrikaans and Afrikaner culture has received since then (Giliomee, 2003). In his view, Afrikaner leaders under former President F.W. de Klerk concentrated so much on seeking an agreement with the liberation movements that they failed to use all the means available, even the strategic use of their military superiority, to wrest concessions in order to protect the Afrikaner minority in a democratic state under a "black" majority. For Giliomee and Afrikaner intellectual leaders, the new state offers little minority protection to Afrikaans, Afrikaner culture and education. Hence, they argue a new agreement between Afrikaners and the state is needed. However, what is sought is not a final agreement that will satisfy Afrikaners once and for all, but an ongoing process that sees the constitution and daily policies being subjected to negotiation and modification by the Afrikaner minority (Rossouw, 2002).

Besides the Group of 63, there is the radical and nationalist organisation, Dan Roodt's *Pro-Afrikaanse Aksiegroep* (PRAAG). It has a more muscular approach, arguing for the creation of an Afrikaner homeland. PRAAG also organises public protests against name changes and commemorates Afrikaner holidays. Thanks to its leader, the flamboyant Dan Roodt, the organization enjoys much attention in the media and public discourse. The political orientation of PRAAG is traditional right wing, cultivating values and discourses that intend to defend Afrikaner ethnicity and language, to resist the Africanization of South Africa, to pretend that Western and "white" civilisation is superior to the rest and that "black" people cannot be trusted with fair and rational politics and administration, and so on. Roodt, the leader, likes to show off his taste for sophisticated clothing and is parading his wealth and hence it is questionable if he could be taken seriously as the new leader of a political movement that would need to forge a class alliance and could galvanize a disparaged, ethnic flock.[27] Rather than epitomising a selfless leader, the self-stylisation of Roodt shows well the

[27] For a portrait of Dan Roodt, see Sampson (2006)

consequences of Afrikaner *embourgeoisement* and the *Zeitgeist* of late modernity. Displays of ethnicity compete with a stylization of the self, revealing at most a narcissism in which ethnicity figures as a tool for expression like individual accessories such as clothing, cars and other consumer goods. Roodt has the confidence to call himself a new, intellectual *volksleier*, a leader of the Afrikaners in the tradition of Eugene Marais, Gustav Preller and JBM Hertzog and other Afrikaner cultural and political leaders. Unfortunately, form and style trump substance. Or can he and his fellow travellers seriously believe that Afrikaners will rule themselves within the next ten years, as Roodt claims? While he is not necessarily appreciated by the Afrikaner intellectual establishment and his right wing, proto-nationalist politics is criticised, they show little concern for his racialist politics.[28]

The third group that enjoys wide public attention is the Solidarity (*Solidariteit*) union, the former *Mynworkers Unie* (Mineworkers Union), a traditionally conservative union that used to serve the interests of "white" workers. For the union, the threat of employment equity and retrenchments due to privatization and downsizing resulted in a major surge in mobilisation and recruitment. Since the 1990s, participation has sky-rocketed. Solidarity has members primarily in the electrical and communications industry, metal and engineering, agriculture and cement industries. Over the last years, Solidarity is not only focusing its attention on the workplace, but all aspects of the social life of its members. Hence, the union is working closely with other organizations, such as the FAK to mobilize Afrikaners to defend their interests. The union's slogan is "we protect our people" and it is quite clear that it is primarily addressing a "white" clientele, including a newly founded youth section (Solidarity, 2007). While the union is evidently reaching out to ("white") civil society, divergent class interests indicate different strategies and objectives in defending Afrikaners with other organizations, especially corporations. In an interview with the author in 2003, Dirk Herman, spokesman for the Solidarity, vented his frustration at Afrikaner captains of the industry, such as the chairman of the media conglomerate Naspers, Ton Vosloo, who allegedly said that individual Afrikaners had now to make the best they could on their own in a capitalist society.[29] On the question of diversity, Herman conceded that they have a dominantly "white" membership and

[28] See Pieter Duvenage 'Is 'n saaklike debat met Dan Roodt moontlik?'Litnet, 7 Maart, 2005
[29] Centurion, June 10, 2003

hence organize for their concerns, yet he argued that Afrikaner identity is now a much softer identity. The question remains if such a defensive approach, mobilizing based on “race” and ethnicity, is well adapted to reach out to young Afrikaners and live up to their expectations as they try to belong to a changing society.

While these three groups are different in tone and in their agendas, they share the same analysis. Afrikaners form an ethnic group that deserves recognition which should be reflected in the granting of cultural and political rights within democratic South Africa. Afrikaners are seen as an ethnic group which shares specific characteristics. They should therefore mobilise to maintain their distinctiveness, language and culture.

Let me now turn to three areas in which the debate and political struggle about minority and ethnic rights are particularly strong. Language policy, education restructuring and affirmative action indicate well how Afrikaners have less political leverage. As in many other divided societies, the status of one’s language is an issue of pride and political concern for ethnic groups. It is an emotional issue since one’s worldview is filtered through language. The history of the nation-state shows how language turned into a political means to advance, politically and socially, ethnic groups and how it was instrumental in consolidating the nation-state. As political power has shifted, the position of the Afrikaans language in public life and education, and employment equity legislation, have become dominant issues for Afrikaners. Language, as a cultural issue, and affirmative action, as a socio-economic issue, touch upon fears about the survival of Afrikaners as a group as it has been moulded and believed in during ethno-nationalist mobilisation that took place in the course of the twentieth century.

As the bitter conflict over the language policy at Stellenbosch University shows, the language issue is closely related to concerns about education and the maintenance of the Afrikaans language in schools and universities. In 2002 and 2003, as plans for the restructuring of education were made public, the viability of Afrikaans as a language of learning was questioned. The debate about the status of Afrikaans at the University of Stellenbosch highlights three important issues. First, the Department of Education cites universal access to

education as the main reason for the introduction of English alongside Afrikaans as the language of instruction (Asmal, 2002; Van Coller, 2003). Advocates of Afrikaans instruction argue that it is a basic right to use one's language of choice and that Afrikaans, like all the other ten official languages, enjoys equality of status and protection under the constitution. At the core of the divergent views on language and education are the two competing constitutional principles of equality and diversity. Whereas the former justifies universal access for all those who cannot speak Afrikaans, the latter allows Afrikaans-speakers to receive tertiary education in their own language and contributes to the maintenance of Afrikaans as an academic and public language. Given current government language policy, Afrikaans is undergoing "controlled status reduction" (Bostock, 2000). The approach taken by the Department of Education highlights the rejection of Afrikaner cultural interests. To "weld one nation, out of (and in) diversity and difference" was the declared objective of Kader Asmal, the ANC Minister of Education before the 2004 general election (Asmal, 1996). However, the language policy indicates that current African or South African nationalism is not as "generously inclusive" as Asmal wished it to be. Rather, civic inclusiveness as equal citizens is offset by an Africa-focused, symbolic-cultural state construction which leaves little state-sponsored space for Afrikaner cultural interests. In the case of higher education, it seems that the organisational demand for a uniform system motivates plans for a policy which requires English as a dominant language and access by potential students to all universities, notwithstanding the traditional language of such institutions (Van Coller, 2003).

The second aspect of the language debate at Stellenbosch is the lack of interest it elicits among Afrikaans-speaking students. The *Oorlegplatform* claims that it is the lack of knowledge among the younger generation about the viability of Afrikaans in the future as a public language which has resulted in apathy (Die Oorlegplatform, 2002). The third issue that the *taaldebat* (language debate) at Stellenbosch raises is about Afrikaner identity and how it relates to equality and diversity. For the former Vice-Chancellor who resigned during the controversy about the language policy, Chris Brink, the conflict is about those who want to protect Stellenbosch as a "white" Afrikaner university and those who envisage a more multicultural university (Brink, 2006). He suggests that those who want to keep the university

dominantly Afrikaans also want to maintain an exclusive, "white" Afrikaner identity without much space for change. He agrees with the Department of Education that equality will only be served if access is enlarged to English speakers. The issue might be a bit more complex and those who want to maintain Afrikaans are not necessarily harking back to the bad old days of apartheid and wanting to preserve "white" privilege. For in the latest development in the debate, even such public intellectuals, with a firm reputation being beyond ethnic politics, such as Breyeten Breytenbach, Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert and Jakes Gerwel, expressed their concern for not protecting Stellenbosch as an Afrikaans language university (Du Toit, 2005). It might indeed be the case that one cannot achieve the protection of Afrikaans *and* the promotion of a multicultural university that will attract "black" students, so manifestly absent from the campus. The dilemma for those who want to change an exclusive, Afrikaner identity to an open and racially inclusive one is how to do so without threatening the maintenance and flourishing of the Afrikaans language.

Employment equity is a crucial issue in the construction of the new nation. For the ANC government, it is designed to fulfil the promise of non-racialism. But for the opposition, it is reverse discrimination. With the end of job reservation, "white" blue-collar workers most strongly felt the competition from "black" workers. The union Solidarity successfully challenged the failure to promote "white" police officers in the courts, since candidates from a designated group were sought to fill the vacancies. In another issue, Solidarity successfully lobbied for the extension of the *Telkom* shareholder offer to all low income buyers, independent of "race", instead of to only previously disadvantaged African citizens. Without going to the courts, government acceded to the union's demand. Misgivings by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party (SACP), both part of the governing tripartite alliance, about privatisation which benefited the rich, "black" or "white", might also have contributed to the government concession. From this case, it appears that the ANC government respects the verdict of the courts, although political pressures that weigh on the judiciary have recently surfaced. Second, government is more willing to concede to Afrikaner interests on economic grounds rather than in the cultural and symbolic realm. This is related to politics within the governing alliance and its strategic

relationship to the labour movement, but it also points to the more inflexible politics of culture and identity.

The crucial question is how successful are these Afrikaner organizations at ethnic mobilisation? Is there is indeed a new Afrikaans movement, fuelled by feelings of neglect, a popular movement among Afrikaners beyond elite circles, which struggles to keep Afrikaans a public language, and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans culture as a major cultural presence in South Africa, as Pieter Mulder, the leader of the Freedom Front Plus, claims (Dispatch, 2002). No doubt, the union Solidarity is successful at ethnic mobilization, but are they also reaching out to young Afrikaners? Notwithstanding their class position, young Afrikaners are well aware that they cannot count on the largesse of the state. It seems to me that evolving material conditions, but also the quest for a place in a transformative state and society, have led young Afrikaners to explore new avenues for the construction of a social imaginary. The potential of the younger generation to participate in ethno-political mobilisation remains an open question. Although 4 000 students at Pretoria University are reported to have signed a petition of protest against the proposed name change of Pretoria to Tshwane, even such a significant issue as the use of Afrikaans at traditional Afrikaans universities does not create a groundswell of ethnic mobilisation. Some observers nonetheless pin their hopes on civil society and believe that Afrikaner culture and language will be preserved through renewed mobilisation of civic institutions (Scholtz, 2003). But it is far from obvious that this resort to civil society is equal to the aspirations of young Afrikaners and their waning interest in political and ethnic ‘group’ issues.

Often the young Afrikaners I interviewed feel ambivalent about mobilizing for Afrikaner language and identity. Klaus, a twenty-nine years old economist residing in Johannesburg, when asked what he thinks of Dan Roodt, the Group of 63 and others that organize demonstrations to draw attention to issues such as name changes and affirmative action, says that “I feel very often embarrassed by these demonstrations. They can be very extreme and show very narrow mindedness and simplicity.” While he appreciates their concern for the Afrikaans language, he argues that “I feel our language is not upheld by government policy but by a community of people that share a language.” Language activism is seen as leading to

negative perceptions among the broader South African public. "[Demonstrations] seem to be more alienating and playing into people's ideas of what Afrikaans is about…the stereotypical idea of narrow mindedness and backwardness". Tiaan, a twenty two years old law student from Tshwane feels that a union like Solidarity is "fighting the good fight for white South Africans" but that they should include all minority groups. He only sees mobilization beyond Afrikaner ethnicity as fruitful, but is not sure how this could be achieved. While he sees a sort of a united front of minorities as a possibility, he suggests that the time for focusing on white people only has definitely passed. I want to suggest that even though young people are concerned with employment equity and name changes, that is, they feel the pressures of transformation and redress, they also have an understanding that ethnic mobilization, in light of apartheid history never far from racism, has no future in South Africa. The contemporary *Zeitgeist* has led to an ethics that is averse to ethnic mobilization and is beyond traditional forms of politics.

The history of Afrikaner nationalism shows that the desertion of ethno-nationalist mobilization on a broader scale began in the 1970s and 1980s. Besides the everyday socio-economic relations that undermined apartheid, the *Voelvry* (feel free) generation articulated the Afrikaner society's "profound sense of malaise and self-doubt" and began challenging the established order through rock music and poetry (O'Meara, 1996: 368-372). They gave voice to the change in identities among Afrikaners that had occurred. Louis, a 33 year old music promoter from Tshwane tells how, as he was growing up, he believed the 'story' about the becoming and struggle of a people that Afrikaner ethnic entrepreneurs propagated in school and church. Only later, in university, did he become aware of the lies he was told. He remarks that alternative Afrikaans music was primarily about self-fulfillment, "[it] was just hedonism", but soon he realized that he was "sitting on an incredibly strong social tool" to bring people of different "races" together. His identity had evolved beyond Afrikaner ethnicity. These evolved identities reflect the *Zeitgeist* of late modernity. In this sense, the young Afrikaners I interviewed here, like their *Voelvry* predecessors, stand for more than a youthful rebellion, but rather a different way of being, removed from ethnicity and nationalism.

Faisal Devji writes in another context of the mostly young people, latching on to global networks, such as those for the environment and against war and globalization, who are averse to old-fashioned political solutions and are more concerned with ethical behaviour (Devji, 2005). Young Afrikaners, ever since growing up in a comfortable middle-class position, like their counterparts around the world, have "the luxury of moral choice" (Devji, 2005). Emerging from witnessing the oppression of others and the resulting feelings of pity, young Afrikaners are perhaps led to accept sacrifices which others would reject. This sense of justice and sacrifice that is today required from them, appears in most of the interviews conducted for this study. Jan, a thirty-one year old chartered accountant from Johannesburg accepts that Afrikaans is less present as a public language. He observes that "growing up in the apartheid era, you always had the expectation that people should be able to understand your language [Afrikaans]. That is actually wrong….It is not fair to expect a black person to be able to talk Afrikaans to you." His sense of fairness and justice leads him to accept a diminished role for Afrikaans and he deems English, as lingua franca, is an agreeable compromise language. With the same justification, George, a twenty-two year old financial controller feels that "employment equity is also a good thing". While he says that historical justice requires such policies, he fears that employment equity undermines equality, a principle he deems very important for living together in contemporary South Africa. As George's position shows, young Afrikaners have the independence to make the moral choices they deem right and that are in tune with global standards of behaviour. This does not mean that they would not want their culture, language and selected traditions be thrive and flourish, but that they are suspicious of any form of ethnic mobilisation harking back to "white" privilege and supremacy.

Moreover, young Afrikaners have grown suspicious of traditional forms of politics. Paul, a thirty one year old businessman from Midrand says he has "a problem with this whole Afrikaans movement…I think it is very limiting." When asked if he saw the need for a party or group to take care of the interests of Afrikaans speakers he said: " I don't think so. Then, you classify people again. I think they should take care of South Africa as a nation rather than to a specific group." For others, they feel that there standard of living is good and as long as this remains the case, there is no need to be concerned with politics. A good job, ownership of

a nice house and a comfortable life style contribute to an understanding that there is no real need to change politics the way they are today. Cornelia, a young businesswoman states that "I don't think that the government is doing a bad job politically…I feel there is not a lot of turmoil in the country."

Over the last years, the Afrikaans press has focused on the younger generation. Cultural developments among young Afrikaners, especially rock and popular musicians, have drawn attention at cultural festivals such as *Aardklop*, *Oudtshoorn*, and others. The editor of the Sunday newspaper, *Rapport*, was so enthusiastic that he attributed leadership responsibilities to the rock groups for facilitating a shift to a new way of being Afrikaner and Afrikaans in their imaginative use of language. The *AKTV* too has a cleverly designed website that promotes with trendy designs events which cater to a young clientele, trying to brand the Afrikaans language and the Afrikaner way of life as a hip and *lekker*. A new generation has been identified and even named the 'Zoid generation', after the successful rock singer, Karen Zoid. They seem to enjoy the liberty which freedom from the ethnic *laager* affords.

The younger generation is also much more willing to accept the post-1994 dispensation with its benefits and challenges without resorting to ethnic mobilisation. It also has little appreciation of the view that sees Afrikaners as new victims, be they intellectuals who see the dominance of English as the imposition of a colonial language upon disempowered Afrikaners or unionists who point to the plight of "white" workers at the hands of retrenchment and affirmative action (Goosen, 2002). Louis, a music promoter from Pretoria, feels that widespread poverty is a much bigger problem than to defend Afrikaner ethnicity. For him, it is a kind of trade off. The taxes he pays and the "political no-power" are acceptable because, he reasons, "there are people with a bigger need than I have at the moment". As long as he can pursue his business, he accepts to go along with politics. A similar point about the loss of interest in politics is made by Jennifer, a twenty-five year old journalist. She argues that there are too many issues in their everyday lives, like getting a job, worrying about study loans, trying to make car lease payments "for people to really care about politics." Many wish to focus on their work and how they can best live their lives. They look at the job market and estimate their chances against the competition if they are

well prepared. For them, the scourge of HIV/AIDS and rape are seen as issues which demand as much mobilisation as the Afrikaans language (Niewoudt, 2002).

For Antjie Krog, there is a more profound process at play among young Afrikaners in which the self searches for new ways to relate to society. She argues that young people want to turn away from traditional means to express their identities such as politics and sport, and even poetry (Krog, 2004). Young people feel that these activities offer limited means of self-expression. Rather, they feel that they hold them back. Furthermore, Krog argues, they are unsure how they can find a way to belong to a changing South Africa. In order to avoid the contestation that is inherent in these activities, they look for different lives and different ways of thinking and being in rock music and other media of popular culture, such as comic books.

This quest to express identities and to find ways how to live one's life is reflected in the question: what is an Afrikaner? Afrikaners will immediately question the usage of the term 'Afrikaner' and ask who will be included and who excluded in your definition. While some feel that 'Afrikaner' is a softer identity, others contest that the term 'Afrikaner' can imply a more open identity than the traditional ethno-nationalist one. Furthermore, the question remains if we should look at the Afrikaners as an ethnic group – the differences are so significant within this ethnic group that to assume a group coherence is problematic. Such considerations are the staple of any contemporary political discussion amongst Afrikaners. The wide variety of life experiences and the views on society and politics of the people interviewed in this study, question the assumption that there is one dominant Afrikaner identity. Adopting a plural perspective of identity adds to our understanding of the relative ease with which profound changes have been accepted among Afrikaners and South Africans and ultimately contributed to a successful transition. Ways of life that only recently have been frowned upon have entered the mainstream. For instances, a protestant ethic forms the moral basis for the "proper" life of many of the people interviewed. Nonetheless, the popularity of the eccentric, openly-gay entertainer *Nataniel*, among 'ordinary' Afrikaners or the alienation of the young men of the springbok rugby squad, dominated by Afrikaners, from the militaristic and sado-masochistic training methods of *Kamp Staaldraad* in preparation for the

2004 Rugby World Cup, shows an important move away from a hegemonic Afrikaner male identity (Du Pisani, 2001).

The search for a new South African imaginary is reflected in the identity formation and self-stylisation of the new generation. While the analysis of leading Afrikaner intellectuals focuses on state policies and how the loss of political power and black empowerment policies, including employment equity, exerts pressures on young Afrikaners to move away from their language and culture, the evolution of values and the challenge of dealing with the past, also affects their attitudes towards ethnicity. Being an ethnic Afrikaner, and all that affects ethnic identity, can no longer be considered the sole and dominant factor that shapes identity. In the following three chapters, I will take a closer look at how young Afrikaners reflect on these issues of identity in narratives of the self.

AFRIKANER IDENTITY AFTER NATIONALISM

PART II

Chapter 6

NEGOTIATED ETHNICITY

In this second part of my thesis I turn to an in-depth analysis of narratives of the self of young Afrikaners. These narratives reflect in many ways our epoch of late modernity. All the people I interviewed engage with these characteristics of late modernity as they negotiate their identities. Traditional identities were dislocated and new ones were emerging which could no longer be contained by nationalism and ethnicity. As a sign of times, identities are changing and new subjectivities are emerging. As we have seen in chapter two, in late modernity, Stuart Hall argues identities are breaking up. The cultural landscape of class, gender, ethnicity, "race" and nationality is fragmented. An individual is now described as having several and contradictory identities – the self is pluralistic.

Contrary to the views of the Afrikaner organizations discussed in the chapter five, Afrikaner ethnicity today is more complex than plans for ethnic mobilization would suggest. Ethnicity as lived today among young Afrikaners is differentiated, complex and contains many nuances that do not fit traditional conceptions of ethnicity. Ethnic identity is much less shaped by adherence to tradition but rather through stylization of the self by which individuals choose to create self-identities (Nuttal, 2004). Identities are more differentiated and complex and they cannot be reduced to ethnic identity. At the same time, for many of the individuals interviewed, Afrikaner ethnicity, especially language, is something they appreciate and want to see preserved and flourishing.

With a theoretical background that focuses on individual narratives in late modernity, this thesis is able to shed some light on aspects of Afrikaner identities that are neglected by a state-centered approach to the study of nationalism. Emphasising the role of the state in

identity formation makes it difficult to account for changing and evolving identities. A problem that is confounded by the uneasy co-existence between a political-historical narrative, focusing on structure, and a subjective narrative. By looking at narratives of the self, we gain better insights into individual life-worlds, how people make choices and ultimately desert nationalism.

In a well developed, capitalist consumer society of late modernity, to choose and shape the individual self is a ubiquitous occurrence. In South Africa, young Afrikaners are exposed to two major influences that shape identity. First, the transformation of the South African state and society into an African nation has practical implications stemming from Employment Equity legislation and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). Since recruitment and advancement in the state sector and in major corporations is more difficult, young Afrikaners (and "white" people) turn to enterpreneurialship and self-employment. This is a consequence of state policy and hence, the state-centered approach to identity formation contributes to a meaningful explanation. Second, equally important are the symbolic and normative aspects of creating an African state and society that are major forces that shift identities. Among the people interviewed, some were socialized into a strong sense of Afrikaner culture. Others come from families who identified much less with *Afrikanerdom* or consisted of mixed English-Afrikaner parents. Today, whether they are conservative or alternative, all Afrikaners have embarked on the process of negotiating ethnic identity, and therefore the claim that identities are in flux. In a clear break with the past and stemming from social transformations beginning in the late 1970s, it is now widely understood that there are different ways of being Afrikaner or Afrikaans. Many feel that Afrikaners are more open in dealing with people of different backgrounds. The view that ethnic identity is unstable, that individuals may have different identities that share equal importance in their lives is based on a *Zeitgeist* according to which exerting choice is part of the contemporary social imaginary in a democratic, consumer society. While modern individuals may feel a sense of thrownness and uprootedness, such identity related dislocations may also offer the opportunity to overcome established authoritarian structures which relied, among others, on a dominant Afrikaner (masculine) identity. Based on this premise, Jon Hyslop argues that the

development of consumer culture of late modernity in South Africa has undermined Afrikaner nationalism and relented group cohesion around a dominant Afrikaner identity that was instrumental in supporting apartheid (Hyslop, 2000). However, we need to remember that choice of identity and lifestyle does not apply to all equally – differences of class and geographical location, just to name two, shape possibilities of choice. But perhaps less visible and nonetheless fundamental to modern society is that choice is something all want to possess.

With a violent history of apartheid and ethnic nationalism, the analysis of the Afrikaners as a social group lends itself easily to emphasize extremes. During apartheid, sympathetic views of the "white" man's burden were apologetic for the regime. In contrast, left leaning analysis condemned Afrikaners as racist Nazis. Today, this polarizing perspective continues. A focus on Afrikaner (and "white") racism in the making of contemporary society often neglects processes of social change, how people try to makes sense of their lives and integrate change into their daily lives (Desai, 2006). In other words, in our analysis of "white" identity we should not neglect how a new social imaginary takes roots. In this thesis, the narratives of young Afrikaners are not analyzed uniquely with respect to their normative content as is often done in discourse analysis on whiteness (Steyn, 2001). While such a classification allows for some insights into how people perceive the world and express their attitudes, it neglects the complexity of "white" (Afrikaner) identities. It is for this reason that I have arranged the narratives only loosely according to their 'progressive' or 'conservative' content, if it is indeed possible to make such distinctions. Rather than identifying and emphasizing one dominant discourse, my intention is to capture the multiplicity and contradictions of individual narratives.

1. Shifting and resisting identities

In what follows, I analyze how Afrikaner identities are shifting towards a position that allows them to be more African and at the same time, how they are resisting such a process. This apparent contradiction is quite understandable because the formation of identities is always exposed to positions that pull into opposing directions. For many, to become more African is an irreversible development. Even if they are skeptical of or

averse to Africanization, becoming more African seems the only option that allows for a livable future. To facilitate this process, some argue that African and Western culture may merge. Moving towards such a position of entanglement seems necessary because many find it difficult to see how Afrikaners could be more African. But since the old is gone, becoming part of Africa is the only option.

What does it mean to be more African? Most agree that someone who is more African is getting along well with "black" people. All strive to be able to do so. In an ironic twist, this broad move towards 'white liberalism' is taking place at a time when "black" voices criticizing "white" liberals for their alleged racism are a constant feature of public discourse.[30] It may well be that this is only a confusion created by facile labels, for if need be, African nationalists and "white" liberals can get along, but it contributes to a public sphere in which people speak past each other, instead of talking to each other. While finding a way to be more African seems the right choice, to relate to "black" people, striving to understand their story and to adapt to a changing country also carries a narrative of loss. As a new identity takes shape, an old one is left behind, often with regret.

In contrast to those who make an active effort to change, there are also narratives that see Afrikaner identity as fundamentally opposed to anything African. It is an attitude combined with racism and a belief in white superiority. Such a mind-set, however, is rare and often co-exists with awareness that such beliefs are morally wrong and strategically obsolete. But most important perhaps, hardly anyone assumes a unique or dominant Afrikaner ethnic identity. As "race" and ethnicity recede as accepted features of distinction, language assumes such a role. Most young Afrikaners I talked to show appreciation for their language and they are concerned for its continued existence. Language remains a marker of difference and it is not beyond doubt if the reduction of ethnic difference to linguistic difference reflects an opening up apartheid mentalities or if

[30] In South African public discourse, African nationalists regularly criticize "white" liberals for hidden racism. They argue that these liberals may be from the left and claim to be progressive, but they nonetheless treat "black" people as juniors and don't take them seriously. In South African history, however, "white" liberals, have been advocating rights for "black" Africans and the dismantling of apartheid.

language (and culture) are merely replacing "race", as Paul Gilroy (1994) observed. What is apparent, however, is that Afrikaner ethnic identity turns out to be highly complex. Love and care for one's language does not necessarily mean support for ethnic mobilization; individuals give it a meaning that eschews the simplicity of mobilization. Rather, identification with an ethnic Afrikaner identity cohabitates with other identities in which no definite hierarchy can be detected. It is now broadly accepted that being an Afrikaner means different things to different people. Reflecting upon ethnicity and identity among young Afrikaners affirms Tambini's discussion of post-nationalism (2004). National (or ethnic) identity is no longer the dominant identity, if this was ever the case. Rather, individuals have a plural self and multiple identities that are unstable and without hierarchy.

Political power has changed hands dramatically in South Africa when the first democratic elections were held in 1994. In a response to this change of power, but also as part of a more long-term development, Afrikaner identities are shifting. Kurt, a 22-year-old engineering student from Pretoria, says of himself that he is a conservative Afrikaner. This becomes quite clear in the course of our conversation. From his reflections about the past I gather that he and his family used to have a strong understanding of place in the world: there was strong Afrikaner culture with church, educational institutions and politics aligned and interlocked – the 'pseudo traditional complex' (Hyslop, 2000) in which he and his family felt very much at home, but now, in a changing society and with the certainties of the past gone, he feels lost. As we sit down in a coffee shop in the mall, he attempts to have a conversation in the Sotho language with the waitress. The opinion of others, especially "black" people, are important to Kurt. He regrets, even feels guilty for the injustice of apartheid. When asked if he considers himself an African, he suggests that his definition of African is "something that has African traditions and stuff like that and then I am definitely not an African." This reflection whether his identity can fit in with the current, dominant 'Africanizing' project within South African society, leads him to realize that if he is not African, "then I don't know *what I am* and I think that is the problem with a lot of us…now that I am put on the spot, I don't know what I am". With the collapse of apartheid, a political transition, the advent of democracy and an African

nativism in the ascendance, the traditional Afrikaner identity of the previous generation, as a 'thick' ethnic identity, fails to be transmitted.[31] Afrikaner identity seems to have lost its moorings, lacks purpose, and is bereft of meaning. While Kurt states that he feels alienated from an African identity that is growing more dominant in society, he is equally ill at ease with traditional Afrikaner identity. Such alienation from Afrikaner mainstream society is not new, as the *Voelvry* (feel free) generation of the 1980s has shown.[32] What is perhaps different today is that besides an emerging African identity, with which to identify is problematic, no other dominant identity is readily available. The generation of the *Voelvry* movement could still identify with a common "white" society, perhaps liberal and alternative, but nonetheless safely within a common, "white" and western paradigm. Kurt does not think that he has these options. For him, a more thorough engagement with what it means to live in an African society is needed, even though it is fraught with difficulties. He nonetheless hesitantly suggests that there is perhaps a possibility of merging two apparently contradicting identities. He explains that African and western culture could merge with the result that "a new sort of African, westernized culture" would develop. While he wants to give this process time, he says:

> "we feel it's all happening too fast. Ten years, and things have changed like this. I mean, name changes and job changes, everything. Why not give it a little time? I know the past is bad, but just slow down."

Kurt feels overwhelmed by the rapid changes of the current epoch. The feeling that everything around you is changing fast leads to a feeling of neglect. "They don't think about us anymore", says Kurt, but it is not clear to whom 'they' refers to - the government or perhaps "black" people, on whom the construction of a common identity and a common future relies? Or does he signal a larger sentiment of forlornness in a society whose shifting signs are no longer recognizable? In the absence of state support,

[31] The nature of national and ethnic identity can be separated according to how firmly they are embraced by their subjects. When we say an Afrikaner has a 'thick' ethnicity we want to say that she or he identifies strongly with such an identity in all aspects of his or her life. When we talk of a 'thin' ethnicity, we mean that her or her Afrikaner identity is just one aspect of her identity, among many other markers that are at least as strong and visible.

[32] For a brief overview of the *Voelvry* movement, see Dan O'Meara (1996), 368-372.

many who relied on and identified with the South African state feel that the state has left them on their own. Kurt feels that “we just have then to accept everything”. He regrets that society is now led by people who use traditional healers and who celebrate important events, such as marriage and birth, with the slaughter of animals. Hence, in his view, he lives in a society in which Christian values are no longer recognized.

Despite the negativity that is attached to living in a society that is promoting, through the state, an African identity and in which traditional Afrikaner identities have come under pressure, the possibility remains that Afrikaners may find a way to relate to the emerging society. So much is conceded by Kurt who says, “we know that it is necessary to change”. This observation shows an understanding that individuals will have to change in order to become part of a newly emerging society. The lack of a definite identity and a sense of forlornness testify to the difficulty of the process. At the same time, I find it significant that this young Afrikaner who grew up in a staunch, conservative household, understanding that racial and ethnic identities are not as essential as apartheid doctrine had taught him and he can consider mutual respect and friendship with “black” people.

Kurt’s narrative is dominated by a feeling of loss: the loss of privilege, of the good life, of power and the loss of Christian values in the public sphere. Tiaan, a law student from Pretoria, shares the same narrative with a stronger emphasis on the feeling that he is now, as a “white” Afrikaner male, a victim of the new power relations in post-apartheid South Africa. He is very articulate, with an urge to ‘tell his story’, and I hardly manage to put in a word or ask another question during our conversation. Like Kurt, Tiaan comes from a conservative, religious Afrikaner home. His father used to work for *Eskom*, the state-run electricity provider. His brother immigrated to the United Kingdom, enlisting in the British army. Tiaan says that his brother left South Africa because he could not find employment with *Eskom*. A sense of loss and absence of orientation in society appears in the contradictory observations he makes. At one moment he says “young people are very pessimistic about their future because they feel that everything that is happened [sic] around them is showing that they want to be worked out of the South African society.” A little bit later, he feels that “young white people are adapting well.” Nonetheless, being

"white" is now a negative characteristic that jeopardizes your career. Employment Equity undermines non-racialism and serves to exclude from the nation. "We don't want to see white, we don't want to see black, we want to see South Africans but me as a person and many young people feel that we are not seen as South Africans." The feeling of exclusion is aggravated by his impossibility to find any relationship with an emerging African identity. He reasons that "African is Africa and Africa is black people and I don't feel like an African, I feel like a South African." He cannot see how he could belong to Africa, how he could own something that would make him African. For him, Africa is firmly tied to blackness and together they constitute a fundamental difference to his "white" identity. Even worse, in his narrative, Africa and blackness stand for death, chaos and all that is negative. Yet, despite the negativity, I will show later that Tiaan, like Kurt, believes that things will not stay the same.

The transformation of society has contributed to a flux of identities in which traditional modes of thinking of the self collide and contradict with emerging ones. This is particularly apparent when the self is brought in relation to the transforming society with the dominant paradigm of becoming more African. Christel was brought up in a religious and traditional Afrikaner household and is now studying politics at Stellenbosch University in the Western Cape, the traditional *haut lieu* of Afrikaner intellectual life. She is unsure how to conceive of a South African society that is supposed to become more African. On the one hand, she does not think South Africa has much in common with other African states. "We are different than the rest", she says. Also, Africa is a continent full of disasters and a bad example that South Africa should not emulate. On the other hand, she approves of the Africanization of state symbols, extending her approval even to individuals, when she observes that "we can all be a bit more African." While she expresses skepticism about Africa and Africanization, she considers that she, as an individual, could become more African. Together with Kurt, Christel feels that becoming "more African" is a real possibility. But Christel had already a view of Afrikaners as a people who were open to change. She observes that Afrikaner culture has become more modern due to the fact that "world values, habits, political pressure and economic factors change." But she also feels that Afrikaners have changed through their own efforts,

especially over the last ten years. She argues that "during the transition, the Afrikaner has tried to change everyone's view of his stereotyped culture." In her view, it is outside pressure, political and economic factors, but also the evolution of values and factors within Afrikaner culture and society that have led Afrikaners to desert the ethnic *laager*. They have done so in the past and are doing so at the present. Yet she remains uncertain how Afrikaners could be "more African."

What does it mean to be more African? I want to suggest that in popular parlance among ("white") South Africans, to be African implies to have an appreciation for "black" people. This is expressed in the observation that some Afrikaners have become liberal. The liberals are those who have changed. Patricia and Ronel have both grown up in Pretoria. They are religious and see themselves first and foremost as Afrikaners. Patricia feels that Afrikaner culture has "changed year by year, you get those that change and those that don't change. I don't have a problem with those that change, it's a way of being Afrikaans". In the course of our interview, it becomes apparent that she identifies more with those who don't change. But she is far from a condemnation of those who do. She understands that there are now many ways of being Afrikaner and Afrikaans. To be conservative and averse to change, hanging on to white supremacy is no longer a viable way of being. Ronel qualifies her own, self-declared *traditional*, Afrikaner identity by saying "…our views have definitely changed. We are more liberal, although our conservative values, for example faith, are still important to us. We are more open to change." The existence of liberal Afrikaners, those who have changed, testifies to the sea-change under way in Afrikaner society. During apartheid, liberal Afrikaners were traitors that failed to support their own people and sided with the enemy. Now, they are mainstream, no more or less Afrikaner than those who do not want to change. Diversity among Afrikaners is recognized. From this perspective, and in tune with the new South African imaginary that seeks to be more African, all are more liberal now.

The relationship to language is another marker that indicates shifting identities. Language as a marker of ethnic identity occupies now such a dominant position because culture has changed much and cultural differences between speakers of different languages,

especially English and Afrikaans, have by and large disappeared. Under apartheid, a common white supremacy and middle class consumerism reduced ethnic awareness. Under these circumstances, language becomes one way to distinguish oneself from others. George is a twenty-two years old chartered accountant from Pretoria, working in Sandton City, a luxurious office and shopping mall complex. He is from a middle class family that values religion and Afrikaner culture highly. He says that the folkloric *volkspiele* and *Voortrekker dans* in which he used to participate are no longer practiced. Concluding from this observation, he states that "the whole tradition has changed, it's more modern, but still, you have your language". Language becomes the most definite marker of ethnic identity, especially under circumstances in which cultural traditions have changed significantly and culturally-based markers of differentiation have been reduced. The crucial question is whether someone like George is falling back on language, and to a lesser extent culture, to defend "white" privileges against the end of apartheid and white supremacy? Paul Gilroy writes that in our epoch of multiculturalism and non-racialism, culture-talk is replacing race-talk (Gilroy, 1994). While it is not evident that this is the right interpretation of George's narrative, it is so in my discussion with Adam. He is a successful businessman in the Information Technology sector, got recently married and moved into an old villa in Yeoville, close to Houghton, that he and his fiancée are now renovating. He travels frequently to Europe which allows him to combine work and pleasure: he is deeply appreciative of European culture and likes to be there on holidays. Adam begins our discussion by telling me that he is definitely not a typical Afrikaner but then he attributes his good prospect in the South African job market to his (Afrikaner) qualities, such as being in the possession of a "Calvinist work ethic". What he meant though by stating that he was not a typical Afrikaner was that he saw himself as an urban, sophisticated, upwardly mobile Afrikaner who has little relation to the stereotypical Afrikaner, wearing short pants, and *velskoens*, trekking regularly out to attend *volkspiele* and doing the *volksdans* to *sokie-sokie* music. His ethnic belonging is not expressed in traditional, perhaps folkloric ways. Rather, he is highly fluent in English and in our conversation he makes it plain that being "white" is an important aspect of his identity. He is using an offensively, racist discourse which shows perhaps best his limited ethnic awareness and how an almost obsessive awareness of "race" as difference has

superseded ethnicity as a dominant marker of difference. For Adam, the struggle over identities is to a lesser extent based on how to deal with Afrikaner traditions and Afrikaner ethnicity but rather based on "race" and the presumed superiority of "white" people. He may have left certain Afrikaner traditions behind, but his worldliness hides racism and a feeling of white superiority.

Racial and ethnic identities are closely related. Patricia, a twenty-three years old student from Pretoria says that "black" people "always think the white people are racist"…if you just say something, your opinion, or something, you are a racist". She says: "I am *Afrikaans*, I feel like the *boer*, I feel like that proudly". Is it this strong ethnic identification that leads her to affirm difference and perceive antagonism from "black" people? Carrying her Afrikaans ethnicity so open and visibly around may be perceived as aggressive, given the strong association of apartheid racism with Afrikaner culture, language and political dominance (Matshikiza, 2005). In the political realm, a strong ethnic identification appears much clearer. Explaining her vote, Patricia states "you vote for your people to make them stronger." Obviously, 'your people' are white Afrikaans speakers, engaged in a struggle with the Others. Francine, a nineteen-year-old student from Musina, feels that her voting choice reflects antagonistic social relations:

> "…there is [sic] so many people who is against our party because it's the whites between [sic] the blacks in this country. So, there is [sic] many blacks, there is more blacks because all the other, the white people, is [sic] emigrated."

In this view, politics are based on racial competition. For Francine, as indicated in the quote above, the boundaries between "race" and ethnicity are blurred: she later indicates that she is proud of Afrikaans and prefers it over English. Talking about her choice of television programmes, she says that "we have *Kyknet*[33] in South Africa,… its just Afrikaans. No English. It's very good." She conveys her enthusiasm for Afrikaans music, the musicians and the excitement that goes with the success of these Afrikaans musicians. With Francine, it is quite evident that a "white" identity is closely related with being an

[33] Afrikaans language pay-per-view TV channel that is a popular and commercial success.

Afrikaner, with her ethnic identity. For these Afrikaners, being “white” makes for a distinctive, even immutable difference to black people. “Race” is essentialized. Being Afrikaner is one aspect of a dominant, immutable racial identity.

Ronel identifies strongly with the Afrikaans language and does not see how this could be problematic: “If you have a fierce love for Afrikaans it does not mean that you are a racist!” Rather, she is concerned that the language is used less as a medium of instruction. She observes that “the government is forcing a lot of Afrikaans medium schools to become double medium and Afrikaans classes are being taken away at most universities.” At the same time, Afrikaans is a modern language that is very much alive:”Afrikaans is growing, culturally in music, dramas and art festivals”. Adam too feels Afrikaans is modernizing and he welcomes the modernization of the Afrikaans language and the freshness brought about by a new generation of Afrikaans rock musicians. When talking about their creative use of the language, mixing it with English, he feels that “it’s cool that we mix things and if you look at the Afrikaans music that is coming out in the last couple of years, it’s really exciting, people like Karen Zoid”. Yet Adam, like Ronel, deems the defense of Afrikaans a good thing and he feels that the *taalstryders*, the language activists, like prominent historian and public commentator Herman Giliomee of the Group of 63, are necessary. This apparent contradictory appreciation for opposing camps, on the one hand, the youthful modernizers and on the other, those who want to preserve the language, is important for an understanding of the complexity of contemporary ethnicities. Like Margaret and Klaus below, you aspire to incorporate many social and cultural aspirations at the same time. This also influences the formation of identities. In the present, you need and want to be part of a modern, emerging culture as is reflected in the new South African nation. Only in subscribing to this societal project can you project yourself into the future. But you also want to carry your cultural tradition with you - language is the dominant (and remaining) legacy of that culture. To modernize the language and culture is a way to open up to others, beyond the ethnic camp. Although language remains an important factor of differentiation, the contested nature of the Afrikaans language makes its usage open to a myriad of interpretations. In other words, support for the Afrikaans language is not equal to ethnic mobilization, the defense of a

certain way of being Afrikaans. However, language remains one of the few available markers of identity that establishes continuity over time of one's ethnic heritage.

With a dominant, political paradigm that declares the nation to be African and that seeks to infuse all its domestic and international policies with an ambition to be African, conceptions of the self cannot ignore this influence. Identities shift. The crucial question is how can one as an Afrikaner belong to an African society? Klaus and Margaret, a young professional couple, considered going overseas. They eventually decided to stay and live in South Africa. Klaus works as an economist. His office is in trendy Melrose Arch, a gated business, living and leisure complex in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Margaret is a self-employed labour consultant. They are very much concerned with how they can fit into this new society and how they can belong to the emerging nation. Klaus says, "we came back [from overseas] because we felt this is where we belong...and this is where we could make a difference". They fear that they could be excluded from a society that sees Afrikaners and "whites" as alien. Klaus feels that "you are not allowed to play a developmental role because even when you do, you are still being seen as white and you are still being seen from your background". While they say that they would want to make a contribution to the new nation, the extent of this commitment is not clear. Is it their presence in South Africa despite professional possibilities elsewhere that they see as a contribution or is it an open mindset insisting on working with "black" people? Or are they involved in concrete projects to uplift the previously disadvantaged? However may be the case, they try to look for the positive in this transforming society and they search for a way to belong.

Klaus and Margaret feel that they live in a society that is "exceptionally sensitive to differences" and it seems to them that such sensitivity is necessary. Margaret believes that one has to make a mind-shift to understand the Other better and to be part of society. While they intend to make an effort to relate to society and the Other, the fear of rejection, of being pushed aside by an alien majority, is never far beneath the surface. Margaret is very cautious in her critique of the name change, such as the renaming of Pretoria to Tshwane, which met strong opposition among Afrikaners. Yet it becomes

clear that her concern is less with the financial costs of the re-branding of the city of Pretoria as Tshwane, but with its symbolism. She wants to understand why this name change is important to "black" people. Hence, she strives to understand better the perspective of "black" people on this issue and why it matters for them to change the name. At the same time, she experiences the disappearance of the name 'Pretoria' as if something had been taken away from her own life. She explains:

> "African people, black people wanting names to be changed – for me, there is something important in the fact if the names stay the same. It's part of your history, it's there for a reason. It's just a name. It doesn't have all these symbolisms for me that it has for people that want to change it, that see this name resembles something that is bad. But in some way I feel it tells a story".

The story is that of her people. Hence, to understand the Other, to adapt to a new country, is a narrative of loss. As the places (and names) that mark "her story" are changing, the history of her becoming is disappearing. At the same time, something new, uncertain and marked by risk, is appearing. Or, coming to terms with change carries a certain risk.

Margaret's attempts to understand the Other and why they would want to change names and the symbols of the country, symbols that reflect her origin and belonging, appear to be in conflict with an affirmation of ethnic identity. She and her husband feel that their way of thinking was very much formed by community, language and religion and they find that these institutions shaped and continue to shape their identities. It seems to me that it hardly fits the traditional understandings of ethnic identity according to which identifying with an ethnic identity trumps any other form of identification. Both, Margaret and Klaus, are fluent in English. It is the language of their work place, and as likable and serious professionals, they could make a living all over the English-speaking world, wherever their skills are needed. Nevertheless, they fit well into the new South Africa. They are hard working, tax paying, middle class consumers and citizens, who blend into the British Commonwealth, the dominant English-speaking elite culture of the country. They express the need to reach out to "black" people and to understand them. At the same time, they also want to keep their love for Afrikaner culture and language.

2. Making choices

In the section above, it becomes quite clear that Afrikaner ethnicity is unstable and multiple. A more global, perhaps English ethnicity has diluted a single Afrikaner ethnicity. Young people choose how much Afrikaans or Afrikaner they wish to be. In this sense then, identity is a choice. This is a sign of the times, of democratic, capitalist consumer society in late modernity in which choice and individual lifestyle shapes identities in significant ways. But changes in identity are not only modified through living in a consumer culture. Global standards of ethical behavior have been established in South Africa. Under the influence of a global ethics of being, young Afrikaners negotiate adherence to traditional and new, lifestyle oriented ways of living one's identity. For young Afrikaners, there are now different ways of living one's identity. But such diversity existed for a long time. For those growing up with a mixed Afrikaner and English identity, identity was always a plural, lived experience. One can be 'in' and 'out' of Afrikaner ethnicity, without having to choose either of the two.

For conservative Afrikaners who strongly identified with the institutions of the 'pseudo-traditional organisational complex' of the apartheid order, such as Kurt and Tiaan, the void of being without definite markers of identity is difficult to come to terms with. But perhaps more difficult is accepting new norms of social conduct. The liberal Afrikaner, the one who gets along with "black" people and appreciates their presence, is a difficult figure to emulate. In some instances, such complicity is still seen as a betrayal to the national project of survival of the *volk* (people). After all, was the fear of "miscegenation" not a crucial factor in the perceived need to separate "races", first through segregation and then through apartheid, and hence to guarantee the survival of Afrikaners and "white" South Africa? The *kaffir boetie* (nigger lover) is a popular figure that testifies to the lure of transgressing social taboo. That this figure is now part of the dominant, social imaginary shows the vast transformation of values that Afrikaners are dealing with. The liberals, those who show little identification with the dominant markers of *Afrikanerdom*, just like the conservatives, are trying to come to terms with socio-political and personal circumstances that are transforming. In this quest, the liberals cope

better. They have less of a sense of loss and are more ready to adhere to that which is emerging. Yet both face the same challenge of finding ways to belong to a fundamentally changing society. Some see themselves as more liberal than others. There is a perceived necessity to distinguish you, as a liberal Afrikaner, as someone who is not a racist, from those who are perceived as being racist.[34] In order to do so, some want to choose how much an Afrikaner they are. Performing the self becomes a choice – being Afrikaner is no longer just given by birth and an accepted way of life into which one is socialized.

For some, experiences beyond the limits of Afrikaans culture and family, such as studying at an English language university, offers a larger world of possibilities informing how to conduct life. Equally important is that choice, on a perhaps superficial, ephemeral consumer level, but also on a more profound level, reflects our *Zeitgeist*. To be able to choose is an important aspect of a democratic, capitalist consumer society in late modernity in which citizenship and belonging is modified through choice of life-style and in which different modes of being compete with each other.

Jennifer was raised in a middle class home in Cape Town, with parents who did not adhere to the dominant ideology of *Afrikanerdom*. She is now studying in Johannesburg and working as a journalist. She differentiates herself from those who are racist, including friends and family members. She says "…some of the friends which grew up in my area, they are my age and I can't believe how racist they often are" and "some of my aunts and uncles, they were real Afrikaner, racist kind". Important in her account is also that she relates being a "real Afrikaner" to being a racist. Afrikaner is a tainted identity. For Jennifer, it was easier to make a break with the apartheid order, its meanings and symbols, and to demarcate herself from racist Afrikaners because she has never seen herself "as an Afrikaner". Her family background was very critical of the apartheid order. Her dad is "completely anti-Calvin and anti-establishment."

[34] The existence of liberals (*verligte or, enlightened*) and conservatives (*verkrampte*) goes back to the 1960s in Afrikaner intellectual and political history. The former advocated the transformation of Afrikaner nationalist ideology to suit political objectives. This also implied compromise and pragmatism, even experimental thinking. In contrast, *verkrampte* were against all that was new. It is a narrow attitude that adheres to tradition strictly. In race relations, it advocated the strict enforcement of apartheid as a reflection of a clearly defined racial hierarchy (O'Meara, 1996:155)

For Jennifer, young Afrikaners are more open today. The transformation of South African society has contributed to such a need for change. Talking about young Afrikaners, she argues that they are more open "because in the work place, you have to deal with the real, new South Africa. You can't get away from that. Whether they like it or not, they have to see it everyday." What do Afrikaners now have to deal with, in this real, new South Africa? It seems to me that Jennifer refers to the collapse of the dream of a "white" society on the African continent. Now, Afrikaners live in a society in which all are equal, sharing the same social space without racial hierarchy. For Jennifer, the new openness of young Afrikaners is not only derived from within, but it is also a necessary response to new social and power relations.

Liberal Afrikaners, more than conservatives, are more capable to relate to an emerging and transforming society. While talking to Jennifer, I realize that her progressive mind-set allows her to remain positive in dealing with the challenges of living in South Africa. Jennifer affirms her commitment to the country by saying "I like this country". And she is doing so even though she acknowledges that life here might be difficult but she is glad to take up the challenge. After all, she says, "there is something to work with, there are things to change. That is what I like." A positive attitude to the challenge society poses is supplemented by the appreciation for diversity. Coming from Cape Town, Jennifer enjoys the greater cultural and racial diversity of life in Johannesburg, "it's the real South Africa", she says. Because much of the historical legacy associated with being an Afrikaner is tainted by apartheid racism, she wants to reserve the right to choose what she thinks is useful and discard what she abhors: "I choose what elements I can associate with."

Josette is a young academic in Johannesburg, working as a university lecturer and for non-governmental organizations. She is close to her family - she lives at home, but her sense of family and place does not translate into being a conformist. Both parents work and they are now in a comfortable middle-class position. But they had to work and save their way to get there. Josette agrees that traditions have changed and that Afrikaners

have become more open. But, as she reflects upon the Afrikaans language, these changes are contested. How far should she speak the 'pure' Afrikaans language and how can it be a tool of self-expression that also includes mixing it with English? For her, the way she speaks is different from the way her father speaks:. .."he is very staunch Afrikaans kind of 'we speak the pure language' whereas she says that "I want to speak it the way I want to speak it". For her, it is an important choice how to speak Afrikaans. She clearly enjoys the choice to speak it in a way that does not reflect the Afrikaans of apartheid discrimination and exclusion. But not only on the linguistic issue does she differ from her father. She also holds different views on "race" and the legacy of apartheid. Often, these views lead to conflict in the family, and she keeps her liberal views to herself as to avoid confrontation with her father and members of the larger family. Different perspectives on Afrikaner ethnicity such as the usage of the Afrikaans language can reflect different political and social positions. As I will show in the following chapter, Josette makes the deliberate choice how much she wants to be Afrikaans. For her, it helps to deal with the historical legacy of being an Afrikaner and carrying the historical responsibility of apartheid.

Beyond the very personal, choice is involved in the struggle between modern cosmopolitanism and an ethno-cultural tradition. With a dominant paradigm that promotes an African nation and multicultural inclusiveness, adherence to Afrikaner ethnicity is negotiated with an emerging feeling of belonging to a broader, national allegiance. For George, respect for the cultural and linguistic diversity of South Africa requires that all cultural and linguistic communities are treated equal. As an Afrikaner, he is concerned with the inclusion of Afrikaans in the emerging South African nation, especially in light of the promotion, through the state, of a dominant, African identity. But he understands that the Afrikaans language will have to live alongside other national languages that are entitled to an equal presence and consideration. In his quest for equality, he is even willing to accept English as the dominant language since its usage makes for a reasonable compromise. He regrets that "Afrikaans will be spoken less, but it's more equal if you look at all the other languages." Also, the positive aspect of the present in comparison to apartheid is that people understand now "that it is better to be

equal." Detlev also prefers the equal treatment of linguistic communities, but he is less willing to accept the downgrading of Afrikaans in the public sphere. If equality is the objective, such downgrading does not make sense to him. Rather, indigenous languages should be uplifted. Detlev argues that to scale down a language is not compatible with treating all national languages as equal.

Detlev says that his parents adhered fully to Afrikaner nationalism. They were not active in politics, but they supported the National Party and his father was even to the right of it. He studied law at the University of Pretoria and is now doing his articles with one of the major South African law firms. He acknowledges that he straddles two different ethnic identities, English and Afrikaans. Membership in the Anglophone, cultural world gives him access to a more open, perhaps global and individualistic identity. But he is trying to negotiate a way between the two apparently opposing poles of belonging. He says "I am not just an Afrikaner but also part of the bigger, cultural context which is partly and mostly English." Reflecting on his relationship with the Afrikaans community, he reasons that "I identify myself with the Afrikaans community in a cultural way but I don't do it in a political way anymore." While he seems quite comfortable in separating his personal identity from a communal, political identity, he is more ambiguous about his relationship to the Afrikaans ethnic community. Detlev observes:

> "I still like being in touch with the community although there is a large part of the community that I absolutely hate. I don't know, it might be just in a sense nostalgic. There are so many things from one's childhood that stay with you and it is just an instinctive, nostalgic bond. I like being part of the community and being in touch with the community."

He appreciates being a member of his ethnic community, his community of origin. It gives him comfort. But there are aspects of this community, such as the political legacy, with which he can no longer identify. But how he may relate the ethnicity of his community to a new, emerging identity is in the process of negotiation. This is a process in which he is individually involved but that also counts for the entire Afrikaner community. He observes that Afrikaners "accept the new South Africa. They just want to

be part of it and still be Afrikaans and to keep up an identity." Reflecting on his individual situation, he remarks that "I would be comfortable with myself being Afrikaans and even Afrikaner and keeping up some of the things that go with the identity." He believes that one can be Afrikaner and still be part of the emerging South African nation. But it requires an effort. He is aware that being an Afrikaner carries a certain "baggage that goes with the identity" but he feels commitment to the country and his intention to want to make "a contribution to the new South Africa" will overcome this legacy.

Louis was very much convinced of the correctness of the Afrikaner cause until he went to university to study engineering. There he found out how many lies he was told. Now, he is s successful music promoter in Tshwane and he feels very much at ease, with all the ups and downs, in the new South Africa. For him, like all the other young people who wanted to break with the imposition of a dominant Afrikaner identity, the creation of a counter culture through the promotion of alternative, non-state sponsored Art, was instrumental. In this subculture, individual satisfaction was crucial and only slowly did he realize the potential for wider, social change. Remembering the first years of the music festival that he had launched with friends, he states that

> "in the beginning [early nineties]…[it] was just absolute hedonism…that was just us having a good time…completely hedonistic, as much as you can drink, as long as you can drink, as loud as you can go, but then, all of a sudden, you realize, you are actually sitting on an incredibly strong social tool, where you can influence people and shape them and do things with it".

What started out as an event for individual satisfaction developed into a tool for social transformation. The purpose of the festival was then to expose young, "white" people to "black" African artists, their music and their thinking. Louis argues that the purpose was, even though it was run on a commercial basis, "to break down borders, to open people up".

At the basis of the rock festival was the understanding that "apartheid is all the lies, just all the lies, and all the bullshit that went with it." At university, Louis came to understand

that “almost the entire Afrikaner history which I was told at school was lies.” As a young man, he believed in the promises made by the authorities, the Church and the school. These representatives of the state and civil society are now discredited because of the lies they told. He was made to believe that he was a European but with his experience of traveling in Europe, he had made several trips in recent years, he knows now that he is definitely not European. He feels he was misled and he is now “very pissed off that they did that to me”. While he acknowledges some cultural affinity with European thought and tradition, he is upset that he was told his roots were in Europe when in fact they were not. He feels a much stronger belonging to South Africa and to Africa.

The three young Afrikaners interviewed above, Detlev, Jennifer and Louis, explain how they came to re-think their adherence to an Afrikaner ethnicity and how they put some distance between this communal identity and an emerging, more individualized identity. For them, ethnicity involves making choices. They also see their individual identities as part of a larger, perhaps even global society. They share a common upbringing with a strong sense of Afrikaner identity.

There are also others for whom allegiance to an Afrikaner ethnic identity was always divided. Because of a mixed upbringing, Afrikaner and English, they were at the same time, ‘in’ and ‘out’ of Afrikaner ethnicity. According to situations, they could choose if they wanted to be Afrikaner or not. Their narrative is an important addition that shows the broad complexity and diversity of Afrikaner ethnicity. Albert is eighteen years old and training to become a teacher at the University of the Witwatersrand. He comes from mixed family but he chooses to emphasize his Anglophone background. He never regarded himself as an Afrikaans person. At the same time, he states that he has many Afrikaans friends and he does not hesitate to identify himself as an Afrikaans speaker. Such an emphasis on his Anglophone background is certainly due to his early schooling in English but it seems to me that it is also the burden of history that leads him to look for an alternative identity. He says, “I rather regard myself as an English person than an Afrikaans person. Afrikaans people have a history of apartheid and [have] everything

against them." Provided with a choice to express belonging, identification with the Anglophone world is less problematic.

Henry is a married man, a part-time student and a film-maker. His parents are English but he has been to Afrikaans schools for all his education. There, he blended in very quickly. In this sense then, he is Afrikaner, but he is 'in' and 'out' of Afrikaans respectively English ethnicity. When it comes to self-perception in a multicultural context, he is very much aware of his "white" identity and possible differences between English and Afrikaners move into the background. This is illustrated by his view that English speakers blame the Afrikaners for apartheid yet they had an equal stake in it. Furthermore, when it comes to relating to "black" people and dealing with the past, English and Afrikaans speakers share their common "white" identity. For Henry, to deal with the legacy of the past is not a problem that only concerns Afrikaners – all "whites" are concerned equally. But he feels that there are limits to what they can do. "…maybe as a group, people need to be more open. I don't know. To seek forgiveness? But once you have done that, what are you going to do? You can't walk around with this yoke." Henry and Albert are equally at home in Afrikaans and English. Albert is fond of emphasizing his English identity; to be Afrikaans is much less attractive given the historical legacy. Albert shows then very well what many Afrikaans community leaders observe: that there are increased pressures on Afrikaners to give up their ethnicity and move to an English identity. But as Henry indicates, such a hybridisation does not necessarily mean a denial of Afrikaans; in his case, it is rather an embrace of at least two ethnic identities.

For some Afrikaners, as Henry, Afrikaner ethnicity has always been more than one dominant identity that is constructed and maintained with the help of the state. It is the benefit of studying narratives of the self to understand that ethnic identity is unstable, shifting and resisting; in other words, contradictory. While there are also those who find it more difficult to adhere to a new, African identity or even resist letting go of an exclusive "white" identity, all young Afrikaners interviewed here live a plural identity. Ultimately, the existence of a pluralistic self is a reflection of late modernity and

consumer society in which choice informs the formation of identities. In the next chapter, I look with more detail how such a sense of choice is manifest.

Chapter 7

IDENTITY AND CHOICE

In the previous chapter we could see that with the influence of late modernity, ethnic identity is now a matter of choice for young Afrikaners. In the consumer culture of late modernity, choice and individualization are the dominant values that reflect the aspirations of self–realization. To be content, modern subject means to exert choice and to be recognized as an individual. As a society in transition, the challenges to the individual are perhaps stronger than in other societies as one is challenged to make sense of an evolving environment and to adapt. Living in a difficult society is a test for the self and emphasizes the importance of the individual and personality. Moreover, increasing individualization is concomitant to living in a risk society. A modern society with all its technological complexities and dangers produces a sense of risk that permeates the very foundation of society (Beck, 1994). Since this risk is not clearly visible in everyday life, it has to be imagined and believed in. Risk is thus a cognitive and social construct that accompanies life in late modernity. With this sense of risk and a concomitant horizon of lost security, we are constantly confronted with the question how to live our lives. In other words, we are forced to make choices. In this endeavor, the individual takes centre stage and the collective moves into the background. Moreover, in late modernity globalization is encountered in many aspects of life. For young Afrikaners, living today means seeing oneself within a larger, globalizing world. Finally, I analyze how a sense of choice has led Afrikaners to move away from traditional churches to New Religious Movements.

1. Individualization

Challenges and risks are testing the individual. They probe individual self-worth. That things are more difficult is clearly acknowledged when Dan, a twenty-eight years old communications officer from Potchefstroom states that “we realized: ok, it’s not going to

be given to you on a silver platter. There you go! Your future is here. You have to work and you have to create a space for yourself." Yet it is also this challenge that is promising and gladly accepted for the experience it provides. There is almost a tragic, heroic aspect to the role Dan sees for himself. He is in favor of Africanization, of redress of black people and black African culture, but he also feels that this "power shift" will leave him with "the short end of the stick". Yet the understanding that you have to work hard and create space for yourself carries much excitement and values individual contributions and effort. I believe it is also this focus on the individual that is much appreciated. With it goes also the understanding of doing the morally right thing after years of injustice and prevalent, unethical behavior. That Dan carries this sense of mission of a tragic-hero is revealed in his statement that despite the difficulties and challenges, he intends to stay in South Africa because of an almost mystical power that the country exerts on him: "South Africa has got incredible energy…I will not give it up for anything, it is something in my soul…it is not going to be easy, I am sure." Living in South Africa is a challenging, daily experience, even a risky adventure but it also emphasizes individual self-worth.

Jennifer has a strong sense of individuality that she developed in her school days, coming from a dissident Afrikaner home: "I always found myself different from my peer group. At school, it was a problem for me." But it is also the focus on one's individual trajectory, one's career that receives much attention in her discourse. "my world is shaped by the fact that I am a journalist, more than anything else". Later, she emphasizes again the importance of her experience and her employment in making who she is and what she believes in. In late modernity, the individual is the centre of all life's action. To choose a career and making it your own is one of social processes that affirms the individual.

In contrast to individualization, a sense of the collective, as encountered in patriotism and nationalism, are considered to belong to the past. The individual wants to be recognized as such in his daily life experience and no celebration of belonging can compensate for such an individual recognition. Herman is a graphic designer living in Pretoria. His wife is from Austria and they stayed there for a while. He works as a graphic designer and he

is also a graphic artist with several solo exhibitions under his belt. He is very much concerned with thinking about the Afrikaner past and present identities. Herman reasons that "I will never die for my country because I think it is ridiculous nobody appreciates [it], you become a name on a plaque." The group is seen as negative. Instead, individuals should make up their own mind. Also, our beliefs do not have to be confined to traditional ideologies. Rather, our mind can be fashioned in different ways. What defined the past, like belonging to a nation, identifying with the project of the in-group, are no longer useful and "you programme yourself by thinking this thing over and over, so you have to re-programme your mind in this country." For Herman then, the values we believe in do not have to be based on our upbringing and the tradition where we come from, but they can be modified by the individual according to circumstances. Individualism helps to adapt to a changing society with new and altered demands. Tiaan also believes in the choices an individual can make, but he mitigates this view by claiming the same for communities. For him, democracy is applauded for giving freedom to each individual. "I am a big believer in democracy because it is a system that is giving everybody his equal right to be what he can be and *to be the one he wants to be*[35] individually and in his community." An individual can modify the self according to his/her choice. But he also observes that the individual is still connected to the community.

In late modernity, the self is constructed less as a social being and more as an individual. The social and political situation in South Africa may be difficult, but it also holds the promise of excitement. Life as a daily test for self-worth emphasizes individual responsibility. To stay in the country and make a contribution is then the right thing to do, 'the luxury of moral choice' that a young Afrikaner, as Dan above, has in committing to stay in South Africa. Also, the importance of the world of work and personal career affirm the importance of individual self-realization. The degree of such a point of view is mixed. For some, the individual is still related to the community. For others, the group, a sense of belonging and striving for the collective, no longer holds value or relevance.

[35] my emphasis

2. Consumption

Consumption occupies an important place of social reproduction in modern society. According to lifestyles chosen, consumption shapes the formation of identities. In modern consumer society, people learn to desire consumer goods by accepting consumption-oriented values. Under an increased focus on consumption, the desire for goods to be consumed becomes an important aspect of society and it is such desire that includes also members of society who may not have the means to purchase them, but are still exposed to desire them. To buy a lifestyle through consumption seems to have replaced a more rigid form of identity since consumers, and this is a very contested assertion, have a chance to construct an identity as desired, or more accurate perhaps, as consumers, we are forced to choose an identity. In consumer society, individuals face a superstructure of purchasable identification objects. Identities are chosen today and discarded tomorrow. Products purchased to "be yourself" are as ephemeral as your identification with it. Among young Afrikaners, consumption has taken an important place and shapes their outlook on life.

Material well-being deserves much attention in Cornelia's assessment of her life situation. She grew up on a big farm in Brits. The family business delivered produce to international clients. When asked about the future, Cornelia stated that she was positive about it. Her happiness is related to her running a successful business at the age of twenty-nine years. She says that "I am very happy and I think I am part of a business and I am a share holder and I think for somebody my age I am actually doing actually quite well." The pride and status that goes with having a career and a business is also a dis-incentive to move away from South Africa. "…now I have a house, a car, I am part of a business, why give it up just to have a different experience?" The benefits of consumer society loom large in the choices that she makes. Jennifer also describes the consequences of consumer culture. But here, it is in a negative way, taking people away from their concern for the public good. "People just don't care anymore. You have to work to earn a salary. We have to pay our study loans. I have to get a car. It's just, there is too many other issues for people to really care about politics". Other issues crowd out a concern for politics. It is the desire to consume and spend, to possess, but also the need to

own material things to be able to function and participate as a full individual in consumer society. Consumption and related individualization leave a crucial mark on the formation of identities. Tiaan underlines the importance of consumption in making life choices. Reflecting on what differentiates him from his father, he says that "my father's first dream he had for himself was nothing else but a car. My first dream for myself is a house, something I can call mine." I think it is important in Tiaan's statement that family relationships are immediately related to consumption. A new generation has new dreams of consumption. Consumption has become an intimate part of everyday life.

3. Risk

Increasing individualization is also apparent in the realization of living in a modern risk society. As the literature on risk and modernity indicates, risk and individualization go together in that it is the individual who responds and deals with risk and its consequences (Beck, 1994). In professional and private life, risk calculations shape how we conduct our lives. While risk perception indicates danger and even anguish, it has also a liberating function. It is foremost up to the individual to deal with the risk that is directed at the self.

Cornelia grew up on a large, commercial farm in Brits, to the North of Johannesburg. Her parents' business dealt with international clients and she says that for this reason, she feels she has a more open mindset, treating all people, "black" and "white", as equals. This is all the more the exception, as the Brits farming district is one of the more conservative municipalities. During negotiations to a transitional government in the early 1990s, the majority of "white" citizens in Brits voted for joining an Afrikaner homeland. Judging from her dynamic personality, it is quite clear that she is an entrepreneur. As an optometrist with her own shop, she is running a successful business. With regards to the political situation, she observes that living in South Africa has a certain *risk*. "..there is a lot of unknown I think where South Africa is going". Nonetheless, this is for her not a reason to leave the country. That there is a risk seems to be the wary outlook of a businesswoman and the question is how far this is a South African particularity as a developing country in political and socio-economic transition? Much literature on modernity is concerned with the risk that modern society brings with it. In this sense,

South Africa is like any modern society, with risks and opportunities: the risk of venturing into business, of personal relationships, of living in a modern, technology-driven society.

Paul is very well aware of this risk, especially with regards to the world of work. It is a challenge that carries risks. “I mean it took me long to get out of the ‘being employed mindset’ and moving over to self-employed, it’s a big risk. I mean it’s a leap of faith that you have to take but I haven’t looked back for one minute.” For Paul, it is a well-mastered risk that reveals some self-dramatization not unlike a classical hero who overcomes hardship against the odds. However, risk seems a natural corollary of seeking success in business life and personal satisfaction. Paul highlights the importance of work and individual achievement. “…being a white South African, you need to make it for yourself”. Whether Afrikaners seek work abroad depends on how their employment situation is. Some can’t stand “the situation in SA” and emigrate. Those who are employed may consider either staying in the corporate world or creating their own business. What is important here is the personal satisfaction one gets from work which is not only related to financial benefits but also to personal satisfaction. In late modernity, arguably more than in any other epoch, the world of work, pleasure and personal satisfaction coincide. For Josephine, a single mother of twenty-five years, to find personal satisfaction is now an important quest in her life. Having had a difficult time in her personal life, she was in an abusive relationship and is now raising a son on her own, she now emphasizes the importance of making choices to ensure she will never be in a situation like this. Also, in the work place, one has to find satisfaction. Work brings your personality to the fore. Josephine finds that “[a]t work, you need to get out yourself and show what you can do.” David’s observation demonstrates perhaps best the role of the individual in shaping the self. In the end, it is the individual who dictates the pace of progress in self-learning, self-development and self-improvement:”…it depends on your own where you are now”. Prescriptions from culture and tradition have to at least find a way to fit in with such personal ambitions.

As is the case with choice, risk is part of the perceptions permeating everyday life that reflect the ideology of consumerism. While life in modern society offers choice, it is also replete with risks that have to be taken if one's life is to be realized. The world of work illustrates well how risk and choice go together and the demands they make upon the individual.

4. A Global Imaginary

Being a young Afrikaner today does not mean one cannot seek living and recognition abroad. On the contrary, young Afrikaners are practicing, global citizens. Both, those who have a more cosmopolitan outlook, and those who understand their ethnic belonging as attached to a place, consider living and working abroad in their life plans. Amongst those who want to seek a future abroad, some argue that it is crime and the ineptitude of the government that pushes them out, while for others a global imaginary integrates a stay abroad as a regular *rite de passage* for skilled professionals in the global economy.

When I asked Marlene who recently received her teacher's certificate and is now teaching, if she felt she had a future in South Africa, she said that "[i]f you asked me that last week I would say yes but this week I would say no." This uncertainty if one has a place and a future in the country brings the relevance of the global connectivity all the more to the fore. As an alternative to staying in South Africa, she envisages "to go to Australia for about four or five years. I am still young. I like to see the world, travel, stay overseas and come back." At the same time, she says that she and her family are very close and hence it would be difficult to emigrate definitely[36]. The same ambivalence is reflected in Ronel's view: "Although I would like to travel, I want to return regularly to South Africa."

For George, who just entered the world of work, the most important things in life are his career and his ethnicity, loosely defined as language, culture and religion. He says that he contemplated moving abroad if he would not find suitable work in South Africa. But it is

[36] There is anecdotal evidence that one of the main reasons for South Africans to return home is to be with family and friends.

not only such a work-related necessity that would force him to seek work abroad, but he also deems working abroad a good experience and it is beneficial to enlarge his work experience. The world of work is not confined to South Africa, but it is global. Tiaan shares with George the feeling of the importance of Afrikaner ethnicity in his life. He also says that the political and socio-economic conditions put him under increased pressure to seek a living abroad. They use the same discourse of disgruntled South Africans who feel that they are no longer welcome in their country of birth and that the state has turned against them. For Tiaan, there is however a more personal dimension that makes moving to England attractive: his brother is already employed by the armed forces of the United Kingdom. But he also easily connects global possibilities with a luxurious lifestyle. He says: “I like England, it’s a good country. My biggest dream would be to have a yacht.” Despite his love for Afrikaner ethnicity, his racist talk and his general sense of doom when talking about South Africa, global standards of a universal humanism, of equality and non-discrimination have entered his vocabulary, probably through education at the law school. The project of the extreme Afrikaner right, to which he seems somehow to be close, like the *Vryhydstaat*, an autonomous Afrikaner territory, is not possible “because in this world, in this era, you are not allowed to discriminate”. This is an acknowledgement that power has changed and that he now belongs to a minority. But it also points to the influence of a global imaginary of universal values, carried by the media, such as television, and liberal educational institutions.

Even before the end of apartheid, through globalization and increasing travel opportunities, study and work, Afrikaners traveled abroad. Christiaan stayed for several years in the United Kingdom and in Holland, studying and working. He comes from a traditional, working class Afrikaner home, studied art and is now teaching art in Johannesburg. Through his work as an artist, he is very much involved with international trends in the arts and he feels a sense of belonging to that interstitial space, between South Africa and Europe. He feels belonging to Europe and South Africa, depending on the subject. Talking about his relationship to Europe, he says: “I actually feel very much European. When I am in Europe I feel very much vitalized by those cultural and in artistic terms as well”. As a “white” South African with an affinity for Europe, he feels

that he belongs culturally to Europe – he appreciates very much the cultural productions that originate from the continent and he felt that his stay in Europe was a fruitful experience. Christiaan is glad that the cultural exchange between South Africa and Europe has increased with the end of apartheid. He feels that "exciting things gained access to the cultural domain" and now, "there is a greater spectrum". This is due to the "international influence" which brought "cultural fertilization from abroad". Global exchanges are very much part of his life, even though he feels a strong belonging, even pride in his local attachment to South Africa: "I feel passionate about this place because what happened here"… "So I feel enthusiastic about South Africa. I feel I have to be here, it's my choice." The option is no longer either to belong to South Africa and define your dominant identity as *the* South African identity or to be a local alien amongst a national citizenry, with little attachment. Lived identities as revealed in the everyday are more differentiated and complex than state sponsored nation building projects foresee.

Like Christiaan, David can relate very much to a global, transnational culture. He spent two years in London and he has friends in other European cities. While the emigration of large numbers of Afrikaners is usually interpreted as to signify their racist lack of trust in a "black" government and a society in which "black" people play a dominant role, it also shows an opening up of Afrikaners to the world. After all, during the apartheid years, they were confined in an obsessive struggle to the South African territory and shun by the global community. Comparing his generation to his parents', David feels "my parents' outlook was one of defense against communism. They brainwashed us with 'the reds under the bed'". Now, his generation is "very much looking out into the world". David observes: "I spoke more Afrikaans in London then I did here [Johannesburg]. There were so many Afrikaners." Louis also observes that the end of apartheid and the opening up of the country has created global possibilities beyond the confines of national borders. Speaking of the younger Afrikaner generation, he says that they have a new feeling that shows a differentiated "being about the world". New music bands, such as *Fokofpolisiekar* "are almost making a new, fresh start…going into the world as Afrikaans speaking South Africans". Although the reach to a global culture has a strong American flavor, Louis argues, the desire of Afrikaans bands to reach a global audience, to see

themselves as global artists, is an important contribution to move away from an ethnic and racialized outlook.

The contact with a globalizing world has changed the perceptions of many Afrikaners. To live abroad is part of a new, global experience, often related to career choices. After years of a self-imposed exile and with renewed contact with the world, moralities have evolved and taken global standards of behavior, especially with regards to "race" relations, seriously. But perhaps even more important, young Afrikaners manifest a 'being-in-the-world' that is global and goes beyond the confines of ethnicity. Young Afrikaner culture can be more than a local idiom, it can travel, it can be global and it can incorporate influences from all over the globe. Individuals can imagine themselves being of here but also of there.

5. Religion

Choice is not only exerted in relation to Afrikaner ethnicity. In the history of Afrikaner nationalism, religion played an important role. While the interpretations as to the nature and relevance of Calvinism diverge, the nationalist movement made use of the Afrikaner churches to advance its cause (Du Toit, 1983). According to Hyslop, the church is part of the 'pseudo-traditional complex' which encompassed most Afrikaners in a coherent system of meaning from cradle to grave (Hyslop, 2000). Since then, however, *Afrikanerdom* has unraveled and in post-apartheid society, religion reflects the pluralism of a democratic consumer society. In modern society, the relationship between religion and the individual is described in the following terms. Through increasing societal complexity, referred to as differentiation, various institutional spheres become separated and different institutions perform specialized functions. No longer tied to specific institutions, the self can now be discovered individually. This process is deepened as each individual performs different roles in different spheres (McGuire, 1992: 251). In a pluralist society, the taken-for-granted quality of a single world view is undermined. Individual meaning systems are precarious, voluntary and private (Ibid., 260). With privatization, life becomes separated into public and private spheres. Values and norms of the private sphere are irrelevant for public sphere institutions. Sources of identity are

found increasingly in the private sphere as the creation of meaning and belonging are confined to it. The individual self is privatized (Ibid., 265). Personal freedoms and individual autonomy are promoted by privatization as the sources of an individual's motives and options. At the same time, problems of meaning and integration increase. The legitimization of the self is questioned and identity becomes a problem. The increase in charismatic churches, for instances, is a sign of personal freedom but also signals a quest for new meanings.

While some of the young Afrikaners interviewed continued to go to traditional Afrikaner churches such as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), others turned their back on them. Josephine is a single mother, twenty-five years old, working as an administrator for a medium-size construction company. She is living with her parents and her eight year old son in a house in Roodeport, a western suburb of Johannesburg. She says that both her parents are working very hard and that she could not make ends meet without their help. Before taking up employment with the construction company, she worked on a cruise-ship in the Caribbean for one year which she deemed a lucrative position although it was strenuous work. She took care of the children of the guests aboard. She deems herself religious. Her personal experience with the lack of moral integrity and the hypocrisy of the church *dominee* (pastor) led her to turn away from the DRC. She says that while they preached Christian morals and sexual propriety, one *dominee* was making advances on her and another was having sex with a member of the congregation next to the church. In the new, charismatic church, they meet in small groups and discuss the bible. While she likes such discussion, she is not sure she will definitely join this new church. For Joesphine, traditional Afrikaner churches have lost much of their attractiveness through moral attrition. Her personal experience with the behaviour of church representatives was very negative. Now, she is in a position of choice. To belong to a church is no longer governed by tradition but by personal appreciation. In her personal quest for meaning in life, the lack of credibility of church members conflicted with her own needs of the church.

Kurt shares Josephine's lack of trust in the DRC. He feels that the church has changed much, especially since 1994. He even believes that the changing position of the church on apartheid is responsible for the proliferation of new denominations. People could no longer trust their church for guidance and so they turned to other churches. He says that "a lot of people look for other churches and there are so many you can choose from now." This crisis of the church is for Kurt another cause for the lack of understanding about himself and about his identity as an Afrikaner.

David's quest for new meaning in life has led him to turn to an alternative religion. He is now a practicing Buddhist. He is very independent – some would even say he is a loner. Financially, he is struggling to make ends meet, working two jobs at the same time. He is a waiter in an up-scale restaurant and also an aroma therapist. But it seems to me that for him, the career and bourgeois respectability was never a priority. Rather, to understand yourself, to know who you are, the spiritual and personal quest for self-recognition and realization, always seemed to have been his priority. David may not have had the example of his parents as dissenters to a dominant Afrikaner, mainstream identity - he grew up in a "very strong Christian home", but like Jennifer, he sees himself as very different from the traditional understanding of an Afrikaner. This almost radical break with his past and tradition is largely inspired by adhering to a new religion – Buddhism. He strives to be able to consider all human beings as equal. He says that in his daily interactions with people, he tries "to just really learn what it is to be able to really understand…that all people are equal". He hardly dwells on the loss that Afrikaners may have suffered since 1994, and instead is proud of new achievements. He was very elated upon learning that many "black" learners are now at the school he used to go to. When he was a learner there, he has been ostracized by his peers for being seen together with a "black" woman. Far from being a condemnable act, having contact with "black" people, even having "black" friends, is now a social fact endowed with value. One could even argue that being comfortable with "black" people and having "black" friends is of increasing social capital. Adhering to an Eastern religion indicates a movement away from all that is related to *Afrikanerdom*. But it is also a contemporary way of self-realization, of stylization the self and of coping with stress, depression and despair. David

adhered to Buddhism through a friend who showed him how to chant when he was facing depression.

Paul is a soft-spoken, thirty-one year old, independent businessman from Johannesburg. He grew up in the rural Cape and as he responds to my questions, he ponders his words carefully. Like with David above, religion expresses an individual preference and shows much less belonging to a group. Or if it expresses belonging to a group, it is one that is much less built out of historically grown communities but consists of people with a plurality of backgrounds Paul states that "in the Afrikaans community…religion [was] forced down your throat." But now, Paul feels he is rather spiritual than religious. He deems himself Christian but he does not want to "believe in that whole structured system of the church because to me that is one person's view of God … and one person's view of the world and why should my view be the same as his?" Paul mediates twice daily and his spiritual life is now "200 percent better than it was." For guidance, he reads the books of Deepak Chopra, a popular new age 'guru', fusing Eastern religion with self-help instructions, and he frequents transcendental meditation centers in Gauteng province. For Paul, his move from religion to spirituality, as he sees it, is an assertion of individuality. Individual spirituality also serves to gain distance from Afrikaner ethnicity, in which religion played an important role, and from his upbringing, attested to by the difficulty his father has in understanding his newly found belief.

Christiaan is a thirty year old teacher and artist. His parents are from a working class background from Johannesburg. For Christiaan, religion takes on a very personal meaning. It helps him to give his life in South Africa a purpose. He lived for some years in Europe. He appreciated his stay there very much and now he is ambivalent about living in South Africa. Asked about his career outlook in South Africa, he says that "[B]eing an Afrikaner, I wouldn't say a great place." And when thinking if he might be better off abroad, he reasons that "if I would leave…it would be because there is more opportunities for artists abroad, financially speaking. The market here is not really supporting." Yet a bit later, when asked what he appreciates about South Africa, he says that he has "the opportunity to do what I like." To believe helps him to make a choice.

Suffering from a chronic illness, spirituality helps to overcome the suffering and contributes to make sense of this difficult life-situation: “I would say if God wants me to be here, this is where I am.”

In Albert’s life, religion also plays a role but it is subject to criticism and has to compete with other interests. Religion, especially as an institution with the Church, has reduced importance. In a society in which time is scarce and consumption and commodities are important, Church attendance is, as he says, a “waste of time”. He would rather fix the car or the house and go shopping. While he says that he is religious, he does not think that he should support the Church or the priest financially. He prefers to relate individually to God and the bible. He emphasizes individual engagement with his belief. Instead of going to Church, “you could stay at home, read a couple of pages from the bible”, and still have a meaningful relationship with God. In late modernity, to believe has become a very personal and individual affair. The end of the ‘pseudo traditional complex’ and the decline of the close connection between politics, society and religion is exemplified by the reduced interest in organized religion by young Afrikaners. For some, to choose an alternative religion contributes to breaking with *Afrikanerdom.*

In late modernity, to make choices belongs to the social imaginary, a consequence of living in a consumer society. The importance of consumption, as an ideology that gives a sense of choice is alive among young Afrikaners. The formation of identity is shaped by living in a society permeated with values of consumer ideology. A heightened sense of being an individual is a consequence of late modernity. To make the right moral choices that enable content living in a difficult society, but also being able to find satisfaction in the professional and private life contributes to an increased awareness of being an individual. But also modern society as a risk society has increased demands for the individual. It is the individual who has to respond to the awareness of risk and danger. The collective is no longer the social unit that can deal with it in a satisfactory way. Another sign of the times is a widespread global awareness. To value Afrikaner ethnicity is no longer attached to a specific place. For many, a global experience, be it for work or out of curiosity is something that is desirable. Most share a global awareness that is based

on an expansion of universal values. Far from being isolated, young Afrikaners have a sense of belonging to the world community. An indicator of how much common markers of Afrikaner identity are changing is the adherence to other than the traditional Afrikaner churches. While much of the old lives on in the narratives of the self of young Afrikaners, they are also trying to keep up with the changing and emerging society. In the next chapter, I will look at how young Afrikaners deal with the past and the racial Other.

Chapter 8

THE APARTHEID PAST AND THE RACIAL OTHER

In the previous chapter we could see that when young Afrikaners talk about the present, the past is never far away. In their reflections, dealing with the past and the relationship to the "black" Other are inextricably linked. After all, the apartheid state's legacy of racial discrimination is still visible in South Africa today. But for most young Afrikaners interviewed here, the immediate engagement with the past is their opposition against policies, such as Employment Equity aimed at redressing historical injustice. They feel that such policies exclude them from the nation. Equally important, in a consumer culture with capitalist values that acclaim individual competition and meritocracy, they feel that redress policies undermine their efforts of self-realization. They feel that they did not have a say in the implementation of apartheid, and hence have no responsibility for its existence, but are now nonetheless made to suffer the consequences. With a few exceptions, they deny the need for redress and feel that the past should be forgotten. In this, the young generation of Afrikaners resembles the generations of Germans who lived through WW II and negated the past. In South Africa, as it is still the case in Germany today, the question remains how to deal with a violent past? As Heribert Adam aptly puts it, important is not only what is remembered but also what is the purpose of remembering (Adam, 2000: 88)? While this problem is discussed regularly in the Afrikaans press and is part of the collective reflection of that language community, it is largely absent from any emerging national debate. Rather, the ANC led state erects monuments to the struggle and celebrates the overcoming of violence and injustice, but victim hood in the past often passes as an excuse for lack of accountability in the present.[37] In South Africa, a soul-searching debate about the lessons of the past is still awaited.

[37] The cases of two struggle heroes are a good reflection of the collective amnesia at play. Jacob Zuma, South Africa's former Vice-President and currently Vice-President of the ANC is under serious suspicion of involvement in corruption and yet he is being feted as a man of the people and a deserving struggle hero.

Grappling with a violent past is related to the question of interacting with "black" people. In the interviews conducted for this study, a wide variety of views and strategies how to relate to "black" people come to the fore. Some see the need for both, "black" and "white", to change their attitudes. Others are overt in their racist discourse. But often even those who express racist attitudes feel that this is something they have to change. All seem to be acutely aware that in order to live a content life in South Africa, they have to find a way to relate to "black" people. Declaring oneself to be African is then a way to find a commonality with "black" people. But identification with the African victim, even sharing the sense of being a victim can also help elope to assume responsibility for the past. As victims, all are the same, without paying attention to historical structures of injustice.

What makes perhaps the particularity of whiteness in South Africa today is the perceived need to find a way to relate to "black" people. Under pressure to change, whiteness is unstable, contradictory and contingent. It is being redefined by engaging with the presence of "black" people as equals. After years of racial dominance, it is a presence that has to be taken seriously. But before I turn to this problem, I try to see how the grappling with the past in Germany can be related to the South African situation.

1. Grappling with the Past

In their analysis of apartheid rule, scholars have compared South Africa with Nazi Germany. The apartheid regime's use of white supremacy as a basis for exclusion from citizenship served as an important aspect of a comparison with the Nazi regime's persecution of the Jewish people which was rationalized through an ideology of racial purity and superiority (Adam, 2000; Furlong, 1991). More recently, the work of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) received much attention for its efforts to understand how society could deal with the legacy of a violent past (Adam,

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The same applies to Toni Yengeni, former chief whip of the ANC in parliament, has been convicted to a prison term for fraud and for lying to parliament. Nonetheless, he is celebrated by the ANC as a hero who made sacrifices for the victory over apartheid. The historical lesson of past injustice and authoritarianism that a functioning democracy has to uphold accountability is being lost.

1999/2000). All over the world, societies face the challenge of living with the memory and the visible scars of past atrocities. In what follows I identify parallels and differences between the ways German society dealt with the past and the views of young Afrikaners as they grapple with their past. This section is not intended to be a full comparison of how a violent past is remembered in Germany and South Africa. Instead, I focus of some of the themes about identity and memory that emerge from young Afrikaners' narratives of the self as they reflect upon the apartheid past. This section ends with a larger reflection about the relevance of the past for the present.

In Germany, Margaret and Alexander Mitscherlich addressed in a substantive way how post World War II society grappled with the past (Mitscherlich, 1967). They argued that after the catastrophe of World War II, the holocaust, the senseless killing and death of soldiers and civilians, the Germans negated this past. To cope with the "total devaluation of ideas of national grandeur" that the end of the War in 1945 had brought about, the Germans forgot about the past completely or opted for a cloudy memory as possible (Mitscherlich, 1995: 527). As a consequence of this negation, Germans were unable to mourn. Even today, Margarete Mitscherlich suggests emotions and modes of behavior from the period of the War and its aftermath remain unacknowledged and are at risk to be repeated as the lack of sympathy for and even aggression towards foreigners and asylum-seekers demonstrates (Mitscherlich, 1995: 529). While the generations of the Nazi era disavowed guilt, the latter generations took this guilt upon them but at the same time reacted defensively towards it as it threatened their self-esteem (Mitscherlich, 1995: 530). Young Germans claimed they had no responsibility for the sins of their fathers. But for Mitscherlich, claims to innocence did not relieve them from their historical guilt:

> All we achieve by negating our memories is evasion of the opportunity to learn from the past, circling blindly around ourselves and our fantasies of grandeur, exposed to feelings of inferiority and unable to appreciate the real suffering around us. Both as individuals and as a nation the only way to achieve something akin to maturity, humanity, and tolerance – towards oneself as well as others – is to face up to the active challenge that the acceptance of guilt, mourning, and remembrance represents.
> (Mitscherlich, 1995: 530).

Mitscherlich writes that a humane national identity requires a collective remembrance that eschews hostility and infantile self-idealization (Mitscherlich, 1995: 531). Self-respect is needed to respect others, within and across generations. For this reason, the break of silence of the younger generations of the 1960s was so important. For the first time, Germans had to confront the fact that they had been living a lie and active, conscious mourning became possible (Mitscherlich, 1995: 532). They had to confront themselves, learning to bear guilt and anxiety and to build a more stable identity. Today, after the reunification in the 1990s, Germans have to learn to distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate guilt feelings, and foremost, tolerate their guilt feelings. If they fail to do so, they remain stuck in a narcissistic circle, occupied only with them, fighting these guilt feelings and neglecting feelings for others (Mitscherlich, 1995: 532).

I find the psychoanalytical analysis of the Mitscherlich's helpful in interpreting the life narratives of young Afrikaners addressing the problem how to deal with a violent past. Many of the young people I talked to are in a more or less overt denial about the need to redress past injustice. They acknowledge that the past was bad, they may even feel guilty, but they want to forget about the past. They see little relevance of the past for the present. Like young Germans, they claim innocence and want to be relieved from the historical guilt of having benefited from apartheid. In an astonishing reversal of roles, they now see themselves as victims of 'reverse discrimination'. We may ask if this claim to victim hood manifests a wish to identify with "black" victims of apartheid. Reflecting upon young Germans, Amos Oz observed that the children and grandchildren of the perpetrators may have a secret wish to be among the suffering too and for this reason they showed so much empathy with the Jewish victims (quoted in Buruma, 1995: 20). Post-1994, many of the young Afrikaners interviewed see themselves as the victims of "black" rule. In a reversal of roles, they are now the victims of government policies, such as employment equity legislation, that seek redress for "black" people. Is it possible that seeing now themselves as victims, they can identify with the victims of the apartheid state?

Beyond denial and unresolved conflict about feelings of guilt, some of the young Afrikaners interviewed want to acknowledge the past, understand the victim and make amends. This understanding of the victim, the Other is a crucial step in acknowledging past injustice and living up to the historical and moral duty to make amends and seek redress. In his discussion how German public culture dealt with the holocaust after 1945, Ian Buruma observes that most German playwrights shied away from treating the violent past in their work. They seemed to agree with Theodor Adorno that after Auschwitz, one could no longer write poetry and there was no possible way to express the industrial brutality of the extermination camps (Buruma, 1994: 80). Yet this silence contributed to the absence of grappling with the past. The Hollywood soap opera *Holocaust*, "a work of skilful pop", aired in 1979, was an enormous success among the German public (Buruma, 1994: 88). Buruma argues that it was such a success because it boosted emotions and enforced identification (Buruma, 1994: 90). Victims and perpetrators could be seen as real human beings. This representation tore down the barriers of abstraction between the protagonists and the viewers, between us and them. Only then could Germans identify and empathize with the Jewish victims and ultimately with the German perpetrators. Buruma argues that "[f]or a non-Jewish German, told to internalize Auschwitz as a German crime, the problem is real (Buruma, 1994: 86)". To find something in common with the perpetrator requires first "to imagine the past from the point of view of the victim (1994:86)." Reflecting on South Africa, the question arises if "white" people and Afrikaners have been able to see apartheid from the perspective of the victims? A minority of the people interviewed reveal some sort of identification with victims of apartheid. Public debates about apartheid and the crimes committed during "white" rule, including the radio and television, broadcasts and discussions of the TRC, may have contributed to such a sense of identification. On the broad level of the social imaginary, it might well be that the debate whether Afrikaners are Africans points to the problem of identification with "black" people and "black" victims. Identification as African could help to identify with the victims of apartheid and ultimately, according to Buruma's perspective, acknowledge commonalities with the perpetrators. Carli Coetzee, however, cautions against a too facile emphasis on commonalities in trying to find a connection to an African identity at the expense of failing to acknowledge the wrongs of

the past (Coetzee, 1998).[38] To imagine themselves as the victims of the new dispensation, young Afrikaners may usurp the apartheid victim's place and hence forfeit the need to offer redress and atonement. The debate raises the difficult question to what kind of history and to what kind of past can Afrikaners refer to that allows them to imagine themselves as members of the new nation and construct a new, social identity.

In order to be able to see themselves as South Africans, as Africans and as equal members of the nation, young Afrikaners wish that their stories of the past are understood and acknowledged by the new collectivity in the making. Even without a past that carries the heavy burden of apartheid, joining a new nation for an ethnic group such as the Afrikaners is fraught with difficulties. Norbert Elias observes in another context that the disappearance of the tribe or state (or ethnicity, group) as an autonomous entity is perceived as rendering "meaningless everything which past generations had achieved and suffered in the framework and in the name of this survival unit" (Elias, 1991: 223). Or, to put it differently, what past can Afrikaners contribute to the making of a new South African nation? The difficulty they have is that Afrikaners cannot just escape the past and resume after apartheid with a clean slate. The past of Afrikaner nationalism, including apartheid, has to have some relevance for the present and the future. Afrikaner culture, tradition and language share the past with the politics of apartheid which cannot be just wished away. Cultural historian Bogumil Jewsiewicki sees the problem of the Afrikaner past in this way. He asks how can Afrikaners "recognize themselves in the narrative of the becoming of a people that, after having exorcised the curse of apartheid, belonged to the new South African nation" (Jewsiwiecki, 2004: 173)?[39] To be able to connect the past with the present and the future is one of the crucial tasks of the nation, as Benedict Anderson argues in *Imagined Communities*. As a social construct, the nation has a specific function for the social community, related to space and time. According to Anderson, with the advent of modernity, time was now apprehended in a new way, as empty time which allowed the nation to pass through time (Anderson, 1991: 205). With

[38] The historical figure of the seventeenth century Cape, Krotoa, a Khoikhoi woman, married to a Danish surgeon in the service of the Dutch East India Company, is reinterpreted as a 'founding mother' of many Afrikaner families and they thereby emphasise their hybrid identity.
[39] My translation

this sense of time, the nation is immemorial. Yet besides empty time, there is also the secular, serial, calendar time. The two measurement of time contradict each other. With the former, time cannot be measured – the nation just is, immemorial. With the latter, calendar time, time has a beginning and an end. Hence, in solving the contradiction of these two time measurements, the nation is about continuity but also about forgetting the experience of this continuity. As members of the nation, living in the present also requires to source ourselves in the past and project our existence into the future. For Afrikaners, with a legacy of apartheid, this becomes a difficult task.

Jocelyn Letourneau, Quebecois historian, shares this reflection about memory, the past and the nation.[40] He suggests that living in the present is inextricably linked to the past. People living in the present, and especially the youth, are always oriented towards the future. They intend to renew the 'problematique' of the group in order to fashion their own way and recreate new meaning. In the case of the Afrikaners, living on the African continent, belonging to an African nation, how to exist, and perhaps survive, as a "white" minority among "black" people, requires to find the meaning that enables such a project. For Letourneau, such renewal is necessary so that the future is not just an eternal beginning. The present that is being constructed has to have its source in the past. Living today requires more than hope for a (better) future. But what to do with the traditions of the past, Letourneau asks? The usage of tradition depends on those who live in the present; their search for meaning, their plans and their refusals. For them, the past is only meaningful when it allows them to project themselves into the future. The function of the past is to contribute to a possible future. The nation is the place in which memory, that is, the traditions of the past are located. The nation helps then to remember but at the same time, and this is the paradox of the nation, it is also about distance, about forgetting. More important perhaps, the memory one wants to keep as heritage has to mean hope, deliverance and liberation. From the past, one has to choose what to assume and what to reject. Otherwise, memory becomes nostalgia, resentment or even worse, an obstacle. In our current epoch, however, the nation is no longer this grand and transcendental

[40] The following paragraph is based on Letourneau (1998), pp.411-430. All references are based on my translation

narrative. Rather, the nation is integrated into individual life stories. In paraphrasing Letourneau, I want to suggest that the question for Afrikaners today is not 'what do I have to believe in so as to be an Afrikaner', but 'what does it mean to be an Afrikaner in the present'. I think that in reflecting upon an answer to these questions, two lessons need to be retained: first, the duty to remember, and here, the revelations of the TRC have to be acknowledged, and second, in order to participate in present and future collective life, the present has to be constructed with all other participants. I want to suggest that for this reason continued Afrikaner ethnic mobilization is an obstacle: it cannot allow for the construction of a common future within a diverse and emerging nation.

2. The Apartheid past

The past looms large in the formation of contemporary Afrikaner identities. Only a few of the young people interviewed suggest a genuine way that can deal with the guilt-feeling of having created and benefited from the apartheid order. Different strategies are offered how to deal with this burden. Anastasia comes from a well-off family, her father was a successful entertainer and she is now working as an academic in Johannesburg. She takes a great interest in Afrikaans music and literature. She suggests that there is no easy way out; even the separation of contemporary identities from the past is problematic. She recognizes that she belongs to a specific "cultural heritage" and a "cultural milieu" and she feels that although, she may have a different outlook on life than previous generations and friends and family, she feels that she is not "being released from this burden". Identification with the Afrikaner cultural milieu also means that one has to assume the heritage of that culture. Yet given the history of apartheid, it is a heavy burden that one has to carry.

In contrast, Josette, does not want to carry this burden. She explains:

> "I have never been able to say …I am an Afrikaner because I feel there is so much baggage that goes along with that I am not happy with the history that goes along with that …I don't want to be associated with that history."

Yet her answer is not definite. Because of the history, she feels she is not comfortable being called an Afrikaner but she qualifies her statement by saying that this is only the

case “at this moment in my life”. There is then a conscious effort on her part not to be too closely associated with being an Afrikaner: “me and my sister…we don’t want to go too Afrikaans”. The burden of the past leads her to choose her identity that moves away from an Afrikaner identity. She cannot see herself as a traditional Afrikaner and instead wants to decide for herself how far she can identify with such an identity. While Anastasia is not quite sure how to assume that past and carry it into the present, Josette tries to escape from feelings of guilt and responsibility by moving away from an Afrikaner identity.

The feeling of personal responsibility or perhaps even a sense of collective guilt for the crime of apartheid is a heavy burden. In a reversal of roles, some try to evade this burden by declaring that the racial Other, the ”black” victim, has no right to claim how she or he suffered in the past or is suffering now from the legacy of apartheid. Veronique comes from a middle-class Afrikaner family from Pretoria and is now studying and working as a journalist at Stellenbosch University, in the Western Cape province. She feels that “there is [sic] too many black South Africans my age that blame me for apartheid, even though I was a child at that stage, and that they didn’t really suffer under the regime.” That one has no direct relationship to the apartheid past should help to free oneself from its burden. This view of the past is also to defend one’s individual career that is hampered by the apartheid past and the means to overcome it, such as employment equity. Capitalist society emphasizes individual career opportunities and competition, and in such a world, to sacrifice one’s own advancement for the greater good, and for historical justice, undermines self-realization and genuine participation as a full member in a capitalist and competitive society. From this perspective, the contemporary means to deal with the legacy of the past are unjust. For Veronique, the defense of Afrikaner history mingles with the present criticism of employment equity, “because it is turning into reverse discrimination”. That “black” people have been victimized is then less a concern: “I know we should set right the past, but at the moment only the rich, “black” elite benefits from “black” empowerment, while the rest stays hungry.” In light of the discussion in the previous paragraph, it is not clear if being a victim of the ANC government’s policies is a form of identification with victims or rather a defense of spoils. After all, a “white” victim of a “black” government is relieved of the burden of redress.

The easiest strategy is just to forget about the past, as Francine and Stephanie, two very good friends, suggest. They both grew up on the countryside, in Musina and now, they are studying in Pretoria to become teachers. Francine feels that apartheid is not an issue "because there is no apartheid anymore, but I think in the past, it was a problem". Stephanie agrees by saying apartheid "was in the past. It's not anymore, so we don't talk about it very often." Yet these statements indicating how to deal with the past are pronounced tentatively and just to forget is not an unproblematic strategy. Albert, also studying education but at another institution, offers nonetheless a rationale why it is better to forget about the past:

> "I think they should just leave it. It happened. …You can't correct the past, but what you can do is to look forward to the future, make sure that it never happens again, you know. And if people look back, we are never going to advance as a nation if we keep looking back…They must just leave it now."

He is worried that too much remembrance will prevent the emergence of a new relationship between the previous antagonists. But more importantly, he feels that young people, "black" and "white", are less concerned with the legacy of apartheid. He states: "…it [apartheid] died between all the youngsters, it's dead. We joke around it, that's about it". He claims that for the younger generation, "it doesn't matter anymore, we all know it's finished". But besides his argument that even "black" youngsters feel that apartheid belongs to the past, he feels that his youth makes it impossible for him to accept any responsibility: "I was too young to know what happened…when I was in grade 2, Mandela became president…and in grade 1, we already had black children in our school". While his parents' generation may have practiced apartheid, he was in mixed schools from early on and he seems to suggest that because of his schooling that had little resemblance to the old apartheid order, he should not have to deal with its legacy. In his view then, whether "black" or "white", as a young South African, apartheid is no longer relevant.

As I discussed at the beginning of this chapter, to live in the present demands a meaningful relation to the past. Hence, Herman maintains: “I still regard my past as valuable”. He feels that he does not want to withdraw to the past, but “just take the past and maybe the present and join them together where I am now”. When asked how he manages to keep a positive view of the dismal apartheid past, he says that he distinguishes between the political and the private sphere. In the private life of his upbringing, “we lived in peace”, relations to “black” people were good (“you handle them as normal people”) and in the end, he was “not part of that big, big apartheid era”. In his recollection then, a positive legacy of the apartheid era can be claimed since despite the legislated inequality, human relations between “black” and “white” people were normal, “we didn’t act in a political way, we treated the people in a decent way, like proper humans.”

Paul argues that despite the official policy of apartheid, he was growing up in a society in which racial segregation was receding. Paul remembers: “I have never been exposed to apartheid but, I mean, you lived in that era without really realizing what was going on about because I was a child.” In a way he was largely ignorant about the sad reality of racial segregation. This is also due to his parents not seeking to insist on racial separation. He was taught by his parents who “always treated people with respect whether they were black or white”. Such respect for “black” people also meant that he could socialize with them. “I have never been brought up in an environment where you were told that you were not allowed to mix with blacks.”

Yet this mixing and socializing with “black” people was confined to the workplace, a super market, where he used to work on weekends when he was a schoolboy. Yet such a shared workplace encounter certainly falls short of the genuine relationship that a non-racial democracy envisions. In fact, Paul, quite in contrast to his positive assessment of a non-racial upbringing, acknowledges that through living in segregated neighborhoods “you had very specific boundaries”, yet there “was never that clear line”. This last phrase makes it clear that *there was* a separating line, albeit one that was more ambiguous and amorphous.

Reflecting on the apartheid experience of his business partner, an Indian male, Paul understands that “those boards, ‘Europeans only’, was a major thing for him”. He feels that different experiences are hard to bridge:”I don’t think that I fully grasp the difference that apartheid made contrary to what we have now”. Obviously, we cannot live the experiences of others, but we can try to understand the perspective of the Other, and I think it is here that Paul fails. He cannot face up to the origin and history of his perspective of “black” people and the relationship between “black” and “white” people. He insists that “race” was never an issue for him. At the same time, he recollects an event in which “race” took centre stage and which shows the importance of “race” in his thinking. He says: “I never really had an issue with race. I have a big issue with class. I also get my moments where I get frustrated and will silently whisper a racist remark”. It is quite incompatible to claim that “race” is not an issue for you and then to make racist remarks. Clearly, in his interactions he is aware of the “race” of the person he is dealing with and he utters racist remarks when he has a problem with a “black” person.

This lack of self-awareness and understanding of the privileges one carries from the apartheid era appears clearly when Paul states that “my generation…didn’t get advantaged by apartheid”. The emphasize on the individual and the need to advance your career, neglects the macro social, economic and political benefits one inherited as a “white” South African. “I feel like am being punished for what my parents or my grandparents’ generation did because I didn’t benefit directly from apartheid”. Christel makes this view clear by saying that reconciliation and employment equity is carried out on the backs of young Afrikaners like herself. Her recommendation is that society should “get over [apartheid]”. Redress through employment equity is so strongly criticized because it directly undermines individual achievement, and for young Afrikaners, to stand out from the group after years of ethnic enclosure is an appreciated achievement. For Paul, it is now time to treat everybody equally.

Magda is from a farming community in Kwa-Zulu Natal. She is now studying law in Pretoria. She understands that the way “black” people were treated during apartheid was

bad and that this is somehow related to her history and the people she belongs to. She "feels a bit ashamed what the Afrikaans people did. When you see what happened, it's terrible." At the same time, she denies that there is much relevance of that apartheid history to her present life. "…apartheid…happened a long time ago and it's not applicable to me anymore". She feels that today, everybody is equal. This is justified by her observation that "there are laws and stuff for the disadvantaged community to push [them] up, putting them equal".

Hans, next to Magda, is the most open in admitting that it is difficult for him to cope with the feeling of guilt. He says:

> "apartheid…it was wrong. We realize it now …We said we were sorry. How do you sort of justify fifty years of injustice with 'I am sorry', you can't really do that, but we really are…If you keep on rubbing this into our faces, we want to go. We don't feel welcome."

He feels that his apology is inadequate to make up for past injustices and he fears constant recriminations from the past. The burden seems to be so heavy that to be reminded of it, makes life unbearable. Hence, to move abroad is for some a way to try to live free from the burden of the past.

George is able to find some positive aspect in contemporary measures to address the legacy of apartheid. However, he is very unsure about his position. He does not seem to have made up his mind. With his strong emphasis that we should now all consider ourselves equal, he argues that "[i]f they keep on going like that, then it is just apartheid almost turned around". Yet, employment equity, although it goes against his personal interest, may well exist to address legitimate concerns: "For me, [apartheid] is a very difficult concept because you can't understand what black people felt, like against the white Afrikaans people and so that is why employment equity is also a good thing". His admitted incapability to understand what "black" people might have felt during apartheid shows how difficult it is to develop a common understanding of the past in a society which was sharply divided. But with a desire to right the wrongs of the past and the

establishment of a dialogue across racial boundaries, the possibilities to work towards a common understanding of the past, exist.

Views of the past remain divided. George is not much aware how specific landmarks from Afrikaner history can have a completely different significance for others. Making his point for the inclusiveness of Afrikaner history as African history, he says that the Afrikaners "are part of Africa, but keep your own culture as well…I mean, I came from the Netherlands - Jan Van Riebbeck who started Cape Town, there is a white side as well, but it is part of Africa, so why not make it equal?" This "white" side caused much pain to "black" people. With such a painful memory, how can these colonial agents and their culture be included in a common history, meaningful to all? Government discourse and policy that promote the Africanization of South Africa is an attempt to increase the presence of African history as lived and told by Africans, and which also subsumes Afrikaner history. For some, this process is inevitable, yet it is welcome. Such limited approval is motivated by the fear that the legacy of Afrikaners will be displaced. Veronique wants Afrikaners to be included in the new nation. So the founder of Pretoria, Andries Pretorius, has to be accepted part of African history and hence the city's name should not be changed. After all, she argues, "It is part of *everyone's* (her emphasis) history." Furthermore, the "old things" that cant be changed, presumably Afrikaner monuments and perhaps even the history of the Afrikaners in South Africa, " ..are African as well." Such a plea to include the Afrikaner legacy in the new nation is certainly important to support multicultural nation-building, but does it not have to be based on reciprocity and an understanding that "black" African history has to be redressed?

Detlev is much more skeptical that past landmarks of Afrikaner history can be incorporated into a new, African history. Instead, he suggests that with the dismal legacy of apartheid, Afrikaners should take their own dissidents as examples. He believes that "in order to go forward, one can build on their legacy". This view is certainly a minority view among the people interviewed. Journalist and author Max Du Preez suggested in his memoirs the same re-evaluation of history and the integration of resistance history into

the Afrikaner mainstream (Du Preez, 2003: 21). However, to build a popular, critical and alternative history and take Afrikaner dissidents who have been expelled from the people as examples to build a future is a challenging task. That change is slow is well illustrated by the tolerance and acceptance that Dan Roodt, a self-styled activist and defender of all things Afrikaner, receives from the Afrikaner intellectual and cultural establishment. While he may qualify as an intellectual, his controversial statements recurrently antagonize "black" people.[41] If Afrikaners want to be taken serious as members of a non-racial, nation, how can they, and "white" people, tolerate individuals who hurt "black" people with their racist views? In the heydays of apartheid and the long years of its steady decline, the extreme (racist) right remained for many part of the political and social landscape, it was 'normal' to be racist. But in a democratic South Africa, of which a large majority is "black", how can racist views be tolerated and shrugged of as normal?

To acknowledge a violent past is a difficult task for young Afrikaners. The burden of the past which would require atonement for past privilege runs against the striving for success in an individualistic, consumer society. Hence, many deny the relevance of the past for today and they argue that the past should be forgotten. Attempts to look upon a past that can have relevance for today is a difficult task. So is the incorporation of Afrikaner apartheid dissidents into the 'story' of the Afrikaner people in the construction of a new, critical history. Rather than facing up to the violent past, many young Afrikaners choose to defend the trajectory of the Afrikaner nation, despite the injustice committed in their name.

3. Relating to the racial Other

Talking about the past leads to reflections about "race" relations, about the relationship between "white" and "black" people. In *A change of tongue (2003),* Antjie Krog addresses the problem of dealing with the past and the racial Other. For her, the challenge of living together today and for reconciliation is how to form "new relationships and partnerships" between peoples who have been scarred deeply by a violent past (Krog, 2003: 151). Krog feels that her upbringing and her past had prepared her inadequately for

[41] For an illustration of this thinking, see Dan Roodt. *The scourge of the ANC* (PRAAG, Pretoria, 2005).

doing so. Nonetheless, it is the presence of "black" people and the task of finding historically unprecedented ways of relating to "black" people that makes the particular challenge of her life in contemporary South Africa. It is also this quest to find ways to relate to "black" people that help her to affirm her African-ness, her belonging to the country and its people. Reflecting upon their relationships to "black" people, most of the young Afrikaners I talked to share Krog's view that they need to find ways to relate to "black" people in meaningful ways.

What emerges from these narratives of young Afrikaners as they reflect upon their relationship with the racial Other is a complex and differentiated definition of whiteness. Based on these Afrikaner narratives of the self, I argue that whiteness is contingent and situational.[42] South African approaches to the study of whiteness often assume stable discourses of whiteness (Steyn, 2004; Desai, 2006). The narratives of the self presented here however show a discursive multiplicity of whiteness that indicates instability, indecisiveness and contradiction. But perhaps more important is the realization that whiteness can be meaningfully understood as constructed and defined in relation with the racial Other. It seems to me that we need to look at "white"-"black" relations not according to "the logic of binary opposition" and but according to a "logic of coupling" (Hall, 1990: 111). In any binary opposition of social relations, we use reified notions at the expense of looking at mutual influences. Discussing Franz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Mask*, K.E. Supriya suggests that Fanon offers an argument about the inseparability of whiteness and blackness (Supriya, 1999: 136). For Fanon, Supriya argues, constructions of the Other "imply and entail the construction of the self; the construction of blackness implies and entails the construction of whiteness" (Supriya, 1999: 136). Whiteness, more complex than its relationship with privilege and superiority would indicate, is foremost a relational and contingent identity.

The redefinition of white identity is a required in order to relate to the experiences of "black" people. Furthermore, to do so is a necessity for professional success in a

[42] In his essay, 'The secularization of South African white male identity' Michael Titlestadt discusses three South African novels written after 2000. He argues that white identity is historically contingent and more complex than a narrow analysis of whiteness would allow.

corporate world marked “black” political power and by Black Economic Empowerment, but it is also a requirement in order to be a content subject in a multicultural, mixed and equal society. One has to find a way to relate to “black” people and to try to establish a genuine relationship with them. In the new, emerging social imaginary of an African nation, they have to be equal. In the previous section that dealt with the apartheid past, many stated that only if they were accepted as equals, could Afrikaners be included in the new nation. But in everyday life, and with a history of racial separation and denigration, many struggle to consider the racial Other as equal.

Herman’s narrative shows well the reflection that motivates to find a new way to relate to “black” people. He feels that the separation based on historical experience of the apartheid years is hard to overcome and he therefore tries to find a way, in his artwork, to relate to “black” people. He says that he “can’t ever imagine any of these uproars where black people were killed. It is difficult to say. I empathize with them but at least there is some reference to it.” Herman, through his artwork, photograph-like images that engage on the one hand with South Africa’s past and present, and with Afrikaner identity on the other, tries to find a way to relate to the racial Other.

Marlene grew up on a farm in Kwa-Zulu Natal. She went to the teaching college in Pretoria and is now working there. Working in Pretoria also means for her getting to know “black” people better. There are positive experiences that she has with “black” people and she feels that “she can learn from them”. Yet her intention to ‘get through’ to “black” people is also tinged with a racialized Othering discourse that affirms stereotypes. Commenting on a demonstration of “black” students against the merger of different colleges and student fees increases on the campus of her university:

> “I feel like they would like to be in charge of the campus”… “they are actually just disturbing everyone and it’s for us as Afrikaners, when they are so loud and anti - I get frightened because I don’t know what is happening. I don’t understand the Xhosa language; I don’t know what they are saying. I get frightened when things like that happen”.

While she understands that it is beneficial to understand and to get to know "black" people as individuals, as human beings, she speaks of them as a group with important differences. As a group making their concerns heard in a public demonstration, "black" people turn into a threatening mass. Patricia, who studied at the same university, sees such a difference not only between "black" and "white" but between ethnic and linguistic groups. For her, the Afrikaners have their cultural particularities and compared to other groups, "there are lots of cultural differences" that she experiences every day, especially in university residence where she was in close contact with "black people". The tangible marker of that cultural difference is when she thinks of what defines Africa and African-ness, she sees "those skirts and painted ornaments…like, black culture". With Patricia, a discourse that talks of racial differences has been replaced with one that refers to cultural difference.[43] While she affirms that there are many cultural differences between Afrikaners and other ethnicities, her definition of African-ness shows the dearth in her reasoning on what this difference is based: skirts and ornaments. When probed for examples of what difference consists, the answers wear thin and we may ask what makes Afrikaners and "white" people so different from "black" people beyond "race" and all the popular mythologies, developed and attached to "race" over centuries.

While aesthetics can mark a visible difference between people, aesthetics of otherness can also constitute a way to relate to a racialized Other in positive terms. While during apartheid, the dominant ideology, and lived experiences, served to denigrate the Other, living with "black" people is now a comforting experience. Herman again: "the blacks, even though I don't mingle with them, in the sense of socialize, there is something warm about them". Here speaks an observant of "black" people, certainly in his everyday experience, but nonetheless from a distance. While previously blackness was denigrated, it is now endowed with positive attributes.

A reversal of the dominant meaning and values in a very short time is that most people I talked to show an appreciation for the country's diversity. Such diversity is no longer an

[43] The same process is at play in Kurt's discourse replacing racial difference with cultural difference (chapter 6).

obstacle to development that requires apartheid and separation, but it is something to be appreciated. Magda reasons that "we like being here, we like the people here and its so many different cultures here. We have English, Afrikaans and all the different black languages and cultures and Indian and French and Dutch and German". But the way to such appreciation was arduous and for many Afrikaners to see black people as equal was not easy to accept. For her, many Afrikaner students "come from farms" and there, they were taught that "I am in charge of people of another colour. You are my servant. So that is the way they grew up, that is the way they were taught". It was for her a life-changing, deeply personal experience to have a close, egalitarian contact with a black person. "…it was strange in the beginning…that my black friend came over to my house and sat on my couch and drank out of my cups and saucers and ate birthday cake with me.. .so I saw nothing happened to me doing that…I [didn't] get degraded".

It seems to me that close contact with the racial Other can change fundamentally one's own identity. The narratives of the self show a continuing re-evaluation of one's self-conception as one is reflecting upon and dealing with the Other.[44] An interesting parallel to such a process is found in Max Du Preez' *Pale Native*. He mentions two close encounters with "black" people in extreme situations as 'life changing experiences' that changed his consciousness and view of "black" people (Du Preez, 2003: 82). Although they are defined by the classical tropes of black suffering and black rage, so often encountered in "white" on "black" writing, reflecting racialist stereotypes of the Other, yet nonetheless provoking his feelings of sympathy and as such, they had a lasting effect on his view of "race" relations in South Africa in the late 1970s and spurred his opposition to the apartheid regime.

The relation to the Other serves to distinguish your new, progressive identity from the old, conservative and racist one. While there are also racist, Othering discourses, they take place concurrently to a discourse of the emerging that contemplates the relationship

[44] In 2004, I was listening to a call-in show on SAFM radio, the public broadcaster. The theme of the show was about life changing experiences. During the one hour call-in, most of the "white" callers told a story in which they had an encounter with "black" people that had changed in positive ways their views of them. 'Life changing' meant for these "white" callers a transforming experience of how they related to "black" people.

with the Other. Hans, for instance, expresses his frustration that Afrikaners are excluded from the state-nation building project. He feels that they are neglected by the government. In his racialized discourse, he denigrates blackness and Africa. Yet he regrets that these very same "black" people are not willing to include him in the construction of a common nation. For him, culture and "race" remain markers of difference that have to be taken seriously. When asked if he would consider a "black" girlfriend, he says that "you should keep with your own" and invoking "race", her implies that racial difference exists for a reason and that one should not mix and that racial difference is here to stay. Equally, Tiaan condemns sexual relations between "black" and white based on the grounds that it is against his religion. "I don't like seeing white girls with black boys or black girls with white guys. It's not normal for me and maybe it's the way I was brought up but I don't like it and I am not going to change." For Tiaan, racial identity is so strong that he feels it is unusual to have ordinary interactions with black people. He tells the story of a positive interaction that he had with a "black" student and that took him by surprise. When a "black" student with whom he was sharing a computer lab brought him the computer disc he forgot in the disc drive, he was surprised that a black man would make a generous, positive gesture towards him. It is this kind of experience that is questioning his racist and antagonistic discourse. But he also seems to understand that the dominant values no longer support his racist outlook and that he will have to change. Talking of the university Church service, he observes that it is segregated. He explains: "We have maybe begun to integrate here on campus on a social level but we are *still*[45] years away from integrating in church groups and so on." The 'still' indicates that it is his expectation, perhaps even desirable that in future churches will be integrated.

Like Hans and Tiaan, Adam also uses an offensive racist discourse that questions his suitability to live in an African society. But with the former two, there is more a sense that white people can grow to appreciate "black" people and culture; "black" culture offers something from which "white" people can gain. Adam, however, regrets that "black" people do not conform to the standards of his "white", European life style. He

[45] My emphasis

believes they still have some catching up to do. He stresses the immutable difference between "black" and "white" people all over the world but in a subsequent example he reasons that "black" and "white" can live together in harmony, as he says they did in the 1980s' in Yeoville, Johannesburg. Yet this multiracial harmony is overshadowed by his racist discourse that unfolds without much doubt. For him, South Africa is not an African country and his incapability to see "black" South Africans as Africans who do not need to look up to Europe for guidance, testifies to his refusal to see difference and accept it as equal, meaningful ways of being. "I associate with what we are in our country, but not with the rest of Africa". "What we are in our country" is then a dominant, Western society in which Africa and blackness has no space, only if assimilated to European ways. In Europe, he reasons, "everybody got certain ideas how to live their lives and I don't think this is a shared view with most people here". For him, the real problem is that too many "black" people are different and this difference renders living in a common society problematic unlike European countries, which, according to him, show a desirable unity of "race" and culture.

Similarly, for Paul, "black" people need to upgrade to "white" standards of living: "I have never really had an issue with color. I don't have an issue as long as the person is basically on my level and can converse with me in either English or in Afrikaans in an intellectual way, then I have no problem with it". He observes that he has always been welcoming to "black" people and that he considered them equal. But it is an equality that demands from "black" people to live up to *his* expectations and standards.[46] Equality is confused with sameness. Paul: "I don't think that I ever had that mindset 'we are different'. I had this whole thing: 'you can converse with me and if you want to be my friend, and if you basically have the same interests and all that, then it does not matter what color you are". It is entirely up to the Other to fit the expectations Paul has. It is not of his concern that he might want to see how he can change and relate to the Other. This is not necessary since "race" is no longer an issue. "I think South Africa to a great extent has become colour blind". Paul, and above Adam, live in a "white" world in which the

[46] This is exactly the view that Charles Taylor challenges in his seminal text on multiculturalism. He criticizes the author Saul Bellow for saying that he will only read a Zulu novel should one be written that has the cultural value of Shakespeare (Taylor, 1992).

Other, “black” people, have to conform to standards set by European culture. If relationships between “black” and “white” are to be established, it is up to “black” people to meet their expectations. Paul’s narrative is not overtly racist, but he denies the values of Otherness and difference. He is so convinced of the righteousness of his way of life that he is far away from being able to live up to the expectations of a multicultural world that values different cultures.

David does not share the same optimism that papers over differences and turns a blind eye on prejudice. He argues that it is important to relate to the racial Other since “we are just opening up to African cultures”. However, he feels that this process is going too slowly and other Afrikaners don’t share the same sentiment:

> “…living in Joburg, I thought things are going pretty well with race relations in the country”...”Melville [a trendy, and relatively mixed neighborhood] is very cosmopolitan and everybody mixes and then you meet these people and no! - some of them want to take back the country and they don’t like black people and they still think of them as inferior. So we see that there is still a big problem in relations.”

His nuanced view is also reflected in his evaluation of “race” relations. Rather than one of opposition and difference, it is one of entanglement. “I think there is still something left of that master-servant way you look at black people”. Many Afrikaners, her argues, including himself, in his view, still a mindset that disregards “black” people and shows a lack of respect: “a lot of things we Afrikaners do are so offensive in ways that we don’t even think of.. It’s so deeply ingrained in my subconscious of having been the people in power”. At the same time, he observes that “black” people would “stroke the white’s man ego to get a favor from him” as he relates the story of a worker negotiating more money from his employer. With David, whiteness and blackness have to be seen in relation to each other; one defines the other. As we have seen earlier with Supriya, racial identities are contingent and mutually influence each other.

Albert has quite a different experience from the other people I spoke to since he is, at only eighteen years of age, the youngest and he is used to sharing his class room and play ground with “black” students. This socialization differentiates him from previous generations. He relates an experience when he was playing in the streets with friends, “black” and “white”, and the parents of one of the “white” children called his playmate back into the house and forbade him to play with a “black” child. Albert felt that this was completely wrong. He displays a great appreciation for diversity and non-racialism. From his school, Albert remembers:”…it was never just a white school or just a black school…it was always colored, white, black, Indian….it was a nice school, I enjoyed it. I would hate to go to a school where it is just one type of person. I like diversity.” Yet his appreciation for diversity has its limits. When asked if he would consider having a “black” girlfriend, he stated that no, he would not do so. He volunteers some long story that too many mixed couples would diminish racial diversity as all people would end up being Coloured. Furthermore, he found white women to be more attractive. But in the end, it is not your background or how you were raised that decides on the issue, but “it just depends on what you like”. He values the exposure to different views that comes with diversity. ..”[T]he white community, they all think the same – the black community, they all think the same…but if you have integration, you have a mixture of people and you get a nice conversation going”. What remains to be seen, is how strong and unproblematic the relations are that he forges in his appreciation of diversity. When talking about apartheid as a possible contentious issue between “black” and “white”, he observes that “they won’t talk about it…from my experiences; I never found that they sit there and talk about something that happened”. Yet he seems to get more out of his relationship to “black” people than Christel who has made little progress. What she encounters as a “communication gap” shows how hard it is for her to relate to and to understand “black” people. For her, it is almost impossible ‘get through to black people’. Even though she says that she values diversity, she is at pains to make it a living experience. To show an appreciation of diversity is taking hold as a way of life among young Afrikaners, but it requires an effort to live up to such expectations. To find a common language about important issues, such as the apartheid past, is a difficult task, even if one is in favor of diversity, multiculturalism and equity.

For others, a multicultural background is already a lived experience. Dan grew up on Potchefstroom, with an Afrikaner father and a mother of Lebanese origin. He studied media, has lived for a year in New York and he feels very much like a cosmopolitan citizen. He feels that the end of apartheid has many opportunities to bring "black" and "white" cultures closer together. In this, his work with cultural festivals plays an important part. In some aspects, his enthusiasm for the creation of a new culture out of the debris of apartheid separation echoes the Latin American intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth century who hailed the coming of a new, superior culture out of European and indigenous elements[47]:

> "..we have got the opportunity now to create a whole new culture from twenty or so different cultures, if you like, where every culture can stand on its own, but the cross-over is fascinating. We can start mixing different folklore and experiences, all in the new South Africa".

For Louis, working in the entertainment industry, to create events that attract mixed audiences, that are 'cross-overs', is also a desired objective. Yet ten years into democracy, this is less urgent as he realizes the difficulty of achieving this goal. "..we actively push people to come together…but for the bigger parts for the last 100 years people have been trying to keep them apart, so it's going to take years of getting people together." Bringing people of different racial and cultural background together is a formidable but nonetheless exciting project. The almost naïve project of popular mixing is tempered with an assessment of the difficulty of the task. For others, everyday life has incorporated such mixing through intimate relationships. Detlev says that he is coming from a conservative home. His parents were both supporters of the National Party and his father even supported the Conservative Party. Breaking with this conservative tradition, he had intimate relationships with young women of different "races". At the time of the interview, he shares an apartment with an Indian woman and he dated a woman from Thailand while he was in the United States. In the past, he had an Indian girlfriend. For Detlev, sexual relationships serve to distance himself from conservative *Afrikanerdom*.

[47] Gerard Bouchard (2000), 198-212.

While some are only becoming slowly aware what it could mean to live in a multicultural society, others have made the encounter with difference their daily experience, be it by choice or by upbringing. But no matter how positive one's view of the Other is, to live with difference requires hard work. Nevertheless, the benefits may run deep. Finding a way to relate to the Other changes the perceptions of the self and fundamentally modifies previously held beliefs.

In summarizing this chapter, it is apparent that how to relate to "black" people and blackness is a major concern for young Afrikaners. With a recent violent history of apartheid, the past looms large in finding ways to relate to "black" people. Identification with "black" victims of colonialism and apartheid may be a way to understand and empathize with "black" people. But we also have to be cautious about such processes of identification. A facile focus on commonalities may lead to a failure to acknowledge the wrongs of the past. A narcissistic concern with one's own status as a victim of affirmative action may already occupy the attention of young Afrikaners. As a victim of new injustice, one does not have to atone for the past injustice. Feeling themselves like victims may be a subconscious means to relate to "black" victims of apartheid, but it is hardly a way forward to mutual understanding and reconciliation. Others are more sincere about the past. They want to acknowledge it and make amends. But for all, to deal with feelings of guilt and responsibility is a difficult task. Hence, some refuse to deal with this burden and want to assume a new identity, far removed from a sense of Afrikaner-ness. To accept the existence of past injustice and the policies of redress, such as affirmative action, undermines individual career plans in a modern, consumer society. Self-realization and cut-throat competition in a capitalist consumer society is not easily combined with the greater good and historical justice.

Living in denial is one strategy for some. They don't see any problem in relating to "black" people. So imbued with a sense of righteousness that their way of life is the correct and dominant one, they feel "black" people have to reach and to conform to their ways. They do everything right, and it is now up to "black" people to make an effort to reach them. Living in such ignorance, one does not escape the awareness that success in

business and politics, but also to live as a content subject in a multicultural, mixed and equal society requires a good relationship with and a better understanding of “black” people. Hence, values are turned upside down. An aesthetics of difference values now “black” culture and identity. Multicultural diversity is something positive, but it is also difficult to live with such diversity. Living with such diversity can fundamentally change one’s self perception.

For the young people I interviewed here, how to relate to “black” people is an important aspect of their reflections on everyday life in South Africa. A discourse of the emerging intends to build a positive relationship to “black” people occurs at times simultaneously with a racist discourse that creates distance between the self and the Other. A mixed and multicultural society is envisaged but it is often understood to be a goal that is difficult to attend. Feelings of guilt about the injustice of the past complicate relationships with “black” people. In light of these contradictory narratives, I suggest a more differentiated perspective of whiteness. Often described as a social system of white dominance with little space for escape or subversion; whiteness, however, is more complex. Whiteness is instable, contradictory and contingent. In a society with an emerging social imaginary that searches to be more African, further modifications how “white” identities are lived can be expected.

Chapter 9

CONCLUSION

How to relate to “black” people has become an integral component of whiteness in South Africa today. In narratives of the self, young Afrikaners reflect about their place in a changing and Africanizing society. The last generation to inherit the legacy of Afrikaner nationalism has come a long way. Let me then summarize in the concluding chapter the argument and the findings of this thesis.

In answering the question why Afrikaners deserted nationalism and why nationalism had declined, I want to make the following argument. First, in looking at the problem of the decline of Afrikaner nationalism, we also have to consider the larger question why individuals adhere to and desert nationalism and ethnicity. The case of Afrikaner nationalism informs theories of nationalism and ethnicity that address the problem of success and decline of nationalist mobilization. Consequently, the case of Afrikaner nationalism serves to illustrate the broader problem of national belonging within theories of nationalism and ethnicity. Second, studying why people become national means looking at the problem of national and ethnic identities. Asking why people adhere to nationalism or desert it is to ask how people, as human subjects, are constituted. By doing so, we investigate how subjectivity is produced or subjectivation. In other words, we are concerned with the problem of the constitution of Afrikaner ethno-nationalist identities. I want then to suggest that in studying why Afrikaner nationalism declined, we have to turn to the problem of the formation of identities.

In the literature on Afrikaner nationalism, the state-centered approach offers the most comprehensive explanation of the formation of Afrikaner ethno-nationalist identity. According to the state-centered approach, it is foremost the actions of the state that shape ethno-nationalist identities. Based on the modernist claim that state shapes nation, what

the state does for those recognized as citizens is the most important defining factor in the formation of identities. This state-centered approach, however, encounters problems when it tries to include values, attitudes and beliefs in the analysis of the formation of ethnic and nationalist identities. That they have changed is usually assumed as a given but we do not entirely get to know what about these beliefs has changed and perhaps most important, how they have evolved in relation to larger political, historical and social developments. The state-centered approach struggles to incorporate the subjective with a historical-political account. To deal with this problem I suggest analyzing narratives of the self. Thereby, we gain better insights how the subjective experience of individuals is related to political, historical and social developments. What insights do we get out of narratives of the self? As we have seen in chapter two on theories of nationalism and ethnicity, constructivist approaches turned to discourse and ideology in the making of nationalism. However, they did not manage to explain how individuals made sense of nationalist discourse. To get better insights into this process and how the environment is interpreted by the individual, I suggest looking closer at the role of individual experiences and life-worlds in order to understand people's motivations to adhere to or to desert nationalism. In other words, the question we want to ask is what do people get out of nationalism? To understand the choices people make, we need to look at the subjective experiences on which people act.

The formation of identities and how people create meaning in their lives reflects the values, ideas, aspirations and ways of life of an epoch. In their personal narratives, individuals give insights into the process of subjectivation. This process is marked by our epoch of late modernity with the following characteristics: individualization, detraditionalization, consumption, risk and globalization. The ideas expressed by Anthony Giddens and Ulrich Beck about late modernity can be gainfully applied to study nationalism and ethnicity. A better understanding about the relationship between late modernity and the formation of identities as well as subjectivization helps to understand the desertion and the decline of Afrikaner nationalism. We need to turn to the *Zeitgeist* of late modernity and analyze how it has shaped identities – narratives of the self allow us to do so.

With this theoretical background in mind, we can turn to the problem of ethnic and national identities. Afrikaner nationalism is an ethno-nationalist movement that has been constructed with the help of the state, as modernist approaches to the study of nationalism claim. The state-centered approach reflects these assumptions. The 'story' of Afrikaner nationalism, outlined in chapter four, shows well how with the help of the state a nation was created and provided for its members. Ethnicity and nationalism were constructed with the state. However, this perspective simplifies how ethnicity is lived. Or, it fails to consider places where identities are shaped that are not directly linked to the state. In narratives of the self, young Afrikaners make reference to the world of work, of leisure and pleasure and reveal how their identities were shaped without being a direct consequence of state action. While government policies, such as affirmative action, are certainly relevant in how young Afrikaners see the world around them (and that influence the formation of their identities), ethnicity is also constructed with these other experiences that originate outside the reach of the state.

Post-national identities, emerging in late modernity, went beyond ethnic and national identities. Young Afrikaner reflect these identities whose emergence led to the desertion of nationalism. Afrikaner organizations, such as the Group of 63, PRAAG and Solidarity that aim at ethnic mobilization in post-apartheid South Africa find it difficult to draft young people into their struggle for ethnic affirmation, as I showed in chapter five. Two reasons explain the absence of such mobilization. With an ethics based on "the luxury of moral choice", young Afrikaners are led to accept sacrifices. Given past privileges and the apartheid injustice based on nationalist mobilization, Afrikaners are reluctant to turn to ethnicity to defend their interests. The intention to do morally right thing indicates values that are removed from ethnic mobilization. Second, an ethnic identity is one of the many identities an individual may have. The plural self of late modernity is constructed with more than one identity. Hence, young Afrikaners cannot be easily mobilized based on ethnicity. While affirmative action and the position of the Afrikaans language in education and public life are of concern, a turn to a new morality and new politics, beyond ethnicity, or rather, a turn away from politics renders sustained ethnic

mobilization among young Afrikaners unlikely. The existence of post-national identities also questions claims for the recognition of Afrikaners as a minority for such a claim seems to insist on a dominant self and a 'thick' conception of ethnic identity.

In the second part of this thesis I study in detail narratives of the self. The larger context of these narratives, and neglected by the state-centered approach, is the emergence of a new social imaginary which affects the formation of identities. I want to suggest that the major thrust of this imaginary is living in an African society. In many ways, Afrikaners themselves deserted apartheid and ethno-nationalism. Everyday life in South Africa was a poor reflection of a strict separation of "races". Among Afrikaners, the apartheid order encountered a crisis of legitimacy. Young Afrikaners, growing up in a beleaguered society, rejected the traditional beliefs that could no longer explain what they saw as their own reality. How to live with "black" people and in an African society is a new, societal project that has been in the making since the dark days of apartheid. What was at the time taboo and dissident has now entered the mainstream – all Afrikaners try now to live in a common society. This emerging imaginary has to be negotiated with the old one. While identities of young Afrikaners are shifting to be more open and being able to live with African-ness and diversity, they are also resisting such change. A discourse of white superiority seems to project little doubt about the inadequacy of "black" people and their culture. Yet, such a racist Othering discourse coexists with enuniciations that indicate a desire to change, to find a way to relate to "black" people as equals. An awareness that diversity is desirable, and not an obstacle to content living is growing. But with a history of apartheid, for many young Afrikaners it is difficult to fully comprehend the implications of living with and appreciate diversity.

Not unlike ethnic identity, "white" identity is best understood as instable, contradictory and contingent. We should however guard against a perspective that claims that the subject has no bounds. In the contrary, the individual is held in place, even his identity is shaped by material structure. While state policy certainly matters in shaping identities as we can see with Black Economic Empowerment and Employment Equity legislation, pushing Afrikaners to more self-employment and less reliance on the state, young

Afrikaners also exert 'the luxury of moral choice', trying to imagine themselves to be African, attempting to establish meaningful relations with Africa and "black" people and turning away from an Afrikaner ethno-nationalist identity. To get along with "black" people, to belong to Africa, is the morally right thing to do. Adherence to this social imaginary is replacing the tradition of Afrikaner nationalism and ethnicity.

With the end of the 'pseudo traditional complex', consumerist identities proliferated, as Hyslop (2000) has shown. These identities went beyond the bounds of a single and dominant ethno-nationalist Afrikaner identity. In late modernity, new identities emerged that could no longer be contained by ethno-nationalist mobilization. Hallmarks of consumer society influence the formation of identities. To be able to choose, even to choose your ethnic identity, is something young Afrikaners value. How much to be ethnic is a matter of choice and is negotiated with other identities – far from single identity, different ways of being Afrikaner and Afrikaans are accepted. Equally important, young Afrikaners have a strong sense of being individuals. The sense of belonging to a group is much less present. The project of self-realization in work and private life emphasizes the individual.

Characteristics of late modernity affect in many ways how the self is lived today. The world of work is an area in which the individual is exposed to risk, such as the risk encountered in any business venture or changing from working for a firm to being self-employed. And yet, it is also the work-place that holds the promise of self-realization. In a society of individuals, pursuing a career is an important choice one makes in life. Living and working in South Africa is interpreted as a test for individual self-worth. Seeking employment is then no longer confined to South Africa. Young Afrikaners have very much a sense of being global citizens. They seek a work experience abroad and to try out how living in another country feels like. Today, as trained professionals, many have the possibility to do so. To live and work abroad is then not primarily to seek refuge from a country deemed lost in a racist gesture of resignation and exile, but it reflects how South Africa has become globalized. What are deemed global standard of living, ethics,

behavior and trends are emulated. As an Afrikaner and an Afrikaans speaker, one is also a citizen of the world, as young musicians attest to.

The final evidence how a consumerist sense of choice is reflected in the lives of young Afrikaners is visible in their attitude to religion. The traditional Afrikaans churches have lost much credibility and young Afrikaners go to different Christian churches, trying out which might suit them. Others have joined New Religious Movements in a break with traditional values of *Afrikanerdom*. At the same time, they also feel that these new religions offer better strategies to cope with the demands of a changing world.

How Afrikaners are trying to live in an African country appears also in their relationship with the apartheid past and the ”black” Other. The two are strongly related as talking about the past brings issues of dealing with redress and reconciliation to the fore. Many want to deny that the past has any relevance for their present lives. In this, they resemble the German post World War Two generation. At the same time, and this is where their narratives are contradictory, they also want to understand “black” people for they do not share a sense of a common historical experience. How to deal with their history, and how to make the past relevant for the present and the future, is a major problem for young Afrikaners today. While a narrative of loss regrets that Afrikaner traditions are no longer relevant, a narrative of the emerging tries to find commonalities with Africa and “black” people.