

# whatholdustogether

**Social cohesion in South Africa**



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**Edited by David Chidester, Phillip Dexter & Wilmot James**



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# Contents

Preface vii

## Introduction 1

*David Chidester, Phillip Dexter and Wilmot James*

## Part I Order 21

- 1 Sovereignty, identity and the prospects for southern Africa's people 23  
*Peter Vale*
- 2 The importance of political tolerance for fostering social cohesion 42  
*Amanda Gouws*
- 3 Cultural justice: the pathway to reconciliation and social cohesion 67  
*Chirevo V Kwenda*

## Part II Production 81

- 4 Labour, globalisation and social cohesion in South Africa 83  
*Tony Ehrenreich*
- 5 The poverty of work and social cohesion in global exports:  
the case of South African fruit 92  
*Stephanie Barrientos and Andriennetta Kritzinger*
- 6 Together and apart: African refugees and immigrants in  
global Cape Town 120  
*Owen Sichone*

## Part III Exchange 141

- 7 Building a new nation: solidarity, democracy and nationhood  
in the age of circulatory capitalism 143  
*Thomas A Koelble*
- 8 Building a better world: using the positive forces in globalisation  
to counteract the negative 173  
*Jan Hofmeyr*

**Part IV Connections 193**

- 9 The family and social cohesion 195  
*Susan C Ziehl*
- 10 Global tourism, marginalised communities and the  
development of Cape Town's City Bowl area 224  
*Sandra Klopper*
- 11 Grounding 'globalisation from below': 'global citizens' in  
local spaces 242  
*Steven Robins*

**Part V Resources 275**

- 12 Human solidarity in postcolonial, Holocaust and  
African-American literature 277  
*Giles Gunn*
- 13 Globalisation, identity and national policy in South Africa 295  
*David Chidester, Adrian Hadland and Sandra Prosalendis*

**Conclusion: social cohesion in South Africa 323**

*David Chidester, Phillip Dexter and Wilmot James*

Contributors 339

Index 348

## *Preface*

This book addresses the crucial question of social cohesion: what holds us together when everything seems to be pulling us apart? Set in the context of a changing South Africa, the book engages this question of social cohesion under difficult globalising conditions. As the chapters demonstrate, globalisation has presented not only obstacles but also opportunities for social cohesion in South Africa. This book explores both.

Following the first democratic election in 1994, South Africa became a new, unified and democratic nation just when nations seemed to be going out of style, when national sovereignty and integrity were being eroded by global market forces beyond any nation's control. In exploring the problem of national identity, coherence and cohesion in a new South Africa, therefore, we are immediately confronted by the effects of globalisation.

In the glow of the South African 'miracle', national identity seemed as easy as one, two, three: South Africa had one flag, two national anthems and three national sporting teams. Of course, national identity has always been more complicated. In his classic essay, 'What is a Nation?', Ernest Renan found that national identity was based on a sense of collective uniformity in the present and continuity with the past. But he also observed that a nation is a collectivity that misunderstands its own history and hates its neighbours. Is that the kind of continuity with the past and uniformity in the present that could form the basis for a national identity in an emerging South African nation?

As we will see in this book, national identity, social cohesion and human coherence are being shaped at the intersection of transnational forces, cross-cutting the local and the global. Certainly, the global market is at play. In the light of government policy, adapting to global market forces, some of the authors might feel a certain nostalgia for a kind of political discourse, as recent as 1999, in which South African President, Thabo Mbeki, launching the African Renaissance, declared, 'We must be at the forefront of the struggle against the god of the market, a superhuman power to which everything

human must bow in a spirit of powerlessness'. Certainly, a few years later, such political discourse, adopting an adversarial position against the 'religion of the market', was not part of the New Economic Partnership for African Development (Nepad) that has been at the forefront of President Mbeki's hopes for a unified, revitalised Africa.

Not only concerned with the global market, this book examines many other globalising forces. Globalisation involves the transnational dynamics of global citizenship, multinational corporations, organised labour, human rights movements, feminist movements, transnational religions, popular culture – a whole range of cross-cutting global forces. At the same time, the authors of this book are concerned with local forms of identity, coherence and cohesion. In some cases, the 'local' assumes new forms of 'cultural citizenship', revitalising indigenous culture in ways that are local, grounded and rooted in place but often the 'local' is shaped by people who are out of place through diaspora, migration or exile. As the chapters of this volume illustrate, globalisation is always experienced in local transactions of social identity, coherence and cohesion.

These are wide ranging questions. To focus our investigation of these questions, we brought together two institutions, the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac), for a conference in August 2002.

The HSRC had recently established a new unit, the Social Cohesion and Integration Research Programme. Dedicated to examining factors that facilitate or inhibit social cohesion, this HSRC unit works with the entire spectrum of human formation, including the arts, sports, religion, history, family, education, media and the social dimensions of science. A variety of human, cultural and social resources are necessarily brought into the mix, providing different focal points for investigating fundamental questions of human life in South Africa.

At the same time, we had a delegation from Nedlac, which has been South Africa's primary institution for facilitating social dialogue among government, business, labour and community. Seeking consensus on social and economic policy, the practice of social dialogue suggests the possibility of broader social agreements about what it means to be South African.

The point of this whole exercise was not to answer the question of what holds us together when everything is pulling us apart, but to explore possible co-operation between Nedlac and the HSRC, identifying areas of strategic co-operation in research projects for the future. Nevertheless, as this book demonstrates, we did get some answers.

Although most of the answers are provided by working academics employed by universities, this book also includes strong statements in chapters, one by a leader in organised labour, the other by a leader in global business, which adopt a direct mode of address that provides a nice contrast to the complexity of academic discourse. Still, without forsaking complexity, even the academic authors in this book have sought to communicate with a wider audience by being clear about what is at stake in social cohesion. The authors are true to their academic disciplines: Political Studies, Sociology, Social Anthropology, Global Studies, Literary Studies, Art History, Religious Studies, Media Studies and Cultural Studies. At the same time, with a remarkable commitment to interdisciplinary exchanges, willing to talk with each other, the authors are primarily interested in making sense. As a result, we have a book, with academic credibility, that is of more than merely academic interest.

For their participation in the conference that led to this book, we thank Gretchen Humphries, Parliamentary Officer of the Federation of Unions of South Africa; Les Kettledas, Deputy Director General, Labour Policy and Labour Market Programmes, Department of Labour; Petronella Linders, Divisional Co-ordinator, Economic Empowerment, South African Federal Council on Disability; Muzi Maziya, Director, Research Policy and Planning, Department of Labour; Khulu Mbongo, President of the South African Youth Council and Overall Convenor for Community in Nedlac; and Borence Moabi of the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce. Deborah Sills and James McNamara, representing the Board of Directors, were part of this project from the beginning. At the HSRC, vital contributions were made by Pam Barron, Jean Whitten and Lynne Wilson of the Social Cohesion and Integration Research Programme and Mthobeli Guma of the Social Aspects of HIV/AIDS and Health Research Programme. In the editorial process, staff of the Institute for Comparative Religion in Southern Africa (ICRSA) – Thomas Alberts, Raffaella Delle Donne, Federico Settler and Judy Tobler – worked through our raw material. The staff at HSRC Press, with special thanks to Garry Rosenberg and Mary Ralphs, transformed that material into this book.

As the beginning rather than the end of our collaboration, this book provides an initial framework for the Social Fabric Initiative, a research partnership of the Social Cohesion and Integration Research Programme of the HSRC, Inyathelo (The South African Institute for Advancement), Nedlac, the Western Cape Provincial Development Council, the University of the Western Cape School of Government, and Mwengo (Mwelekeo wango-NGO Vision: Reflection and Development Centre for Eastern and Southern Africa). As the Social Fabric Initiative develops, we hope to learn more about what holds us together.

David Chidester, Phillip Dexter, Wilmot James  
Cape Town



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# *Introduction*

David Chidester, Phillip Dexter and Wilmot James

This book examines social cohesion under globalising conditions within four contexts in contemporary South Africa – government, labour, business and community. Although the authors come from different academic disciplines and intellectual backgrounds, their chapters can be read as a single, coherent story, even if that story incorporates many voices, about the challenges and opportunities for South African social cohesion in a globalising world.

Briefly, we relate that story. Beginning with an investigation of political order, the book examines the imported, but now pervasive, system of states in southern Africa and locates South Africa within that shifting regional terrain while considering the viability of national sovereignty, the role of tolerance in the constitutional politics of a liberal democracy and the vitality of indigenous forms of cultural politics. Under globalising conditions, the nation-state may have lost some of its force as a locus of social cohesion but new orderings, mixing alien and indigenous modes of coherence, are emerging in southern Africa.

Moving from government to labour, from the world of politics to the world of work, the book critically assesses new relations of production. Although South Africa has enacted progressive legislation protecting the rights of workers, labour rights have been profoundly affected by new developments in the global economy, multinational business and transnational migrations of workers. A case study in the fruit industry shows the impact of changes in the global value chain on the employment, living conditions and well-being of workers. A case study of informal enterprises, such as car parking, hair cutting and street vending, shows the prominent role of African migrants, refugees and exiles in these emerging service industries. Like the demise of the state in the political realm, the end of production as a significant factor in the global economy may have been exaggerated. Labour value, as these chapters suggest, remains crucial, even if the relations, modes and forces of production have been changing.

The global economy, for better or worse, has been the focus of celebration and opposition. Although most analysts have distinguished between economic and cultural globalisation, the chapters in this book dealing with the global economy are distinguished by their efforts to link economic processes with cultural factors in assessing globalisation. In turning to the economy, finance and business, this book juxtaposes two assessments of the globalising world of economic exchange. On the one hand, global capital, in its circulatory, speculative mode, appears as corrosive of distinctively local, cultural values. On the other hand, global business, in its entrepreneurial efforts to maximise customer satisfaction, requires new forms of cross-cultural communication and mutual recognition that valorise diverse cultural values. Not all readers, and certainly not all of the authors, will agree with this suggestion that economic globalisation is generally destructive of cultural values when it appears as speculative financial investments in global markets, but enhances cultural values when it takes the form of entrepreneurial, cross-cultural business ventures. Still, the attempt to weave together economic and cultural globalisations is important for any assessment of the impact of globalising forces on social cohesion in South Africa.

Coming home to local connections, the book considers social cohesion within the family, the urban street cultures and new social movements within South Africa. Arguably, the family, however constituted, is the primary locus of social cohesion. Over the past fifty years, the viability (and desirability) of the 'conventional' nuclear family has been the subject of considerable debate in Europe and North America. In South Africa, the intimate community of the family remains relatively unexplored territory in the social sciences. Extended and stretched, the family seems to have shown remarkable resilience, which is being severely tested, however, by the global AIDS pandemic.

Taking to the streets, urban youth, with distinctive styles of music, poetry and visual arts, as well as the urban homeless, who have developed various entrepreneurial enterprises in the city, have been subject to a kind of 'urban cleansing' in the interests of global tourism. Making the city safe, efficient and 'beautiful' for global tourists, urban policy has further marginalised the most marginalised members of society. New forms of 'globalisation from below', however, have been evident in the emergence of new social movements, with international links and exchanges, which have reversed the old saying, 'Think

globally, act locally', by negotiating local issues of empowerment housing, and social services by acting in global collaborations.

In all of these intersections of the global and the local, resources are at stake, not merely material resources, but also the human resources of imagination, creativity and identity. As anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has proposed, globalisation has accelerated the pace and scope of transnational movements of money, technology and people, but it has also generated new images of human possibility and new ideals of human solidarity (Appadurai 1996: 27–47). Moving beyond the simple assertion of human solidarity based on the assumption that all people share a common, underlying humanity, this book situates the symbolic, cultural and social resources for negotiating human identity, individually and collectively, within a changing South Africa and in a globalising world. Although the South African 'miracle' of the 1990s, with its negotiated revolution against apartheid, has been held up as a model for the world, the ordeals of imagination undergone by those who have survived colonialism, genocide or slavery can also inform our understanding of human solidarity under impossible conditions. In the effort to forge a post-apartheid national unity, the South African government is faced with the challenge of imagining new forms of social cohesion, with both local roots and global extensions, which engage a diversity of social identities, cultural heritages and human aspirations.

In recent analysis, human, cultural and social resources have been captured by the term, 'social capital', the resources accumulated in social networks, informed by trust, which enable practices of reciprocity and mutual support. Several authors of this book use (and criticise) the notion of social capital. In a concluding chapter, we will collect these reflections in an assessment of social capital as an indicator of social cohesion in South Africa. Even in a globalising world, not all capital, especially not all of the many forms of social capital, has necessarily come from elsewhere or gone off shore. Still, we need to ask: how does social capital actually work in South Africa in specific local situations and under globalising conditions?

### *Order*

In the first section of this book, the authors deal broadly with issues of governance, locating social cohesion, in the first instance, in the political order of power relations.

As political scientist, Peter Vale, shows in his chapter on the 'sovereignty' of states in southern Africa, the modern state, built on the European model of the Treaty of Westphalia of 1648, a model which is supposedly in decline within a globalising world, is only in its infancy in southern Africa, although these states certainly had a difficult conception, gestation and birth in the region. In the formula provided by the great sociologist, Max Weber, the modern state is the organised exercise of legitimate force, coercion and violence over a territory. Sovereignty, in this formulation, raises crucial questions about how these assumptions about territory, force and legitimacy, so integral to the modern state, have actually operated in southern Africa. In tracing a genealogy of state formation, Peter Vale takes us quickly, but effectively, back through colonial, imperial, apartheid and Cold-War phases in what might be regarded as a pre-history of the state in southern Africa. In all of these phases, the territory of states, or proto-states, has been determined by ongoing projects in creating and maintaining boundaries, demarcating insiders and outsiders, while investing the often violent reinforcement of those boundaries with an aura of legitimacy, always echoing the nineteenth-century colonial slogan, 'Christianity, civilisation and commerce', in ways that remain profoundly unconvincing. The state's crisis of legitimacy, therefore, cannot merely be attributed to new global forces beyond national control. In southern Africa, the legitimacy of the state has always been suspect.

In a number of the chapters in this volume, authors will invoke the state as a crucial actor in establishing the conditions necessary for social cohesion in South Africa. Within the framework provided by one of the most progressive constitutions in the world, the South African state must provide civic education, ensure workers' rights, facilitate international business and provide social services against the advice of globalising forces variously identified as the neo-liberal agenda, the World Bank, or the Washington Consensus. As Peter Vale suggests, however, the state in southern Africa is not an obvious agent for social cohesion. In the genealogy of the region, southern African states, with their arbitrary boundaries, entrenched coercion and tenuous legitimacy, provide no solid ground. Instead of social cohesion, insecurity and instability, fear and anxiety, seem to be the legacy of the modern state in southern Africa. Even a new South Africa, negotiated out of the regional destabilisation practised by the apartheid regime, has to bear that legacy, especially when it is expected to police the region. While calling the state into

question, Peter Vale also points to more fluid, boundary-crossing formations, such as African-initiated churches, which might provide different grounds for understanding regional relations, networks and exchanges that are not contained by the territorial boundaries, organised coercion or claims to legitimacy exercised by the various states in southern Africa.

Assuming the legitimacy of the South African state, which is sanctioned by democratic elections and constitutional protections, the free participation of citizens in this constitutional democracy requires a public sphere characterised by tolerance of different political positions. Political scientist, Amanda Gouws, who has conducted extensive empirical research on tolerance in South Africa, highlights the importance of tolerance for social cohesion. In a minimalist definition, such as that proposed by the ethicist David Little, tolerance appears when people encounter beliefs and practices they find abhorrent but refrain from violence (Little 2001: 9). Certainly, this minimalist notion of tolerance, which refuses to resort to violence, force or coercion in relation to objectionable political alternatives, must be a basic condition for democratic political participation. However, as Amanda Gouws shows, this simple requirement of democracy becomes difficult for people to sustain when they perceive their opponents not only as different but also as threatening. Political intolerance, in this sense, is not merely a failure to allow for difference; it is a defensive reaction to real or perceived dangers.

In addition to providing documentation of her empirical research into political tolerance in South Africa, Amanda Gouws charts a course for the difficult, but necessary, work of dealing with intolerance in a democratic society. Considering both local and comparative findings, she reports that controlled interventions have been more successful in moving people from tolerance to intolerance than from intolerance to tolerance. Similarly discouraging, educational programmes designed to foster tolerance have often been counterproductive, resulting in reinforced stereotypes, intensified anxieties, and increased intolerance of political, cultural and religious difference. Nevertheless, since tolerance is an essential ingredient for social cohesion in a democratic society, Amanda Gouws confronts South African educators with the enormous challenge which has been taken up, sometimes successfully, by educators elsewhere, of developing new forms of civic education that actually enable learners to be tolerant of difference.

This minimal definition of tolerance, of course, is not sufficiently rich to weave together a cohesive social fabric. A more profound form of tolerance resides in the capacity to develop respect, understanding and mutual recognition of others. In his examination of cultural justice, historian of religions, Chirevo Kwenda, takes us from tolerance to respect in the cultural politics of southern Africa. Defining culture in simple, yet potent terms, as 'that which is taken for granted', a 'comfort zone' of everyday, ordinary ways of living, Kwenda develops an important insight: the cohesion of the social order in southern Africa depends not upon state sovereignty, liberal democracy, the advance of modernity or the global economy, but upon millions of African people being willing to sacrifice what they take for granted, bearing the uncomfortable burden of speaking and acting in unfamiliar cultural idioms within all of the areas of everyday life. In this analysis, Africans are not passive victims of cultural imperialism, although they have certainly been subject to coercive interventions, but active agents in negotiating unfamiliar, strange and alien cultural terrain. The entire system would collapse, Kwenda suggests, if Africans were not willing to suspend 'that which is taken for granted' and bear the burden of unfamiliar cultural formations. Cultural justice, according to Chirevo Kwenda, requires, at a minimum, that this burden of the unfamiliar needs to be shared more equitably by people from different cultural backgrounds across the society. South African national language policy, which in principle recognises eleven official languages, might be a step in this direction. However, Kwenda points to a range of indigenous cultural resources that have been rendered 'unfamiliar' in South African politics, political discourse and public institutions, but might be revitalised as effective cultural media of communication, recognition and reconciliation. 'Praise therapy', in Kwenda's terms, is an indigenous cultural politics. As a ritualised rhetoric of affirmation, but also of criticism, indigenous African praise singing operates in the family, the community, the polity and even in relations with the natural environment. As therapy, praise singing seeks social healing, in this respect, recalling one of the objectives of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Where the TRC collected narratives of pain, however, the cultural politics of praise, as developed by Chirevo Kwenda, might more directly address the pain of people alienated by the 'unfamiliar' within the economic, social and political order of South Africa.

## *Production*

In the second section, the book turns to considerations of labour, working conditions and relations of production in South Africa under changing global conditions. Here also pain is evident, pain that is reflected in rising numbers of unemployed, increasing poverty and declining standards of living for working families. Statistics, of course, are not the whole story, since, as Tony Ehrenreich observes, 'statistics do not bleed. Working families do'. Nevertheless, through empirical and ethnographic research, the chapters in this section indicate important features of the world of work in a globalising South Africa.

As General Secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) in the Western Cape, Tony Ehrenreich has been actively involved in advancing the rights of workers. Accordingly, his chapter in this book is a political intervention in current debates over labour rights and working conditions. South African labour legislation, he recognises, has made enormous strides in protecting the rights of workers. South African law has entrenched workers' rights as basic human rights. Putting the matter bluntly, however, Ehrenreich observes that labour rights mean very little to people without jobs. Globalisation, as experienced by workers in South Africa, has entailed the harsh effects of shedding jobs in compliance with 'global' economic policies generated by the World Bank, the IMF and other agents of the 'neo-liberal agenda'. Accordingly, Ehrenreich's reading of the impact of globalisation on South Africa, with special attention to its effects on labour, is critical.

While staking out Cosatu's position in the debate over the government's economic policy, Ehrenreich challenges the assumptions behind the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) and Nepad, which he regards as perpetuating the failed formula of the neo-liberal agenda, and suggests a number of important points for any consideration of social cohesion in a globalising South Africa. First, although globalisation has undermined the sovereignty of the state, the state is necessary to counteract the corrosive effects of globalisation. Only the state, in his view, has the power and the capacity to protect South Africa's people from the appropriation, exploitation and further entrenchment of inequality attending the advance of globalisation. While affirming a fundamental 'revolution of resources' as a long-term goal for South Africa, Ehrenreich points to a number of immediate measures – social expenditure, social security grants and social wages – in which the

state could be an essential force in protecting South African workers. Second, while focusing on labour, Ehrenreich insists that the interest of workers is central to social cohesion. In many societies, he notes, the inequities of poverty and wealth in South Africa could only be expected to result in social conflict and even chaos. Remarkably, this has not been the case in South Africa. Still, we cannot take this situation for granted. Again, emphasising the social, Tony Ehrenreich identifies social dialogue, social responsibility and the cultivation of social values as urgent priorities for South Africa.

From the perspective of labour, the social dialogue about globalisation is only beginning in South Africa. Empirical research, from sociology and social anthropology, is obviously necessary for informing that social dialogue. In reporting on their ongoing research on labour in the South African fruit industry, Stephanie Barrientos and Andriennetta Kritzingler provide detailed, compelling evidence of the effects of globalisation on the employment, working conditions, material well-being and sense of social cohesion of workers. Incorporated within the 'global value chain' of this export market, workers in the fruit industry have been profoundly reorganised by globalisation. In the interests of quality and international standards, some workers have been elevated, while other workers – in the interests of rationalisation of costs – have been marginalised as occasional, seasonal and temporary, essentially being recast as migrant labourers in their own country. As a result, a 'hierarchy of employment' has emerged, combining features of an earlier farm labour system with new demands of global markets, which has had profound effects on the terms and conditions in which farm workers experience social cohesion.

In meticulous, revealing detail, Barrientos and Kritzingler document the impact of the global fruit market on the working conditions of labourers in the fruit industry in the Western Cape. In different ways, workers on the farm or in the packhouse, in residence or in transit, experience the effects of the 'global value chain' in new ways as defining their situations. With respect to social cohesion, these global effects have altered the conditions within which workers might develop a sense of belonging within the world of work. For all of its structural problems, the notion of the 'farm as family' persists as a frame of reference for belonging in the fruit industry, inscribing a distinction between 'family' and 'strangers'. Under globalising conditions, however, with the increase of migrant, temporary or 'flexible' labour, the number of strangers, and the potential for estrangement in the workplace, has only

increased in ways that undermine social cohesion. This dialectic of family and strangers, as the research of Barrientos and Kritzingler demonstrates, is crucial for our understanding of social cohesion in the world of work.

Foreigners, of course, enter South Africa as strangers. Migrants, refugees, exiles and other foreigners from the rest of Africa have increasingly been moving into South African cities. In standard theories of globalisation, which stress the force of 'Westernisation' in a globalising world, we often forget the simultaneous processes of 'Easternisation' and 'Africanisation' that are also going on in the transnational movement of people, economic activity and cultural practices all over the world. Raising this theoretical problem, Owen Sichone considers the work of African migrants in Cape Town in the emerging service industries of car parking, hair cutting and street vending. Based on a preliminary ethnographic survey of these fluid and shifting urban industries, Sichone indicates some of the ways in which these recent immigrants find distinctive local niches while maintaining transnational networks. From Congolese car guards to Somali cigarette dealers, these 'foreign natives' have become an integral part of urban economic activity in 'global' Cape Town in South Africa.

Xenophobia, as Owen Sichone notes, has recently intensified under these globalising conditions. South Africans, as Africans, engage other Africans through a veil of stereotypes but also with situational anxieties about foreigners taking their jobs or stealing their potential sexual partners. Xenophobia, however, as Sichone suggests, operates in counterpoint to a Xenophilia, an idealisation of the foreigner, particularly in the case of some women, who perceive foreign men as being, potentially, less abusive and more generous than local men. Although harsh experience has not necessarily born out this assumption, the ethnographic profile outlined by Owen Sichone suggests that the new service industries provided by foreign Africans are often sustained by local sexual, marriage and family relations. In this respect, once again, we are reminded that the world of work, even the displaced world of immigrant, informal labour, depends upon social networks that operate, like the intimacy of a family, on the basis of trust.

### *Exchange*

The question of trust, as we have noted, has been prominent in recent analysis of social cohesion. Under the term, 'social capital', analysts have tried to

capture the resources that people accumulate within the networks, fabric, or cohesion of social relations. In the section on economic exchange, two chapters of this book directly address this fundamental question of trust from a South African perspective in the global economy.

What is the global economy? During 1998, two international leaders, one from the United States, the other from Cuba, came to South Africa to deal with this question. In their speeches before the South African Parliament, Bill Clinton and Fidel Castro reminded us that the ongoing exchanges of a globalising world continue to be represented in strikingly different ways. According to President Clinton in his address of 26 March 1998, the United States and South Africa share a common purpose, which he traced back to 'the principles that are enshrined in our [US] Constitution', and a common future leading 'out of the darkness and into the glorious light'. Situating international relations between the US and South Africa within the narrative structure framed by that inspiring past and bright future, Clinton employed a single recurring metaphor – the partnership – to represent the current realities of the global economy. 'As the new South Africa emerges,' Clinton said, 'we seek a genuine partnership based on mutual respect and mutual reward.' As partners, the two countries would not always agree about everything, he advised, since disagreements even arise in the most intimate 'family partnerships'. Nevertheless, with 'African partners', Clinton proposed, the US and South Africa can 'build together new partnerships', that will benefit everyone in a global economy, based on mutual recognition and reciprocity. According to President Clinton, therefore, the global economy in which the US and South Africa operated should be understood as a partnership.<sup>1</sup>

By contrast, when Fidel Castro addressed the South African Parliament on 4 September 1998, he employed a different metaphor – the casino – to represent the reality of the global economy. The world, according to Castro, 'has become an enormous gambling house'. With \$1.5 trillion at play in world markets every day, Castro observed, the global casino is a confidence game underwritten by the 'eternal deceit' of the international financial, banking and trade arrangements through which 'money has become a fiction'. Based on deception and illusion, like an alchemist's dream of turning paper into gold, the global gambling house has stripped values of any real material basis. Like any casino, this global game is rigged so that only the house wins. 'Sooner or later,' Castro noted, 'the world will have to pay the price.'<sup>2</sup>

So what is the global economy, a partnership or a casino? At the risk of oversimplifying their contributions, the authors of the chapters in this section take opposing sides on this question. The political scientist Thomas Koelble advances a detailed, situated critique of 'social capital' in a South African economy subject to the fortunes and misfortunes of the 'circulatory capitalism' that runs the global casino of financial speculation. The global entrepreneur, with a background in the study of religion, the humanities and the social sciences, Jan Hofmeyr, while recognising the corrosive effects of globalisation, argues that global business raises new possibilities for intercultural communication, understanding and even partnership in making the world a better, happier place.

In Thomas Koelble's insightful, incisive analysis, the challenge of social cohesion, in a global era of speculative, circulatory or 'casino' capitalism, is placed in striking relief. With attention to local detail within South Africa, Koelble assesses the usefulness of two theoretical frameworks for understanding the South African situation. On the one hand, Koelble focuses on the analysis of 'social capital' developed by Robert Putnam, whose work has gained a certain degree of popularity in social analysis, in which he seeks to identify social cohesion in those voluntary associations operating between the coercion of the state and the demands of the market in which people freely participate in civil society (Putnam 1993). Although we will return to the question of social capital in the conclusion to this book, we should note that Thomas Koelble advances a critique, in principle, of any formulation of social cohesion that would factor out the state or the economy from civil society. On the other hand, the theoretical framework for participatory democracy provided by Alain Touraine, which is worked out in his book, *Can We Live Together?*, suggests, for Koelble, a theory of democracy, even in a globalising world, in which people are called upon to struggle with the tensions – enforced by states, enforced by markets – between the reality of social difference and the democratic aspirations for social equality (Touraine 2000).

In the context of a transitional South Africa, with its historical legacy of inequality, separation and segregation on the basis of race, any mediation between social difference and social equality would be welcomed. Clearly, such mediation is no easy task. Still, these chapters contribute to clarifying the challenge. Thomas Koelble argues that global 'casino' capitalism provides no solution since it is, essentially, an extension of the problem of entrenched

inequality, an endemic consequence of globalisation that other critics have called 'global apartheid'. Jan Hofmeyr, however, insists that some aspects of globalisation, especially in international business, can lead to new ways of being, acting and doing business in the world that actually advance human happiness.

Recognising the corrosive effects of 'casino' capitalism, Hofmeyr traces a compelling outline of the possibilities of 'partnership' in doing business, even in doing global capitalist business, by taking seriously the human dynamics of intercultural relations. Doing global business, according to Hofmeyr, demands discipline, accountability and public scrutiny but it also requires cultivating virtues of 'business care' in dealing with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the conduct of international business, something as basic as good manners is essential for creating a context of trust in business dealings. Underlying this respect for diversity, Hofmeyr argues, must be the recognition of a shared, common humanity which consists of basic human needs, such as food, comfort, friendship, mating and meaningful work that are tapped by multinational business. As Hofmeyr observes, global business activity reveals our common humanity in, and through, the processes of developing respect for cultural diversity. While he is acutely aware of the economic and cultural pain inflicted by globalisation, Jan Hofmeyr argues that the intercultural contacts, relations and exchanges are also providing unprecedented opportunities for increasing human happiness.<sup>3</sup>

### ***Connections***

Classical social analysis has distinguished between two basic modes of social cohesion: one based on kinship, the other based on contract. These two ways of achieving social cohesion have been given various designations – mechanical solidarity versus organic solidarity; ascribed identity versus achieved identity; or the face-to-face relations of *Gemeinschaft* versus the abstract, impersonal and negotiated relations of *Gesellschaft*. But all of these contrasts seem to be based on distinguishing between the kinds of social connections that are apparently 'given' in relations of kinship but necessarily negotiated, contested, agreed and achieved in contractual relations. As Thomas Koelble remarks, however, these two options, the 'mechanical' based on perceived similarities and the 'organic' based on the co-ordination of differences, appear in

any network of social relations. Furthermore, as we will see in the chapters in this section, kinship can be negotiated and contracts, whether underwritten by international human rights instruments or the international tourist industry, can appear as if they are simply 'given' as unavoidable facts about how the world works.

The family, it might be argued, is the most intimate, immediate context for social cohesion. Several authors in this book touch on important features of South African family life. As Chirevo Kwenda observes, indigenous African rituals of conception, praising family lineages, reinforce a sense of the family as a network of inclusion that embraces ancestors, the living and the unborn. In their chapters, Tony Ehrenreich emphasises the struggles of working families, while Owen Sichone indicates the importance of marriage and family for the survival of new immigrants in South Africa.

In her extended discussion of the family and social cohesion in South Africa, sociologist Susan Ziehl reviews the longstanding controversy over the meaning of the family in social analysis. Over the past fifty years, as Ziehl recounts, the family has variously been understood as the stable locus for primary socialisation, the dysfunctional domain of repression, whether psychological or patriarchal, and the threatened, embattled site of basic values, 'family values', necessary for keeping societal crisis at bay. All of these accounts of the family, as Ziehl notes, involve moral judgements, since they presume some normative version of what 'the family' ought to be. These arguments about the state of the family have clearly been informed by historical formations of domesticity, with their distinctive organisation, architecture and normativity, which emerged in Europe. What is the state of the family in South Africa? According to Susan Ziehl, empirical research on South African family demographics is extremely limited, although some highly suggestive work has been done by social anthropologists. Nevertheless, based on her research, Ziehl is able to compare family patterns in South Africa with data from the US and the UK, finding, as might be expected, that the model of the extended family is much more prevalent in South Africa. The implications of this finding for housing policy, health services, the constitutional recognition of 'alternative' family systems, as found in Muslim and traditional African personal law, and a host of other public concerns, await further investigation. As Susan Ziehl argues, however, basic demographic data about family patterns in South Africa will be crucial to these deliberations.

Documenting and illustrating the ongoing negotiations over cultural identity in the urban space of Cape Town, art historian and cultural analyst, Sandra Klopper, highlights the ongoing tension in the life of the city between local forms of human survival, human expression, and even human flourishing and the demands of the global economy. More specifically, she identifies global tourism, with its almost apocalyptic, cargo-cult promise of redemption for the South African economy, as the catalyst for a coalition of business and government in cleaning up the streets. Dirt, as the anthropologist, Mary Douglas, taught us, is 'matter out of place', a thoroughly contextual, culturally negotiated engagement with the organisation of things (1966). In Cape Town, what registers as 'dirt', as 'matter out of place', in the global tourist industry?

As Sandra Klopper shows, in evocative detail, some of the most creative, innovative forces in the city are rendered as nothing more than 'dirt', destined for a kind of 'urban cleansing', within this urban aesthetics of business, municipal government and global tourism. Urban youth, developing vibrant musical and visual art forms, try to find a place in the city. Urban homeless, engaged in various enterprises, from recycling to selling, try to find a place in the city. Both the youth and the homeless of the city of Cape Town have been inspired by and have even been in communication with people similarly positioned in urban environments elsewhere in the world. As a result, their local marginalisation, resonating with these international connections, has a global flavour. For the local municipal and business interests of the city, however, globalisation primarily signifies the economic opportunities promised by global tourism. As Klopper shows, economic globalisation, in this respect, also bears a strong aesthetic, cultural and, ultimately, human significance. In the globalising interests of efficiency and effectiveness, but also in conformity to global standards of 'beauty', which are largely derived from the global 'Disneyisation' of the aesthetic imagination, Cape Town prepares for tourists by erasing the traces of the youth, the homeless and other social 'dirt' from the city.<sup>4</sup> In the analysis provided by Sandra Klopper, we enter an aesthetic politics, reverberating with basic human questions of the good, the true and the beautiful that must be confronted in any negotiations over social cohesion in the city.

In the Western Cape, the ongoing, contested negotiations over human and civil rights are not solely controlled by the owners of urban property or rural land. In his insightful analysis of new social movements among the homeless, the landless and the marginalised in South Africa, social anthropologist,

Steven Robins, demonstrates that negotiating power can be exercised through the 'social capital' accumulated by local networks that cultivate global connections. New social movements, such as the South African Homeless Peoples Federation (SAHPF), with over 100,000 members – mostly black, mostly women – have become invested with a certain measure of socially capitalised power that is being deployed at the intersection of local interests and global exchanges. Locally, the SAHPF is supported by a Cape Town non-governmental organisation, People's Dialogue, which seeks to advance the claims of the homeless and the landless in the Western Cape. Globally, the SAHPF is involved in ongoing interchanges with Slum Dwellers International, a global network of poor people's organisations in the Southern hemisphere that connects the Cape federation with affiliates in fourteen countries. As Steven Robins unfolds these connections, we see new possibilities for a 'globalisation from below' that is emerging in struggles against the poverty, disenfranchisement and marginalisation often associated with globalisation.

These local, global connections, like any political struggle, involve contradictions. Steven Robins carefully explores the tensions arising in the exchanges among the global network of Slum Dwellers International, the non-governmental organisation of People's Dialogue and the community-based organisation of the South African Homeless Peoples Federation. Adopting many of the tactics of the global network, such as skills development, self-enumeration and collective demonstration, members of the federation are encouraged by the local NGO to focus on the process rather than the product. However, as Robins notes, when they achieve the product, getting a home, many members have deserted the process and left the federation. Nevertheless, as Steven Robins recounts, people involved in this process of mediation between local struggles and global networks have gained profound insights, perhaps even powerful knowledge, by moving back and forth between the local and the global.

### *Resources*

In the final section of this book, the authors focus on resources for social cohesion – the resources of human imagination, government policy and social capital. What resources do we have in South Africa, given our globalising situation, but also given our specific history, for developing social cohesion?

Giles Gunn, a professor of both English literature and global and international studies, recovers the imaginative resources of postcolonial, Holocaust, and African-American literature to explore new terms for understanding human solidarity. Disagreeing with Jan Hofmeyr on this point, Gunn argues that we cannot simply assume solidarity on the basis of a common humanity. Highlighting difference, he rejects proposals for forming solidarity on the basis of either excluding difference, as in the expulsion of a scapegoat, or celebrating difference, as in Michael Ignatieff's proposal that being different is precisely what human beings have in common. Instead of categorically rejecting or affirming difference, Gunn proposes a more situated, relational definition of solidarity, following Kenneth Burke, as 'our sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy' (cited in Hyman 1995: 380). This different kind of engagement with difference, which is located in relations of conflict, but transformed into recognition of kinship, provides a more profound way of negotiating solidarity.

This sense of kinship with the enemy, as Giles Gunn shows, has been forged in the experience of people who have undergone colonialism, genocide and slavery to emerge with new understandings of humanity. As reflected in imaginative literature, a sense of self takes shape. In colonial situations, this process can result in a recognition of the 'other' as what Ashis Nandy called, with reference to British India, the 'intimate enemy' (1983). Aware of the power dynamics of conquest, colonisation and oppression, we can still recognise the complex ways in which 'self' and 'other' have been mutually constituted. As a result, new identities – hybrid, creolised – have emerged under colonial conditions, a hybridisation, creolisation and even kinship in which both colonisers and colonised have been formed.<sup>5</sup> Turning to the Holocaust or Shoah, where perpetrators and victims initially appear to have no kinship, we see creative efforts by novelists, poets and artists to affirm humanity in the face of an enemy intent on their extinction. Refusing to dehumanise the dehumanisers, to demonise the demonisers, as in the case of Primo Levi, marked a courageous, creative intervention in recovering a sense of humanity in kinship with an enemy committed to his destruction. Under the slave system in the United States, African Americans developed creative resources for resisting dehumanisation while also refusing to demonise their oppressors.

Examples of this sense of kinship with the enemy can certainly be found in the recent history of South African political struggle. For example, the president

of the ANC in exile, OR Tambo, we might recall, insisted on affirming the humanity of oppressors, as a moral position, refusing to dehumanise the architects, agents and enforcers of the apartheid system that was designed for the dehumanisation of the majority of people of South Africa. This sense of kinship with the enemy was also evident in the negotiated settlement, the democratic elections and the process of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. None of these achievements, following the analysis provided by Giles Gunn, can be regarded as a product of our 'common humanity', let alone as a 'miracle' of divine intervention, because kinship with the enemy was fought out in oppressive, dehumanising relations in ways that recall other creative affirmations of humanity within the violent histories of colonialism, genocide and slavery. Accordingly, the imaginative resources of postcolonial, Holocaust and African-American literature, as Giles Gunn shows, can also be resources for shaping our understanding of human solidarity in South Africa.

Government policy in South Africa, of course, is concerned with a different kind of allocation of resources. Still, the government has to wrestle with the fundamental question of social cohesion in promoting national unity, dealing with diverse social identities, and preserving the multiple cultural heritages of the people of South Africa. In their review of national policy in these areas, David Chidester, Adrian Hadland and Sandra Prosalendis identify important achievements, but also the persisting challenges, in the government's pursuit of social cohesion in a changing, globalising South Africa.

Setting out to promote national unity, government policy has largely succeeded in fostering a sense of being 'proudly South African', to invoke an important advertising initiative, among an increasing percentage of the population. This sense of collective identity, however, can only be very thin if it does not also incorporate the cultural, linguistic, religious and other human resources of South African people. While attending to local heritage, legacy and diversity, national policy has also been forced to engage global forces. For example, even within the framework of one of the world's most progressive constitutions, a sense of South African citizenship is being altered by new developments in global citizenship, cultural citizenship and other modes of multiple, multi-layered citizenship. Even within an economic policy committed to growth and development, people rely upon different forms of social capital, embedded in cultural, linguistic and religious networks, which often have transnational, global linkages in order to survive under often impossible

conditions in South Africa. Paying attention to these exchanges between the local and global, Chidester, Hadland and Prosalendis conclude with a set of recommendations for national policy that will cultivate the resources of both unity and diversity in South Africa.

Resources for social cohesion, under globalising conditions, have been thoroughly transformed by the global market. The human resources of language, culture and religion, the human relations of family, neighbourhood, voluntary associations and civil society, have all been rendered, under this globalising regime, as forms of social capital. After exploring in greater depth and detail important aspects of social cohesion in political order, labour production, economic exchange and community formations, we return to this question of social capital in the conclusion.

### Notes

- 1 Bill Clinton, 'Speech to Parliament by President Bill Clinton of the United States of America, Cape Town, 26 March 1998' <<http://www.polity.org.za/govdocs/speeches/foreign/sp0326-98.html>>.
- 2 Fidel Castro, 'Speech Delivered at the South African Parliament, Capetown, South Africa, September 4, 1998' <http://www.nnc.cubaweb.cu/discur/ingles/4sept98.htm>>.
- 3 For a more critical reading of global business, focusing on Americans doing business in South Africa, see Applbaum (2000).
- 4 On 'Disneyization', see Bryman (1999).
- 5 On the notion of creolisation in recent South African cultural studies, see the Introduction to Nuttall & Michael (2000).

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# *Part I: Order*

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# 1 *Sovereignty, identity and the prospects for southern Africa's people*

Peter Vale

Take the life-lie away from the average man and straight away you take away his happiness. (Henrik Ibsen, *The Wild Duck*, Act 5)

On a quick reading, this chapter seems preoccupied with challenging statist representations of the southern African region. This is certainly one of three pedagogic goals: any elementary understanding of the region suggests that state-centred renditions of southern Africa, and its ways, leave much to be desired. As a result, the mismatch between events on the ground, and the search for suitable ways to frame them, seems destined to dog southern African studies well into the new millennium unless a theoretical breakthrough helps to shift understandings of the region. A closer reading of this text, however, reveals another face: emancipation – this is the second goal. Using the theory/practice interface that the occasion of this chapter offers, the established tradition of sovereignty as it is practised in the region is placed under close interrogation. The purpose is plain: emancipation, I will show, lies not in a single rendition of the region's social world but in multiple interpretations. As the argument unfolds, I have periodically drawn attention to the practice of International Relations – note the capital letters – in both South and southern Africa. This, the third goal, aims to suggest that politics at this conceptual level has reinforced statist interpretations, rather than opened up the possibilities of embracing multiple readings of the region.

Orthodox framings of southern Africa turn on the enabling concept of sovereignty – the right to exert authority within a geographical space – to put it as Max Weber did: within this space, a legitimate authority exercises the right to violence. The policy derivatives of this have been at the root of great trauma both for the region's states and its peoples. For the former, the mantra 'ending colonialism and apartheid' was once thought integral to the national interest of each of South Africa's neighbours. With apartheid ended, however, how are

these same states to defend their respective 'national interests' in a region that is entirely dominated by South Africa? Their search for policy answers has been complicated by events on the ground: faltering economic performance, drought and flooding and crises within their national borders, of which the problems in Zimbabwe is one example. But orthodox framings have also rendered the region's people unsafe so that from the mid-1970s until February 1990, these rationalised apartheid's export of violence – the policy of destabilisation – deep into the region under the guise of the Cold War and forward-defence. The power of sovereignty, in both its theory and practice, is therefore the central issue of this chapter. Put in a form that mimics the epigraph, the chapter seeks to explain why sovereignty exercises a life-lie over the idea of southern Africa and its derived system of states.

Before setting out, let me offer some scattered and quite primitive thoughts on ontology.<sup>1</sup> The notion that there is an 'objective' entity, a distinctive structure, recognisable by realists and anti-realists alike, is problematic. If by 'ontology' we mean what Aristotle meant – the study of Being *qua* Being – then we mean a thing, or structure, that was actualised *via* the workings of formal, material, efficient and final causes. If we do mean this, then we must recognise that the ontological structure of which we speak, when we speak of southern Africa, is radically unstable. Because colonial history and colonising cartographers have given the notion of southern Africa a sovereign form of sorts – and must thus number among its formal causes – this history and this cartography lives under the continual threat of subversion by the uncovering of its explanatory and policy roots. The conceptual point is plain: the ontology of southern Africa is rendered unstable by critical questioning.

### *The orthodoxy*

The idea that states are at the heart of southern Africa seems to have a long and honourable lineage, which is legitimised through time and sanctioned by tradition. But is this so? Or has this thinking, like much thinking about the social, been haphazard, incidental and mostly flimsy? There is more than a little conceptual game at play here – how we know and explain southern African society, as destabilisation attested, has produced deadly serious outcomes.

Appreciating a ready association between violence and explanation reinforces a divide between problem-solving theory and critical theory. The latter asks

questions, which lie way beyond the fetish for policy answers, which trouble problem-solving theorists. These are questions like: why is migration the regional norm? Why does the texture of regional history appear to change before our eyes? Why has apartheid become a metaphor for new regional order? Basil Davidson's idea of 'the curse of the nation state' fingers the central thread of the argument (1992). All efforts to both understand and engineer social relations in southern Africa turn on the notion that borders are fixed – permanent entities that both demarcate and determine the points of entry to, and exit from, what Larry Bowman first called the 'southern African state system' (1968). This fetish for boundaries and their maintenance has been the only lasting feature of recent southern African politics. Why is this so?

The answer to the question lies in understanding the place of sovereignty in the 'creation' of southern Africa, both the old and the new. What I now propose to do is set down some artefacts on sovereignty in southern Africa in the form of a rough genealogy. Using historical sociology as a point of methodological entry, my illustrative purpose is to show how southern Africa got from elementary forms of modern state creation to the maintenance of South Africa's sovereign power in the post-apartheid era. The first genealogical fragment is drawn from David Chidester who argues:

On southern African frontiers, comparative religion was a discourse and practice that produced knowledge about religion and religions, and thereby reconfigured knowledge about the human, within the power relations of specific colonial situations. For European travelers, missionaries, settlers and colonial agents, who all operated, at one time or another, as comparative religionists, this human science was a powerful knowledge to the extent that it contributed to establishing local control. In this respect, frontier comparative religion was a 'rhetoric of control', a discourse about others that reinforced their colonial containment. (1996: 2)

When this idea is superimposed upon the processes of European occupation that got underway in southern Africa from the mid-sixteenth century, a three-fold process of boundary creation emerges. The first frames knowledge in the service of higher power, in order to exercise inclusion and exclusion; this has many facets. Patrick Harries, for instance, suggests that linguistic 'barriers

were erected in order to restructure the African world in a way that would make it more comprehensible to Europeans' (cited in Dubow 1995: 77). The second uses knowledge and its production – supported by superior firepower – in the service of European power; this is the use of sovereignty to exercise surveillance, administrative control and to fight the 'kings war' (Ruggie 1993: 151). While the third turns both the foregoing two processes into codified practices of 'in/out' which reinforce narrow Hobbesian interpretations of the human condition as 'nasty, cruel brutish and short'.

In the paragraphs that follow, I want to situate the latter within the racial discourses that, with time, were to dominate the everyday politics of southern Africa. Tony Holiday records that 'the first Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 took place one year after Hobbes had published *Leviathan*' (Holiday 1993: 6). Using this fact as a marker, we are able to suggest that those who intruded into the region brought to it understandings of their own superiority, a concomitant hostility to any world other than their own, as their own cultural and knowledge practices – including the capacity to violence – were privileged over that of the 'brute other' (Holiday 1993: 8). What organised form this practice was to take follows from a parallel observation: the European settlement in southern Africa took place four years after the Treaty of Westphalia. Although the first foreign mission on South African soil proclaimed its goal to be one in which 'the name of Christ may be extended, [and] the interests of the Company promoted' (Chidester 1996: 9), the techniques of sovereign control that were brought to bear were no different to those that were destined to operate under the Dutch during their brief occupation of the Cape and thereafter by the British.

The subsequent history of southern Africa is fashioned and refashioned by the lore of Westphalia as an idealised form of social organisation and the allure – let alone stability and security – that its sovereign form promised for those with political and economic power. Moreover, the preoccupation with order of the social world in the image of Westphalia – privileging the state that was to become South Africa – sanctioned a particular kind of political sedimentation, which would anchor the routine behaviour of the region's state system. This same process of foreign settlement also explains why the inclusion of the bearers of supposedly superior culture and ways, and the concomitant exclusion of the indigenous and peripheral, has been a constant thread in the politics of South Africa and southern Africa. Unlike other notions of sovereignty

that were to emerge in the wake of Westphalia, the nascent ones in South and southern Africa were not contingent on reciprocity. The indigenous people – of South Africa and later of the region – were, as innumerable accounts suggest, regarded, at best, as children and, at worst, as savages. They could therefore enjoy none of the rights of insiders because, within prevailing cultural practices, they were beyond the experience of those who carried the mandate of, successively, Christ, the Dutch East India Company, the Dutch government and the British. In short, they could not enjoy sovereignty because they had no state. Moreover, the everyday processes of European/white power came to dispense their authority through a series of ‘savage’ codes which, initially in South Africa and later in the region, would develop into an array of brutal administrative systems – commando, magisterial, location, reserve: each of which reinforced the ritualised power of insiders, and excluded the rights of outsiders – even though, to borrow from Mahmood Mamdani’s work, the insiders were settlers and the outsiders were natives. The result was a region-wide racist ideology with its sharp dichotomies and the practice of social relations within ritualised techniques that turned on the oppositions of white/non-white, European/non-European and, most recently, state/non-state.

Further artefacts in the genealogy are drawn from interpretations of frontier and boundary in southern African historiography. The production and reproduction of images of the ‘opening up’ of South/ern Africa along the lines of the United States has been a well-explored technique in comparative history (Lamar & Thompson 1981). Our case is well served by a discussion of the transmogrification of the idea of sovereignty by the control – and eventual closure – of frontiers by, successively, empire and state. This recognises that the very creation of borders was contingent and conceptual settlement, when it came, was accompanied by violence on the ground.

To understand this move, we must listen closer to both Hermann Giliomee and Martin Legassick, who, building on a notion tapped by Frederick Jackson Turner, advanced the idea that frontiers, certainly in the eighteenth-century Cape, but later elsewhere in the region, were neither entirely open nor completely closed. They did, however, come to experience an ‘open’ moment and a ‘closing’ one. The latter was a classic Westphalian manoeuvre, creating lines of demarcation by establishing sovereign borders increasingly called ‘national’. Open borders were characterised by the absence of a single source

of coercive authority, relatively low population densities and fluidity in group (for southern Africa read: race) relations; by pragmatic resort to policies of co-operation and mutual accommodation and by clientage, rather than bondage, as the basis of labour relations (Keegan 1996: 27). In the resulting fluidity, there was very little pressure to settle social identity, and Legassick suggests that Trekboers – as certain early settlers were known – were assisted in their adaptation to the environment by the knowledge and skills of locals. The open frontier was, to all intents and purposes, a cultural melting pot across which trade, ideas and marriage continued.

‘A frontier zone opens with contact between two or more previously distinct societies and remains open as long as power relations are unstable and contested, with no group or coalition able to establish dominance. A frontier zone closes when a single political authority succeeds in establishing hegemony over the area’ (Chidester 1996: 20–21). This was a moment of profound violence:

as colonists, with the government at their backs, imposed hegemony over indigenous peoples and exerted a growing monopoly on productive resources, and as coercion increasingly became the basis of group relations and the organisation of labour. On the closing frontier too, stratification within the ranks of the colonialists sharpened, with decreasing proportion being landowners and growing numbers becoming propertyless and dependent. (Keegan 1996: 27)

The impulse towards closure was rooted in a number of pressures: the personal ambition of administrators (local or distant), the interests of capital and firepower. But in the moment, ‘insiders and outsiders’ were created at two levels: firstly, by drawing sovereign borders and proclaiming an international frontier; and secondly, in the consolidation and incorporation of power and wealth within the state-in-the-making. These processes were illustrated in the 1990s movie *Dances with Wolves*, which showed both the pathos involved in social relations across an open frontier and the sovereign power and firepower that accompanied a frontier’s closing. This was not, however, the only understanding of sovereignty and its practice in the region. Another, some have called it Calvinist, interpretation of sovereignty, was not tied to geography; this carries, as we shall see, important insights into the continuing ambiguities around social relations in southern Africa. The historian, Rodney

Davenport, in an essay on the life of Paul Kruger, the Boer leader and statesman, recalls the early influences on his life:

The Calvinism believed and practiced by the Trekboers, along the southern watershed on the Orange River, was valued as a shield against the threat of ‘re-barbarisation’, latent in frontier life. In its uncompromising adherence to biblical precepts, it provided a moral stiffening against danger and temptation. The sovereignty of the divine will, and its identification in the combined will of the faithful community, excluded the need for sentimentality in religion and gave a sobering legitimacy to whatever needed to be done for the nation of believers to survive as migrants in rough neighbourhoods. (Davenport, in press)

This passage builds towards locating the very separateness of South Africa’s Afrikaner people. Given their forty-year hold on the politics of the region, this dedicated attention is important. A central thread of Afrikaner history is the desire for a unity based on ‘*volks-eie*’ – an interpretation of sovereignty that drew all Afrikaners, irrespective of their physical location, together, and reached upwards to God. The work of another historian, Leonard Thompson, suggests that in the late 1870s, shifting understandings of social relationships, especially around identity, encouraged Afrikaners, scattered as they were by then throughout southern Africa, to think of themselves as distinct and ‘sovereign’ people with a common destiny. By the 1890s, ‘Afrikaner clergy and intellectuals, in various parts of southern Africa, were responding to the pressures of British Imperialism and mining capitalism by propagating knowledge of the historical achievements of their people and the virtues of their culture’ (Thompson 1985: 173). This particular moment in the consolidation of Afrikaner identity was linked to the work of the neo-Calvinist, Abraham Kuyper – founder of the Free University of Amsterdam and later, Prime Minister of The Netherlands – who substituted Congregationalist patterns of church government for an all-powerful national church in which each community and each corporate body was ‘sovereign in its own sphere’ (Elphick & Davenport 1997: 56). This suggests a unity – and certainly, an identity – that was not initially bound to a specific, sovereign place.

In her powerful deconstruction of apartheid discourse, Aletta Norval casts the net of the development of Afrikaner sovereignty wider and more ambitiously.

She also locates the influence of romantic nationalism and National Socialism, suggesting that the interplay of these helped to awaken Afrikaner nationalism (1996: 93). This is of obvious interest to a social theorist, but I will not pursue it on this occasion. The conclusion of the immediately foregoing digression is simple: the co-incidence of sovereignty and territoriality is not absolute, even – or especially – in a contested polity like southern Africa.

### *The state system*

The turning point came with the establishment of the region's first modern state, the Union of South Africa in 1910. This followed upon the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, a war that was superficially about identity, but was really about the ambition and durability of the British imperial project in Africa. The very Act of Union, rather than closing off the fluidity represented by the frontier, perpetuated the ambiguities associated with sovereignty. It set out conditions, for instance, which might apply to the possible incorporation of the three territories – then known as Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland – and left open, almost entirely, the possibility of the Union's future relations with a territory that was then called the Rhodesias, South and North. So, the Act of Union did not close the frontier but laid the ambitions for what might be called a Greater South Africa.<sup>2</sup> However, the closure of the frontier may first have commenced between 1914 and 1918 with South Africa's participation in the First World War – an event that, like no other before, was about the durability of the Westphalian system.

A second impulse to close followed in 1929, when South Africa began to conduct its own foreign policy. By this time, however, and not without paradox, German South West Africa had been all but formally included within the Union, while Southern Rhodesia had declined the invitation to join peacefully. It took more than thirty years for the next Westphalian-type state in the region, Tanganyika, to emerge in 1962. By this time, the patrolling of South Africa's sovereign borders had reached an advanced state as this clip from a picture caption in a propaganda journal suggests:

the phenomenal expansion of economic activity since the last war has made South Africa the most advanced state in Africa. The vast wealth of her natural resources, developed with enterprise and initiative, has raised her living standards above those of any other

African country and placed her among the industrialized nations of the world. (Andrews, Berril, de Guingand, Holloway, Meyer & Van Eck 1962: 128–129)

Drawing upon cliché to reinforce the analytical point, all the region's maps were charted upon and, indeed, around South Africa, the wealth of its national interests and the interests of its wealthy nationals. By drawing historical sociology even closer, we can readily appreciate why, and how, South Africa and its routines of sovereignty set the conditions for membership in the 'state system'. The other states in the region were defined not so much by an interaction of internal forces but by their external setting towards the state called South Africa. As the self-image of the latter mutated through its regional policy, particularly during the apartheid years, primordial feelings of superiority were transferred from a domestic location onto the immediate neighbourhood. The states of the region exercise a close – and a closed – control over their sovereign affairs with little appreciation of the world that lies beyond sovereign borders. This has not changed with the ending of apartheid, as South Africa's war on migrants has so tragically shown. And it is to the current period that we will presently turn our attention, but first we must use a hurried paragraph to introduce an idea distilled from Antonio Gramsci.

Mainstream interpretations never questioned the sheer contingency of the truth claims around sovereignty and their derived policy outcomes. As a result, there has been little effort to appreciate that interests, national or other, are not timeless but are a function of the particular social condition that underpins them. Who was responsible? It may seem inappropriate, given South Africa's intense obsession with reconciling, to name names. But for these purposes, we need to appreciate that the main carriers of received understandings were closed, epistemic communities whose political goals were either in maintaining South Africa's apartheid situation, or in returning to some kind of colonial *status quo ante*.

### *Cold War*

The force of the orthodoxy is authorised by those who were 'present at the creation', to deliberately borrow an appropriate phrase. As our genealogy has suggested, this is what provides it with its absolution. The best illustration of sovereign continuity in southern Africa involves the one-time American

Ambassador to South Africa, Princeton Lyman. It bears repeating here – and whenever the theory and practice of sovereign relations are brought together – because it confirms the ready association between the practice of sovereignty and the instruments of violence, and the readiness of US (and other) diplomacy to confirm continuities in the midst of change. As Lyman writes:

On May 10, 1994, something happened that few people, even those most committed to the struggle against apartheid, ever thought could. Nelson Mandela, flanked by outgoing president, FW de Klerk, and the top generals of the South African Defence Force, took the oath as president of South Africa. Tens of thousands of South Africans, mostly black, but of all races, cheered.

At that moment, airplanes of the South African Air Force flew overhead, the colours of the new flag streaming behind. There was an initial moment of apprehension as the planes came in sight. Then the crowd broke into cheers. One black man in the crowd turned to his neighbour and said, ‘They’re ours now’. (1996: 105)

The intercession of the sovereign authority of the United States in the ‘creation’ of the new South Africa remains, at one level, quite puzzling. Removed from the daily struggles of South Africa’s majority for decades, the United States government was the target for the ire of influential anti-apartheid activists for close on three decades. Mounting evidence suggests, nonetheless, the deep complicity of Washington in support for successive moments of the apartheid project: Nelson Mandela, for instance, hints that the CIA shopped him (1994: 306, 370), while earlier evidence suggests that post-World War II US administrations encouraged South Africa’s some-time nuclear capacity. These developments can be readily theorised within the matrix provided by ordinary interpretations of the Cold War. The revolutionary and pro-Communist uncertainties represented by South Africa’s liberation movements could be set against the stability offered by a legitimate and sovereign government, albeit a minority one, with strong anti-Soviet policies. These same interpretations helped to incorporate apartheid South Africa into another conceptual and social frontier, the one constructed by the Cold War.

Certainly, apartheid’s forward defence strategy, the destabilisation we have already encountered, which reached into the lives of southern Africa’s people, was fashioned on the behaviour of the US on its own frontier – Central

America. Moreover, Pretoria's obsession with terrorism and its demonisation of the Soviet Union had striking parallels with Washington's Cold War rhetoric, especially during the Reagan years. This process of turning borders into eschatology explains apartheid South Africa's efforts to manage the deepening domestic turmoil of the 1980s by drawing on the thoughts of influential Cold War theorists – including Samuel P Huntington and JJ McCuen. When US engagement with change in South Africa finally came, it was as controversial as what had gone before. The diplomatic strategy of Constructive Engagement that aimed to sustain white power and encourage slow, peaceful change away from racial dogma, unlocked considerable anger from all sides in South and southern Africa. For our purposes, it is clear that (certainly in the initial stages) Constructive Engagement encouraged apartheid South Africa to use its traditional sovereign power as a lever on the affairs of the region.

The ending of the Cold War has taught that ideological movement and social remaking are not the same thing; recognising this, we can explain why, notwithstanding the celebratory mantra of globalisation, Africa is still bedevilled by a range of social problems: porous borders, recalcitrant tribalisms, weak states. For many policy-makers, however, southern Africa represents a beacon of hope on the otherwise troubled continent. This is why the idea of a strong southern Africa, which will act as an anchor for a continent, is a priority in the policy community. The anchor's anchor – as it were – is South Africa with its successful political transition and freed-up economy (Chase, Hill & Kennedy 1996). In this vision, South Africa is as much a new frontier for the idea of a globalised world as the region was once South Africa's frontier.

### *Post-apartheid*

The course of national re/discovery – including the search for a 'national interest' to support the trope of a 'rainbow nation' – has been pivotal in determining policy (and its outcomes) in post-apartheid South Africa. As the popular press and a growing army of policy experts have nudged the post-apartheid government on the issue of the region and its social ways, the permanence and continuity of the national – as opposed to the regional – are invariably below the surface of policy rhetoric. So it is that regional policy has remained cast within the tradition offered by Bowman's idea of a regional state system.<sup>3</sup> This tradition, and the fetish for action it invites,

explains the haste with which South Africa was ushered into accepting a role in international peacekeeping efforts. It is worth recalling the course of events around South Africa's emergence into the peacekeeping community because it reinforces the idea that the policing dimensions of sovereignty and sovereign responsibility were indecently transferred from the old South Africa to the new. The next two paragraphs offer a brief account of what happened.

Suggestions that a post-apartheid South Africa would be drawn into peacekeeping occurred almost immediately after the inauguration of Nelson Mandela as South Africa's President. In a very public display of pressure – it happened on national television! – Al Gore, the US Vice-President, raised the issue of South African armed support for international action in the Rwandan crisis that was then breaking. Such urgings played into the hands of South Africa's military which, at the time, remained uncertain of the long-term role that they were to play in the post-apartheid world. The (then) small conservative think-tank, the Institute for Defence Politics – now called the Institute for Strategic Studies – led by former officers from the apartheid defence force, had anxiously been pursuing a limited public programme sponsored by the conservative German Foundation named for Hans Seidel – the former Chief Minister of Bavaria (1957-60) and President of the Christian Social Union (CSU). Other state-makers, like the South African Institute for International Affairs, were quickly crossing the divide between their traditional concerns with diplomacy towards a new focus on strategic issues. Acting together, and drawing funds from foreign governments, they swiftly consolidated what Ludwig Fleck once called a 'scientific thought collective': a community whose members share questions, assumptions and ways of working, and in South Africa's case, a fetish for 'problem solving' inquiry. The making of post-apartheid regional policy was left to these experts whose only skill was to return southern Africa to sovereign-business-as-usual within the coda provided by, successively, 'a new world order' and by 'globalisation'.

While this expertise has been at pains to stress that the country's goal in the region is peaceful, they have ignored a fundamental confessional point: throughout the 1970s and 1980s, their own understandings of regional conflict were both misguided and ill-directed. The policy of destabilisation, which has twice in these pages crossed our analytical path, bears testimony to this. The same expertise singularly failed – as did others, of course – to anticipate

the collapse of Soviet Communism and the ending of the Cold War. This has not, though it should have perhaps, prompted Baudrillard's challenge: 'If their culture was so mistaken about others, it must also be mistaken about itself.' The power and policy influence of these epistemic groupings recalls Hannah Arendt's telling indictment of modern thought collectives:

There are, indeed, few things that are more frightening than the steadily increasing prestige of scientifically minded brain trusters in the councils of government during the last decades. The trouble is not that they are cold-blooded enough to 'think the unthinkable', but that they do not think. (1969: 6)

### *Key words*

South Africa's transition from apartheid must be judged as a lost opportunity for those who wished to foster an alternative understanding of southern Africa. At the very moment when creative energy should have been geared at re-thinking the role of sovereignty in the region, the discourse fell back on a tradition associated with state, power and violence. The result has been the reaffirmation of frontiers. The idealism and hope associated with transition to a new southern Africa was lost: regional and international relations were recast as a function of South African national purpose and the neighbourhood became an eschatological threat as we have already noted.

The political rhetoric which drove this course of action quickly moved between the celebration associated with endings – the Cold War and apartheid – and the triumphs associated with continuities – the recovery of those 'regional realities' in which peace and prosperity hinge on unquestioned assumptions around sovereignty, now readily associated with a series of new key words: democracy and its twin, free market economics. Through these key words, the region was said to be in sync with the 'modern international system ... [which is] ... dominated by realism and the market' (Arias 1996: 13). At no time was there an opportunity to rethink assumptions, to probe long-held truisms or to debunk some obvious myths. As a result – and borrowing a penetrating insight from Oscar Arias – the transition ignored 'the people whose well-being must be the most important goal of our time', the very people who had sacrificed to liberate southern Africa. As a result, the discourses of peacemaking and of war-making in the region remain

caught within the limited and limiting explanatory range offered by rational choice theory – neo-realism in security questions; neo-liberalism in economics. Both these reflect impoverished understanding of the social, and both place profound limits upon the potential for understanding the region in terms of its people.

The ending of apartheid has certainly closed a desperately unhappy chapter in the history of mankind (Booth & Vale 1995). But the lasting achievement of social struggle is less certain. Take the issue of democracy that carries such a great weighting in contemporary politics and is all too readily associated with emancipation in southern Africa. The idea of a ‘wave of democratisation’, which followed upon the collapse of the Berlin Wall, has been a constant rhetorical thread in the region’s effort to re-chart its course in the aftermath of apartheid (Cowen & Laakso 1997). But, because they suggest that only the authoritative voice of neo-liberalism can fashion democracy, there are profound limits to current discourses over democracy in the region. As Craig Calhoun has suggested, such closed perspectives ‘attempt to settle in advance, a question which is an inextricable part of the democratic process itself’ (Turner 1996: 459).

This notion of a single authoritative voice in public affairs has its equivalent at the regional level, too. The ending of apartheid has encouraged a closed discussion on new institutional arrangements to underwrite political relations in southern Africa. These have turned on the notion that, if anything, change has legitimised assumptions about the permanence of states and reinforced the power of sovereignty. Despite all the talk of change, southern Africa’s states continue to rely on conflict, and preparing for it, as a central instrument of regional intercourse. So, and again paradoxically, the very idea of regional peace is readily associated with the difference generated by sovereignty and its resolution by force.

It was always unlikely that the simple – but profoundly difficult – act of ending apartheid would create a new regional order, promote peace and secure a new regional identity. Decades of strife have left a legacy of deep mistrust and crippling misunderstandings. As economic circumstances deteriorate and small arms are readily at hand, prolonged – indeed, renewed – conflict appears inevitable throughout the sub-continent. Why these conflicts persist are central questions for the region’s policy-makers. However, critical reflection, as

this chapter has shown, suggests that ending them is difficult, if not impossible, within the limitations of orthodox discourses of state sovereignty.

A wider paradox stalks this point in the argument and, because we have crossed it before, we must briefly look again in its direction. For worse, rather than better, South Africa not only occupies a central position in the affairs of the region but also fills a pivotal position in southern Africa's broader international relationships. So, the pressure for South Africa to lead the regional processes by reinforcing the authority of its sovereign power has been overwhelming. The debate concerning South Africa's potential role in peace-keeping has simply reinforced the sense of the country's destiny in the region.

Here we must ask an uncomfortable question for which, on this occasion, there is no immediate answer: if it is to lead the region, how is South Africa to deal with its past behaviour? The one mechanism that might have been used to come clean, as it were, the country's Truth and Reconciliation Commission, largely bypassed the question. The political reason was plain: the government of the new South Africa believes it was no less a victim of apartheid than were the people of the region. There was therefore no reason for it to atone for the damage which apartheid visited upon the region and its people. However, and this is the paradox, the state and its sovereign authority, in the affairs of the region, have continued uninterrupted by political change brought about by the ending of apartheid. This returns us to the question: if it is to lead the region, how is South Africa to deal with its past behaviour?

While we may have no immediate answer, we can draw on Zygmunt Bauman to offer an insight into the causes of South Africa's power in the region. Apartheid's destabilisation resting, as it did, on sovereign power, was 'a legitimate resident in the house of (regional) modernity; indeed, one ... which ... would not be at home in any other house' (Bauman 1989: 17).

### *People*

However welcome and celebrated South Africa's transition from apartheid might have been, it is not the end of the region's history. It has initiated only another phase of struggle and, as the increasing tide of migration across the region suggests, much will turn on the nature and behaviour of the state we continue to call South Africa. The triumphalism over the ending of apartheid

and the celebration of democracy has made it very difficult to see that embedded, deep within the lore of the same state, is a culture that is difficult to dislodge. As post-apartheid South Africa reaches into its collective memory, it is discovering that routine responses, conditioned by the idea of sovereignty, are more likely to satisfy the fetish for policy than the need to think long and hard about creative responses to the region and its ways.

In this drama, epistemic communities and the study of International Relations have played the role of accomplices. The reassertion of realist thinking about social relations is a function of intellectual surveillance as much as it is of state surveillance. Its results are to be seen in the many neo-apartheid policies of the 'new' South Africa; especially telling has been the deepening paranoia around migration to the country. Detailed debate on migration to South Africa belongs, not on these, but on other pages (Vale 2003), save for this observation: the discourse over the issue is cast within a traditionally conceived 'righteous anger and defensiveness in which "others" are finally seen as enemies, bent on destroying ... civilization and way of life' (Said 1994: 376). For the foreseeable future, therefore, migration will remain the litmus test of the new South Africa's commitment to the people of the region rather than its adherence to the policy rote-fashioned by change and by continuity. It is patently disingenuous to question the idea of peace in a region, like southern Africa, that for three centuries has only known war and conflict. However, the fetish for policy answers to the unfolding life of the region is being de-linked from the many layers of social complexity that underpin relations – international, inter-community, interpersonal – throughout southern Africa.

These pages have shown that sovereignty has fashioned a particular form for southern Africa. Political transformation has not shifted this pattern; indeed, quite the opposite has occurred. This preoccupation with sovereignty has created security-conscious states that have generated violence, a process that has been abetted by mainstream interpretations of the region that have reinforced the statist understandings of policy-makers. This is a condition, as every student of social theory knows, that is neither necessary nor commanded by an Archimedean truth claim. To shift this form in an emancipatory direction, however, will require the exploration of 'new forms of community in which individuals and groups can achieve higher levels of freedom' (Smith, Booth & Zalewski 1996: 279). Only the discovery of social impulses that lie beyond sovereignty, and its savage codes, will enable the search for a new form for the

region. Let a single empirical example, in a chapter long on disputation, make a point for other possible forms of community.

In the cusp of the frontiers and their making in southern Africa in the mid-1800s, an Ethiopian Christian movement took form. Based on creative use of the Bible and explicit African imagery, it was once regarded as a ‘major threat to peace in the entire region’ (Elphick & Davenport 1997: 133). Today, the offshoot of one of these African Indigenous Churches, the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), commands the largest territorial space in southern Africa from Malawi, in the north, reaching Cape Town in the south. Its adherents, thought to number five million across the sub-continent, closely identify and adhere to its belief and value system. This is a single example of what John Ruggie has called an issue that ‘cannot be reduced to territorial solution’ and which may well tell us more about the social world of southern Africa than do mainstream accounts that rely on the legacy of Westphalia and the taxonomy offered by sovereignty (Ruggie 1993: 164).

It is unquestionably true that the celebration associated with the ending of apartheid has reinforced the power of state-centred discourse but theoretical work on identity and memory is running apace in South Africa (Nuttall & Coetzee 1998). Such work will increasingly write an account of the region from the other side of the evolving series of the many frontiers we have considered in this chapter. Undoubtedly, new research and reflection will offer alternative narratives to the staple diet of southern African history-through-the-pages-of-state-sovereignty. Whether the location and theorising of these alternatives will be sufficient to build a counter-hegemonic force to the ontological power exercised by the mainstream is unclear. One thing is clear from this chapter, however: mainstream understandings of southern African can be rendered unstable by critical questions.

### Notes

- 1 Dr Tony Holiday helped me think my way around this.
- 2 For public discourse over this issue at the time of Union, see ‘Union and the Native Protectorates’, *The State. The Organ of Closer Union. A South African National Magazine*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1909, pp. 45–54.
- 3 These propositions have been developed in Vale & Daniel (1995).

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## **2** *The importance of political tolerance for fostering social cohesion*

Amanda Gouws

### *Introduction*

Since 1994, South Africa has embarked on the road of social integration within a liberal democracy. This process has been called by different names – nation building, political consolidation and, sometimes, reconciliation. For each process, the focus is different and not one of them is unproblematic.

Nation building is often critiqued as the manipulation of national symbols such as the flag, anthem and monuments for the purpose of creating a new nationalism that should integrate the different population groups. This stands in stark contrast to liberalism that intends to be devoid of nationalism. In a liberal democratic society, the focus is on individual rights and everybody's right to exercise those rights rather than on an allegiance to some abstract construction of 'the nation'.

Political consolidation is a process through which democracy becomes entrenched as the only acceptable political system where indicators of success are far more readily measurable than in the case of nation building. These indicators are, for example, the acceptance of multi-party elections, a free press, separation of powers and the creation of a democratic culture, as well as economic growth. There seems to be little agreement about the conclusion of this process. For many countries, consolidation is never achieved.

Reconciliation is the most problematic of all because the definition of the concept is unclear. Different people understand reconciliation to be different things, which can vary from forgiveness and confession to economic and land redistribution. What the process of reconciliation should look like, now that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has finished its work, is rather unclear.

What is rarely mentioned is the attempt at creating social cohesion through these different processes. The underlying assumption of each process is that the end result will be a society in which social integration has taken place, to a certain degree, and that the segregation caused by apartheid would be substituted by a socially coherent society. But questions of what exactly this society would look like, or what the requirements are for the process of creating social cohesion, are left open.

It would be fair to say that the requirements are many and varied, and may even be in conflict with each other. In South Africa it is generally accepted that citizens need to embrace the liberal democratic values of society but, at the same time, be critical of these values; that a multi-cultural society that would allow many different ways of life should be created; but, at the same time, cultural practices and traditions that discriminate against group members cannot be allowed; and that citizens need to support government, and grant it legitimacy, without being overly trusting of government.

Because an understanding of liberal democracy is not innate but, at best, rather complicated for many people, we also need to ask what the role of education should be in the creation of social cohesion. This is a debate that is long overdue, especially in the fast changing education sphere in South Africa.

My aim here is to make a case for why political tolerance is a key ingredient in a liberal democratic society and why, without tolerance, it would be very difficult to create social cohesion. I would like to argue that teaching tolerance should be one of the main aims of civic education in South Africa. In the first section of this chapter, I want to reiterate some of the results of research done in the late 1990s to indicate the importance of political tolerance for liberal democratic societies (see Gouws & Gibson 2001; Gibson & Gouws 2003).<sup>1</sup>

### *The study of political tolerance*

Political tolerance is the willingness to 'put up with' things that one rejects or opposes. In the political sense, it is allowing ideas or groups one opposes to exist. Tolerant citizens will allow the expression of unacceptable ideas as well as the activities of opposition groups. In its most basic sense, political tolerance is at the heart of procedural fairness. It is a commitment to the 'rules of the game' and a willingness to apply them equally.

Many scholars of democracy view tolerance as an integral value of democracy without which conflict is difficult to manage. When tolerance forms part of democratic values, political systems can remain stable amidst serious conflict (Sullivan, Piereson & Marcus 1982: 2). As global democratisation has taken off after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, interest in the development of political tolerance in democratising nations has also kindled the interest of scholars of democracy.

Most studies of tolerance have been conducted in mature democracies (except for studies in the Soviet Union) but little is known about tolerance as an ingredient of democratisation from authoritarian regimes (Gibson & Duch 1993). The study of political tolerance is of great importance in countries that are democratising because that is when tolerance is most needed and when it is usually in short supply.

In 1993, Gibson and Gouws embarked on a study titled 'An Investigation into the Socio-Legal and Cultural Bases of Democracy in South Africa: Rule of Law, Rights Consciousness, and Political Tolerance', funded by the American National Science Foundation. The aim was to study the development of a democratic culture in South Africa but, more specifically, to study political tolerance in a real life context of civil liberty disputes through the use of an experimental design.

This study was the first empirical study of political tolerance using a large representative sample of the population of a developing nation. South Africa made the transition to democracy from an authoritarian regime based on the legal separation of race groups. The apartheid regime's lack of procedural fairness, which could be seen as the root cause of political intolerance in South Africa, generated a range of responses, one of which has been a great interest in the development of citizens' commitment to democratic values, including political tolerance.

Studies of political tolerance in developed societies very often take place in artificial conditions where the conflict between opposing groups and the threats they pose are not real. Respondents may not have any actual experience of their political enemies, such as white Americans who specify the Ku Klux Klan as a group they find threatening. Similarly, the objectionable groups in question are often small extremist groups that may be politically active only occasionally, such as, for example, the Black Panthers in the United

States of America. In some studies, fictitious groups have been used; questions are asked about hypothetical contexts and very often student samples are used (Marcus, Sullivan, Theiss-Morse & Wood 1995).

In South Africa, the context of threat and the experience of opposing groups is real and immediate. Groups that are not tolerated are major political actors that are in competition with each other for power. Intolerance in South Africa does not concern hypothetical situations but real life disagreements that often end in violence. The consequences of intolerance, therefore, are serious and need to be considered with regard to the development of the democratic system.

### *Studying political tolerance in South Africa*

Political tolerance was operationalised for the purpose of this study by using the content-controlled method, also called the 'least-liked approach'. Through this approach, respondents are instructed to choose a target group they dislike very much. They are then asked if they would allow these target groups certain civil liberties such as the right to hold a rally in their neighbourhood, or to hold a protest march, or whether they would like to see their target group banned. The 'slippage' between their support for democratic values in the abstract (such as the freedom of speech, assembly and movement) and its application to the target group is the indicator of the levels of tolerance (Sullivan et al. 1982: 61–63). Target-group selection can be pluralistic, where respondents choose many different target groups, or it can be focused, where respondents identify one or two target groups.

The findings of the first tolerance study in South Africa by Gouws (fieldwork done in 1990) did not reflect the pluralistic target-group distribution that characterised the United States. Target groups in South Africa were major political players such as the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB). The multi-focused target-group selection, coupled with high levels of unwillingness to allow least-liked groups civil liberties (such as free speech and the right to assemble), indicated that there are serious problems for the development of democratic values in South Africa (see Gouws 1993).

## *Methodology*

The objectives of the research design, with regard to sampling, were threefold: (i) to use survey data to draw inferences for the entire South African population; (ii) to analyse differences across racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups; and (iii) to assess the dynamics of the beliefs, values and attitudes of ordinary South Africans. This was achieved by drawing a representative sample of the South African population with representative sub-samples of the major linguistic or ethnic groups.

This study had the unique feature of oversamples for the smaller linguistic groups (language was used as an indicator of ethnicity).<sup>2</sup> The oversamples enabled the researchers to generalise to the different linguistic groups when they were analysed separately. The main sample (an area probability sample) consisted of 2 557 respondents (92 per cent response rate) with 477 in the boost sample (oversamples). Oversamples were drawn for Tswana-speaking and North and South Sotho-speaking Africans, English and Afrikaans-speaking whites, coloured and Asian South Africans. The questionnaire was translated from English into six other languages: Afrikaans, North and South Sotho, Tswana, Zulu and Xhosa.<sup>3</sup>

## *Results of the study*

The findings of the study confirm that high levels of political intolerance still exist in South Africa (although they are lower than they were in 1990) and that the target groups selected by most people still are central competitors for political power (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 56).

The findings also show that what we refer to as ‘threat perceptions’ are readily translated into intolerance. Least-liked groups in the South African context are perceived as very dangerous.

Intolerance stems from two primary sources: (i) physical and psychological insecurity – people who feel threatened by their enemies will be less likely to tolerate them; (ii) tolerance is connected to a larger set of beliefs about democratic institutions and processes and this belief system is not yet well established in South Africans.

We found that threat was the best predictor of political intolerance in the South African context (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 62–71).

These findings were not really surprising since high levels of tolerance are usually found in societies that have been democratic for much longer than South Africa. The main aim of the study was to see whether we could persuade intolerant South Africans to become tolerant. We used an experimental design that drew on research done in political psychology.

### *Experimental vignettes*

Most research on political tolerance is static and change (due to political disagreement and persuasion) is rarely studied. Gibson and Gouws were therefore also interested in the malleability of political tolerance. Is it at all possible to change intolerant attitudes to tolerant ones if we manipulate attitudes through persuasion? Studies have shown that political tolerance is malleable.

The most important contribution of this study was the experimental design of the questionnaire that included a vignette to test for the influence of contextual variables on tolerance judgements. One of the contributions of vignettes is that they contextualise opinions and enable the researcher to test hypotheses about causal effects. As Gibson and Gouws put it:

If the investigator can identify specific attributes of the context as potential causes of civil liberties judgements, then those attributes can be varied in the vignettes. With the random assignment of respondents to the various treatment conditions (the different versions of the vignettes), strong causal conclusions are possible. If respondents make different choices, and if all other differences among the respondents have been randomised, then the most likely causal source of the choices is the attribute that is manipulated in the vignette. (2003: 100)

Experimental designs give us a much better understanding of cause-and-effect relationships. The value of experimentation is that extraneous factors are kept constant and subjects encounter treatments that only differ in predetermined ways (Kinder & Palfrey 1993: 11). By providing evidence of causal

relationships, the internal validity of experiments is among the highest of any research design available to social scientists. Experiments can disassemble and recreate reality in ways that surveys cannot.

Vignettes are valuable because of the concreteness of the stories that provide respondents with many important details about civil liberties disputes. It can help the investigator to identify attributes of the context that could be potential causes of civil liberties judgements. The more these vignettes imitate real political contexts, the more we can assume that the results will reflect real life civil liberties judgements. For example, we can test for the influence of threatening behaviour of opposition groups, the influence of political leaders on disputes, and the role of guarantees for peaceful protest.

The aim of the persuasibility experiment was to see if people could be ‘talked out of their intolerance’. This was an attempt to deal with one of the paradoxes of political tolerance – that the first judgement is not necessarily the last.<sup>4</sup> Initial reactions to disputes over political tolerance are not necessarily the same as final reactions. Here, the idea of the ‘sober second thought’ becomes important. People may change their views if they are exposed to counter-arguments or persuasion. Through deliberation, people may sometimes be compelled to think about the consequences of intolerance or repression. They may also, for instance, have to consider the consequences of tolerating groups that carry within their ideologies the seed of democracy’s destruction (such as the Neo-Nazis). What people think first in a civil liberties dispute may not be the same as what they think last.

An experimental study by Kuklinski et al., on a sample of undergraduate students, has shown that people react differently to a tolerance stimulus when they process the stimulus affectively rather than cognitively (Kuklinski, Riggle, Ottati, Schwarz & Wyer 1991). Based on the belief that it is always more reasonable to be tolerant in democratic societies, Kuklinski et al. hypothesised that considered thought would lead to more reasonable decisions than emotionally reactive ones.

The findings were quite surprising, however. When people thought about the consequences of tolerating certain groups, they became more, not less intolerant. It therefore seemed that persuasion could lead to greater intolerance rather than tolerance.

In the vignette in our study, four contextual variables were manipulated, leading to sixteen versions of the vignette. Each respondent heard a single story and they were randomly assigned to the vignette versions. The attributes that were manipulated were (i) the likelihood of lawlessness, (ii) the opposition of the community to the demonstration, (iii) the intervention of local elites, and (iv) argumentation and deliberation. These attributes were chosen because they recreate conditions that are integral to civil liberties disputes such as the possibility of violence, the role that elites can play in ameliorating violence, the way the community experiences conditions of conflict, and the role of debate. The vignette applied to the most disliked group as selected through the Sullivan 'least-liked approach'. The most threatening version was:

As an election approaches, members of the DISLIKED GROUP want to hold a rally in a community where most people support their opponents. People in the community are worried that the DISLIKED GROUP will not follow all of the laws during the rally. The DISLIKED GROUP intends to give speeches that will make most people in the community very, very angry. Local community leaders aren't sure whether the rally should be allowed to take place since they say the speeches will be pretty dangerous and threatening. Some people are saying that the DISLIKED GROUP shouldn't be allowed to speak because their speeches will only recruit more people to the DISLIKED GROUP.

The least threatening version was:

As an election approaches, members of the DISLIKED GROUP want to hold a rally in a community where most people support their opponents. The DISLIKED GROUP promises that it will follow all of the laws during the rally.

The DISLIKED GROUP intends to give speeches, but not many people in the community care one way or the other about what they have to say. Local community leaders urge that the rally be allowed to take place since they say the speeches aren't really very dangerous or threatening. Some people are saying 'let them speak because when they speak, they show everyone just how foolish their ideas are'.

We hypothesised that the most threatening version would produce the most intolerant outcome and the least threatening version would produce the most tolerant.

### *Findings of the vignettes*

As in the case of Kuklinski's experiment, we were more readily able to change tolerance to intolerance than intolerance into tolerance. Whereas tolerance is malleable, intolerance seems to be obdurate. It is relatively easy to talk South Africans out of their tolerance.

Resistance to persuasion is related to threat perceptions among the initially intolerant – the greater the perceived threat, the less likely it is that the respondent will be persuaded to become tolerant. The overwhelming judgements of local circumstances of civil liberties disputes (involving conflict) renders intolerance obdurate, making persuasive appeals ineffective (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 115). Among the tolerant, threat perceptions have little impact on change in attitudes.

The most important findings with regard to the experimental vignette is that tolerance and threat perceptions are not dependent upon the context as represented in the vignettes. The findings show that the threat of violence, recommendations by community leaders, or encouragement to deliberation did not influence tolerance judgements. The conclusion that can be drawn about the threat experienced by South Africans is that it is of such a nature that it overrides context. South Africans who are threatened by their political enemies will not allow them to participate in democratic politics. These beliefs do not depend on the strength of the group or whether it is perceived to be likely that the group will gain political influence. These findings present a challenge to those who contend that particular contexts make a big difference in civil liberties disputes.

### *The importance of attitudinal structure*

What we discovered is that among those who were initially intolerant, persuasion took place more readily than among those with *better* integrated belief systems. As argued in the book, we expected the contrary – that change in

compartmentalised belief systems will lead to a smaller degree of belief system dissonance because change in one attitude does not affect change in the others (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 143). But it seems that change comes least readily among those with compartmentalised beliefs.

What became clear is that in order for one value to change, the surrounding values need to be drawn upon. These values must be connected to the primary one (e.g. tolerance) in order for change to take place. Persuasion involves the mobilisation of supplementary attitudes. People with well-integrated belief systems are more able to make connections between the primary attitude and supplementary attitudes, and therefore are more able to change their initial attitudes. Where one attitude is integrated among others connected to democratic beliefs, a person will be more susceptible to persuasion (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 144).

Furthermore, compartmentalisation of attitudes seems to be more positively related to changes in intolerance. Intolerance as an attitude seems to be surrounded by a combination of democratic and anti-democratic beliefs. We therefore argued that tolerance connected to other democratic values resists change to intolerance. By contrast, intolerance is not surrounded by only anti-democratic beliefs, but by a mixture of democratic and anti-democratic beliefs. It is therefore possible to persuade intolerant people to become tolerant. It is, however, difficult.

Persuasion seems to be most likely when people hold alternative but connected values to which counter-arguments can appeal. The conventional view that compartmentalised attitudes are more easily changed, because they are unanchored, does not find support in our research. Poorly articulated belief systems are intransigent because there are no surrounding values that can be stimulated to bring about change. The degree to which tolerance is linked to other democratic values may be dependent on experience with the democratic system (Gibson & Gouws 2003: 150, 142).

Our experimental design has greatly contributed to our understanding of the political context in South Africa. What we have found is that the detail of the context makes very little difference (groups can make promises, leaders can try to persuade followers and local authorities can get involved but this seems to make little difference). Perceptions of context are overwhelmingly determined by threat perceptions, and it is the threat perceptions, rather than the

contextual perceptions, that influence tolerance. If threat is a good predictor of intolerance, we need to understand which variables can predict tolerance.

### *The aetiology of intolerance*

There are certain variables that strongly predict tolerance and others that strongly predict intolerance. There is a strong relationship between high levels of education and tolerance, high self-esteem and tolerance and a weaker relationship between tolerance and liberalism.<sup>5</sup> There is a relationship between threat (or psychological insecurity), low self-esteem, religion and intolerance.

Paul Sniderman was one of the first political scientists to investigate the relationship between social-learning theory and the development of political tolerance. He notes that the idea of democratic restraint, or tolerance, is abstract and difficult to learn. He found a strong correlation between self-esteem and tolerance. Those with low self-esteem tend to be more intolerant. According to Sniderman, low self-esteem impedes the learning of democratic values (Sniderman 1975; see also Sullivan et al. 1982: 158–159).

The relationship between tolerance and education warrants more discussion. Stouffer presented education as one of the best predictors of political tolerance (1955), but as Sullivan et al. point out, Stouffer makes a cognitive argument, that is, that the citizen must learn the value of a free market of ideas and must learn to accept the non-conformity of certain ideas (Sullivan et al. 1982: 115). Bobo and Licari tested the cognitive aspect of education and found that cognitive sophistication accounts for a substantial portion of the effect of education on tolerance. They argue that education is responsible for cognitive development (1989).

Sniderman's research, utilising social learning theory, confirms this finding. Social learning, as collective socialisation, is crucial for inculcating democratic values (Sullivan et al. 1982: 156). People learn the assumptions of political tolerance from the political culture of their society. The values of the polity are usually widely and consensually shared. Where the norms of a political culture are not democratic, people will learn undemocratic values. If we apply the assumptions of social learning theory to South Africa, it is doubtful that people would have learned the values of democracy, since the norms of the previous regime were not democratic.

The norms of the regime, however, strengthened group identities. We tested the hypothesis that people with stronger group identities will hold higher levels of group antipathy: that they will see political enemies as more threatening and will be less tolerant of them. There are consequences of identity for antipathy – those who more strongly believe in the need for group solidarity are more likely to dislike a wider variety of political groups (Gibson & Gouws 1998: 18). The findings show that stronger, more developed group identities are associated with greater inter-group antipathy, threat and intolerance. Strong group identities lead people to see the world as composed of political enemies. Strong group identities thus seem to undermine democratic politics.<sup>6</sup> Mobilisation of politics around strongly held identities can undermine the democratic principles of consensus-seeking and co-operation as we have seen with mobilisation around Zulu ethnic identity in the Inkatha Freedom Party. Many violent clashes and the construction of no-go zones occurred in KwaZulu-Natal involving the IFP and ANC during both previous elections (Gibson & Gouws 2003).

The predictive capacity of education, threat, and psychological insecurity should be taken seriously when we think about teaching tolerance. What these results have shown us is that tolerance is difficult to learn and, even when we want to persuade people who are intolerant to become tolerant, it would be difficult to do so in the absence of integrated democratic belief systems. Social learning plays an important role through which system norms are absorbed although perceptions of threat, as we have seen, may hamper people's ability to learn tolerance. Nevertheless, education is central to inculcating tolerance, not only by teaching democratic norms but also by helping people to integrate their belief systems.

### *The importance of civic education*

Tolerance is a difficult value to learn. If we do not teach tolerance, it will not develop on its own.<sup>7</sup> Tolerance has to be learned and has to be integrated with other democratic values in the process of learning. The only systematic and collective way of teaching tolerance is through civic education (also called citizen education). As Schoeman puts it:

Democracy is not self-perpetuating; it must be consciously reproduced, one generation after another. Citizenship Education

is, or should be, of prime concern. Beneath the discernible operation of constitutional machinery, the South African system is organic. It will not automatically develop but requires careful attention and assiduous cultivation. There is no more important task in South Africa than the development of an informed, effective and responsible citizenry. (2002: 367)

Civic education can have different meanings in different contexts, but there seems to be consensus on its core ingredients: to develop an understanding of a democratic political system in order to become democratic agents or citizens.

Sadie makes a distinction between civic and socio-civic learning. Civic learning involves the knowledge of the functions of the political institutions and process and skills to participate in the political process, whereas socio-civic learning refers to the role of citizenship in the social setting, with special attention to the moral, ethical, social and cultural aspects that have an influence on citizenship (Sadie 1994: 8). For Finkel, Sabatini and Bevis, civic education is the development of civic competence, and the acquisition of values and dispositions (2000: 1852).

There are three models according to which civic education can be introduced. Firstly, as in the United States, civic education can form an integral part of the curriculum throughout the different levels of the school system. In this model, students participate in active programmes involving community issues. Secondly, following the British model, there might be no separate subject but civic education forms part of a wide range of subjects with an emphasis on history. The third model falls in between these two, as in France, where the civics curriculum makes provision for teaching about French history and the functioning of the political system (McAllister 1998: 9).

There also seems to be a general consensus about what the outcomes of civic education should be. Bratton, Alderfer, Bowser and Temba included the following outcomes in their research:

- Civic knowledge – the ability to name political representatives, to distinguish functions of political institutions and knowledge of constitutional rights.
- Civic values – the trust in institutions as well as support for institutions and tolerance.

- Political and policy preferences – the support for selected political and economic reform measures.
- Civic skills – the extent to which individuals develop civic competence to influence decisions.
- Civic action – the ability to participate in election campaigns, voting and contacts with public officials. (Bratton et al. 1999: 811)

For Schoeman, civic knowledge, civic skills and civic dispositions should form part of civic education in the South African context (2002: 351–357). What makes civic education of great importance in the African, and specifically in the South African, context is the colonial and authoritarian pasts of many countries that led to the lack of a democratic culture. Civic education becomes imperative for the development of democracy and good governance.

As Sifuna argues, democratic behaviour is not genetically conditioned or inborn (2000: 216). Even though citizens of African countries had Western education, this education was essentially authoritarian in nature. Reflecting on the Kenyan experience of schooling, Sifuna argues that schools had an authoritarian structure and education led to unquestioning acquiescence to authority. Sifuna emphasises the importance of a democratic or liberal education which inculcates democratic values, knowledge and learning to enable public participation (2000: 231). This type of education needs to be combined with elementary political literacy. In the case of Zambia, Bratton et al. also observe the importance of civic education but note that it has become the responsibility of NGOs in Zambia, and not of the state (1999).

While the introduction of civic education may be based on the expectation that it will create a democratic culture, there is a debate about exactly what civic education should aim to achieve from a liberal perspective. The debate over civic education raises crucial questions of individual autonomy, multi-cultural society and the political legitimacy of the state.

### *The debate about civic education*

Theorists of liberalism grapple with the question, firstly, of whether a liberal civic education should aim to create individual autonomy and whether it is possible to create individual autonomy if the curriculum, as developed by the state, is prescriptive of certain values. Secondly, they ask how civic education,

based on principles of individual autonomy, can create a multi-cultural society if the state intervenes by impeding certain, traditional practices.

Gutmann makes a distinction between political and comprehensive liberalism where political liberalism does not claim to promote any idea of the good life (1995: 557). It is a distinctly political doctrine that does not teach children how to think independently or to be autonomous beings. Comprehensive liberalism attempts to create individuality and autonomy through public education. In this regard, political liberalism can allow different ways of life to flourish.

Because political liberalism does not invoke conceptions of a good life, except for the idea of a just society where citizens respect each other's basic rights and opportunities, restrictions can be placed on social diversity in ways that inhibit a just society (Gutmann 1995: 559). These restrictions may impede certain traditional ways of life. For Gutmann, one of the most basic values that civic education should teach is tolerance. Tolerance is essential for social justice.

Gutmann argues that any defensible standard of civic education should fulfil the commitment to prepare children for responsible citizenship, even in the face of parents' opposition (for example, where parents may resist civic education on account of religious beliefs). The values that should be defended are tolerance, mutual respect and a sense of fairness and civility. This should involve knowledge of the constitution and civic rights. The teaching of tolerance, mutual respect and deliberation does not lead to homogenised lifestyles but teaches children the civic virtues which help in understanding a wide range of social diversity that is necessary for the pursuit of democratic justice (Gutmann 1995: 567, 579).

Brighouse, on the other hand, criticises Gutmann's idea of a just society because of the dilemma that the state faces in teaching beliefs about a just society while, simultaneously, inculcating beliefs in its own legitimacy. According to Brighouse, the state is not supposed to help form the loyalties of its own citizens. The question here is: what are the legitimating conditions of a liberal state? This would determine the permissibility of civic education. Brighouse argues that civic education is only permissible when it also teaches children to be critical of the values they are taught, because legitimacy must be free and authentic. Values taught by civic education must survive critical scrutiny so that we can believe that their legitimacy has not been conditioned by the state (Brighouse 1998: 720).

Brighouse supports autonomy-inducing education but he also points out how autonomy can be limited by poverty, violence and social decay. Civic education that facilitates autonomy, and for that matter, social justice, has to operate in conditions that are free of these limitations.<sup>8</sup>

### *Results of empirical studies on civic education*

We need to test these theoretical assumptions in the light of empirical findings. Bratton et al. did a study in Zambia in 1993 and 1996, which compared individuals who had undergone civic education programmes against a control group who did not. They measured the five important outcomes of civic education: civic knowledge, civic values, policy preferences, civic skills and civic actions. They found that individuals who participate in these programmes display a higher level of civic knowledge and values and are more likely to participate in public life (Bratton et al. 1999: 821). They also, however, make important qualifications of their findings: that the effects of civic education are marginal rather than radical and seem to be built on existing knowledge where some elements of democratic culture were already present. Furthermore, civic education has unintended consequences that may not fit in with planned outcomes. Where the researchers attempted to build political trust, they only managed to create distrustful attitudes. The study also revealed that civic education benefits the privileged. The less educated and the less informed seem to derive fewer benefits from civic education (in the case of Zambia, this was a large proportion of the adult population). It seems as though higher levels of education were needed to understand the messages of civic education. The most disappointing outcome was that the civic education programme could not induce larger numbers of people to vote.

Bratton et al. conclude that civic education's effects are marginal, partly contradictory and socially selective, which has far-reaching implications for policy makers. It means that civic education programmes have to have clear, achievable and measurable goals. Programmes should also be tailored to fit the needs of different groups. The important finding, in this regard, is that civic education has a consistently greater impact on citizen knowledge and values than it has on political behaviour. Civic education in Zambia also seems to benefit from strong partisan loyalties (Bratton et al. 1999: 822).

Finkel et al. studied the impact of civic education in the Dominican Republic and in Poland, seeking to understand the impact of civic education programmes on developing democracies (Finkel et al. 2000). In their research, they wanted to examine the relationship between democracy and institutional trust. One of the assumptions about civic education is that it leads to greater institutional trust – in this respect, one could argue that it violates the principle that the state cannot induce its own legitimacy. But there is no consensus that a large amount of institutional trust is necessarily good for democracies. It could be the case that a certain degree of distrust and scepticism on the part of citizens is necessary for democracy. Finkel et al. explored the relationship between civic education and institutional trust in the Dominican Republic during 1994–1997 by comparing the results of a group of respondents exposed to civic education programmes to the results of a control group. They found that the relationship between civic education and institutional trust was overwhelmingly negative. Those who were exposed to civic education had trust in fewer institutions than those in the control group (Finkel et al. 2000: 1853).

Furthermore, civic education affected the way in which people structured their attitudes: those who were exposed to civic education differentiated between the legislative, executive and judiciary. They interpreted this finding as positive since people distinguished between authoritarian institutions, such as the police, and non-authoritarian institutions such as the legislative branch of government. It also helped them to distinguish NGOs from government.

In comparing the impact of civic education in the Dominican Republic and Poland, Finkel et al. found that the largest effects of civic education were seen in political participation: those who were trained in three or four programmes showed significantly higher levels of political engagement than people in the control groups (1998: 26). They also found that the impact of civic education on participation was not matched by similar increases in civic competence and democratic values. But their most unsettling finding was that democratic values, such as political tolerance and support for liberty, were less influenced by civic education. Neither did they find significant increases in social or institutional trust.

A significant finding, however, was that civic education had the biggest impact among those respondents who were better integrated into civil society groups

and secondary associations. Programmes that had the greatest success coupled formal learning with opportunities to engage in the political process (e.g. involvement in local government). People learn democratic values by being involved in the political process (Finkel et al. 1998: 77).

They also witnessed a ‘fade out’ effect where the impact of civic education begins to fade after a while. Therefore, people need to be exposed to civic education on a regular basis. Accordingly, Finkel et al. propose a life-long learning model for civic education.

The results of these studies show that the impact of civic education is uneven and sometimes contradictory. Outcomes are not necessarily what is expected. In the light of this research, the following points warrant some reflection:

- Civic education seems to build on existing knowledge so that those who have higher levels of education and literacy derive more benefit from it.
- Even if civic education is aimed at teaching certain values, it manages to develop critical thinking in ways that might not make it so easy for states to induce their own legitimacy.
- Civic education may enhance knowledge but may not necessarily contribute to higher rates of participation.
- People who are exposed to participation in the political process absorb the lessons of civic education more easily and learn democratic values through the political process.
- Partisan loyalties seem to be fertile ground for civic education.
- Tolerance and the value of liberty are difficult to learn.
- Education can contribute to decreasing perceptions of threat.

### *Teaching tolerance*

In order to test the impact of teaching tolerance, the team of Wood, Thalhammer, Sullivan, Bird, Avery and Klein designed a six-week curriculum for teaching tolerance to junior high school students in the USA. They argued that traditional civic education had very little impact on students’ political attitudes such as tolerance.<sup>9</sup> They argued that very few civics curricula included teaching the acceptance of unpopular ideas.

They designed a curriculum of eight lessons. The lessons included the following topics: victims of intolerance, intolerance and rights, sources of intolerance,

basic human rights, censorship issues, political tolerance and the US courts, international rights and responsibilities, belief and believers, and developing a class declaration of rights and responsibilities. The curriculum was based on research on adolescent levels of tolerance and how it is related to democratic norms. It teaches that tolerance exists in many societies and it looks at the history of intolerance in the United States. By using pedagogical methods most conducive to learning, they had success in teaching respect for individual rights.

Their pre-test and post-test data shows that teaching tolerance can be both enjoyable and informative. Most students were positive toward the curriculum and learned information about tolerance, increased their understanding of democratic principles and developed critical thinking about civil liberties issues (Wood et al. 1994: 367). An important finding was resistance to the teaching of tolerance by students who were of a more authoritarian personality type.<sup>10</sup> One of the team's conclusions is that when a curriculum specifically addresses the teaching of political tolerance, it has the capacity to affect students' attitudes toward tolerance and the support for civil liberties (Sullivan, Avery, Thalhammer, Wood & Bird 1994: 315). They also conclude that changing adolescents' attitudes toward tolerance seems to be related, not only to attitudes about threat, danger, democracy and rights but also, to personality characteristics such as authoritarianism and self-esteem. Students who showed the best rate of change were low on authoritarianism and had high self-esteem (Bird, Sullivan, Avery, Thalhammer & Wood 1994: 383).

### *The state of civic education in South Africa*

South African education bears the scars of the apartheid past where education was provided along racial lines in a very inequitable manner, where whites received a superior education compared to blacks. In order to socialise pupils to accept apartheid principles, the education system reflected the authoritarianism of the rest of society. Civic education was never part of the apartheid curriculum.

The *White Paper on Education and Training* supports a liberal education that fosters critical thinking as well as respect for diversity (DoE 1995). Drawing on the debate discussed above, it would be possible to argue that we will be stuck with the same problems of creating autonomy and critical thinking in

learners at the expense of the ideals of a multi-cultural society. Enslin, however, argues that the two should be kept in creative tension, rather than thinking of them as a binary opposition (1997: 89).

Civic education is mentioned in the White Paper and forms part of the outcomes-based education of Curriculum 2005. It is diffused across the eight different learning areas rather than existing as a separate subject. Life orientation, as well as human and social sciences in the lower grades, and history in the higher grades, will prepare learners to live as democratic agents. Civic education is measured using both specific and critical outcomes.<sup>11</sup> The *Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R–9 (Schools)* of the National Department of Education, for example, includes a section on ‘The Constitution, National Identity and the Curriculum’ with the following aims:

- Heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.
- Improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person.
- Lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law.
- Build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations. (DoE 2002: 5)

Curriculum 2005 included the following values: a culture of life-long learning and development; critical thinking and problem-solving skills; emotional, moral and social development; a culture of peace and tolerance; a culture of participatory democracy; an awareness of, and appreciation for, the environment; responsible citizenship, and diligence (Schoeman 2002: 350).

At this point, the success of teaching civic education is unclear as outcomes-based education is in the process of being introduced. A tolerance curriculum could easily be integrated across the different learning areas where different examples of tolerance in different contexts can be taught. Tolerance will, however, also need to form part of the curriculum for the Further Education and Training band. In a life-long learning model, everybody needs to be exposed to the teaching of tolerance.

## *Conclusion*

If the assumptions of the social-learning model are correct, South Africans have learned undemocratic values in the past by internalising the norms of an authoritarian regime. Yet, at the same time, many have been engaged in a liberation struggle where the value of having rights has been socialised, although unevenly. In this regard, Gutmann argues that:

‘political education’ – the cultivation of the virtues, knowledge and skills necessary for political participation – has moral primacy over the other purposes of public education in a democratic society. Political education prepares citizens to participate in consciously reproducing their society and conscious social reproduction is the ideal not only of democratic education but also of democratic politics. (Gutmann 1987: 287)

But exactly what type of society do we want to reproduce? We cannot reproduce the society of the past, yet the new one is still in the process of being born. Ultimately, it will have to be a liberal, democratic society. If it is a liberal, democratic society then the curriculum will have to include an understanding of rights and the role of tolerance in a multi-cultural society. In this regard, we will have to accept that autonomy-inducing education is not what will be on offer but an education that will limit practices that are discriminatory and hurtful to certain groups of people in society.<sup>12</sup> In the same sense, the state will create its own legitimacy.

The results of empirical studies, however, have shown that learners develop critical thinking and a questioning attitude towards trust in government, even where civic education sets specific goals of inducing trust. Critical thinking seems to be a spin-off of civic education, regardless of whether it fosters autonomy-inducing outcomes or not. What may be a reason for concern is the seeming inability of civic education to create greater participation among its recipients. This finding may not necessarily be cause for alarm, since too much participation might not be good for democracies (Dalton 1996: 19). Furthermore, tolerance is not an activity but an attitude. What is expected of people who are tolerant is to ‘put up with’ things they disagree with. It is usually the intolerant who show their attitudes through conflict-causing expressions. It is therefore necessary to teach tolerance through a specially designed curriculum, starting at a primary school level. Merely teaching children and

adult learners about rights is not enough, because tolerance research has shown us that people might believe in abstract values, but a slippage occurs when they have to apply those values to specific, concrete conditions in which they have to tolerate their perceived enemies. Civic education will contribute to integrated belief systems that will also help people to cope better with perceived threat. If civic education benefits from partisan loyalties, South Africa has fertile ground for introducing civic education to adult learners.

Social cohesion does not necessarily mean the uncritical acceptance of the rules of a democratic society but, rather, that we cannot exercise our right to be critical in a society where there is a lack of tolerance because tolerance creates the space in which to exercise critical thinking. Therefore, those who believe that the role of civic education should be the creation of autonomous individuals overlook the importance of teaching a specific value like tolerance, without which autonomy is not possible. And that is why Gutmann is correct in arguing that tolerance is a core value of a just society. Social cohesion needs deliberation, not conflict. Tolerance can therefore foster social cohesion.

### *Notes*

- 1 The author acknowledges Jim Gibson's contribution to this collaborative project.
- 2 The fieldwork for this study was done by the surveying company Decisions Surveys International (DSI), in Johannesburg in 1996 and 1997. It was a panel study, using the same respondents in both years, even though there was some attrition in the sample in 1997.
- 3 For a detailed discussion of the sampling process, see Gibson and Gouws (2003, Appendix).
- 4 For a more detailed discussion see Gibson and Gouws (2003, chapter 6).
- 5 For a more detailed explanation see Sullivan, et al. (1982, chapters 6 & 7).
- 6 For an elaboration of these findings, see Gibson and Gouws (1998, 2000).
- 7 If we compare respondents' support for democratic processes and institutions such as competitive elections, multi-party systems, the value of liberty, the rule of law and free media, political tolerance shows the lowest correlation, which is an indication that the other values are easier to learn.
- 8 See also Enslin's (1997) reflections on the application of Rawls' political liberalism to the political context in South Africa.

- 9 For a very thorough review of levels of tolerance among adolescents and how they are related to the broader body of research on political tolerance, see Sullivan et al. (1994) as well as Thalhammer, Wood, Bird, Avery & Sullivan (1994).
- 10 This confirms the findings of a large body of tolerance research. See for example, Sullivan et al. (1994) and Bird et al. (1994).
- 11 Discussion with Dr Trevor van Louw, Senior Curriculum Advisor for human and social sciences and history for the National Department of Education, January, 2003.
- 12 For an interesting approach to the accommodation of vulnerable members in multi-cultural societies, see Shachar (2001).

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# 3 *Cultural justice: the pathway to reconciliation and social cohesion*

Chirevo V Kwenda

In this chapter, I make a very simple suggestion. I submit that what we do with our cultures is of crucial importance to the achievement of reconciliation on a societal level. Culture, as we all know, has been used as a tool for good in human relations or a weapon for harm. In those episodes of modern human history when one group of people has enslaved or colonised another, culture was often used for the latter purpose, with horrendous consequences. For this, and other reasons, culture demands our closest and undivided attention.

## *Culture*

Culture has been variously defined by scholars from different disciplines, especially from those in the social sciences. Of the important points to note about these definitions is the fact that culture is about humans in the multiple and discrete groupings that distinguish them one from another. Culture has to do with how these people live their lives and how these identifiable ways of life come back to define the people who generate and perpetuate them. Tomoko Masuzawa captures this, poignantly, by recalling that culture has often been cast as ‘the collective genius and the destiny of a whole people or nation’ (1998: 82). Of very special interest to us, in this chapter, is the suggestion she makes in analysing European understandings of culture that reading and interpreting culture, as is the case with reading literature, may be ‘morally edifying and spiritually enriching’ (1998: 82). Assuming that this assessment is accurate, it would seem that for culture to function in this manner, it has to be experienced in a positive way. It would follow also that if it is experienced negatively, culture could have the opposite effect, becoming morally degrading and spiritually impoverishing. To speak of cultural justice is to expect that cultures be experienced positively so that their healing and enriching capacities may be released. It is also a protest against conditions

and circumstances that make negative experiences of cultures seem inevitable, or even, desirable. South Africa, both in the past and in the present, furnishes an excellent example of the power of culture to yield positive or negative results.

In South Africa, given the brief but traumatic history of colonialism and apartheid, culture has come to be a serious bone of contention with some cultures being regarded as superior to others. And with changing political fortunes, corresponding patterns of political power have come to subtly influence the fate of various cultures within the cauldron of a multi-cultural society. Yet, culture can also be seen as a resource that can be used strategically for betterment in the process of nation building. Where culture interfaces with religion, this potential for liberating – as well as oppressing – uses of culture is heightened. While South Africa's past is a good example of the use of culture to separate, label, stereotype, discriminate against and oppress some people, while enhancing the privileges of others, it remains to be seen how the present democratic dispensation redresses and transcends this situation.

When people speak of 'our way of life', they are talking about culture. We know that for these four little words, 'our way of life', people are often prepared to kill or be killed. In such instances, it becomes clear that there is a very small step from 'a way of life' to life itself. Thus, a threat to a people's culture tends to be perceived and experienced as a personal threat. This happens, for instance, when cultural symbols, statues, historic buildings, music, languages and so on, are thought to be receiving nowhere near enough respect.

The momentous transformations that are presently under way in South Africa bring this up in ways that raise important questions for our consideration. The general thrust of these affirmative and restorative activities is in the direction of preserving languages, promoting cultural forms such as the arts, ownership and control of knowledge through education, and the right to religious belief and practice. The focus is often on values that issue forth from these areas, not only to know them but also to endeavour to see how the value systems of various ethnic, racial or religious groups can be harmonised or reconciled. In other words, the challenge is to find some common ground. In many cases, this relatively peaceful work is taking place on the heels of a violent phase in which the values of one group were imposed on other peoples, most especially on those who were regarded as subjects.

In this chapter, I suggest we actually need to do more than create harmonisation and homogenisation, if for no other reason than that these strategies still pose the danger of hegemony. What is needed is respectful, functional co-existence. Respectful, in that there is mutuality in paying attention, according regard and recognition, as well as taking seriously what the other regards as important. Functional, in the sense that the co-existence is predicated on a degree of interaction that invokes the cultural worlds of the players, in essence, what they, in their distinctive ways, take for granted.

### *What is taken for granted*

At a very significant level, culture is what people take for granted. It is that comfort zone within, and out of which, we think, act and speak. If it is our 'mother culture', we do all these things without having to be self-conscious about what we are doing. However, when we are operating within or on the basis of a learned culture as opposed to an inborn one, this process is reversed. People find themselves being self-conscious about every thought, word or deed. This is what happens when conquerors impose their language and customs on the vanquished. This may sound matter of fact, but it remains a source of much resentment on the part of subject peoples. We only have to look at the fierce resistance to cultural impositions mounted by subjugated peoples against their oppressors. Closer to home, the mind quickly goes back to the 1976 revolt of the children of Soweto, when school children and youths rose against an education system that forced them to use Afrikaans as the medium of communication in school.

This resentment and the attendant revolt were not only a matter of cultural or ethnic pride, to be sure, but there was a tremendous amount of that pride. All people everywhere are proud of their cultures and languages. The reactions we see in instances of cultural imposition have both a practical and pragmatic side to them. It must be appreciated that thinking, communicating and following instructions or orders in the categories of a foreign language, and acting according to strange customs, is extremely stressful. If linguists are correct in concluding that accurate reading of the emotional content of speech may be 'crucial to communication', then the stress level is bound to go up in second language communication, as the following observation attests:

Considering the delicacy and often the subtlety of the language of emotion, understanding and appropriately producing language which expresses emotion can be a difficult as well as essential skill for the learner to acquire, because getting a reading on the emotion of the speaker, especially when emotion is not the topic, can be crucial to communication. (Rintell 1989: 241)

But then those who have never worn that shoe have no way of knowing where, or how, it pinches. When there is, what appears to be, a sudden knee-jerk uprising on the part of the oppressed, they shake their heads and express the most innocent and uncomprehending disbelief at such irrational volatility. Little do they know that sometimes every word uttered and every act performed by the subject is an emotional and psychological burden.

This is what I mean by the importance of what is taken for granted. Where people live by what they naturally take for granted, or where the details of everyday life coincide with what is taken for granted, we can say there is cultural justice – at least in this limited sense of freedom from constant self-consciousness about every little thing. Cultural injustice occurs when some people are forced, by coercion or persuasion, to submit to the burdensome condition of suspending – or more permanently surrendering – what they naturally take for granted, and then begin to depend on what someone else takes for granted. The reality is that substitution of what is taken for granted is seldom adequate. This means that, in reality, the subjugated person has no linguistic or cultural ‘default drive’, that critical minimum of ways, customs, manners, gestures and postures that facilitate uninhibited, unselfconscious action.

The world today, and certainly countries like South Africa, function because there are millions of people who every moment of their lives, in many contexts, surrender what they normally take for granted to assume the language and customs of others, especially in the workplace. Often there is no recognition of the sacrifice involved, since proficiency in the ‘official’ language is generally seen as a requirement of the job itself. By cultural justice, we mean that the burden of constant self-consciousness must be shared or, at the very least, recognised and, where possible, rewarded. The sharing part is very important. For it is only in the mutual vulnerability that this entails that the meaning of intimacy and reciprocity in community can be discovered. It is in this sharing that, on the one hand, cultural diffidence is transcended and, on the other,

cultural arrogance overcome. By cultural diffidence we mean the disposition that causes oppressed people either to be ashamed of their culture or to simply ignore it as irrelevant in the modern world. One way in which cultural arrogance expresses itself is when one sees in other cultures not simply difference but deficiency (Krog 1998: 336). It was cultural arrogance that caused British colonists of the Eastern Cape in the nineteenth century to rightly see ‘not a shade of difference between the Kafir [Xhosa] and the Fingoe [Mfengu]’, but then inexplicably posit stealing as the common denominator between the two groups (Lester 1998: 234).

When we speak of reconciliation, it seems easier to think of what needs to be done to redress inequities in employment and to provide opportunities, access and attainment in education, health and leisure. Beyond this cultural work, there often seems to be no consideration of the cultural media by which all these are to be mediated. Yet this is of the utmost importance. For there can be no reconciliation, let alone social cohesion, where hearts are clogged with resentment and wills are chafing to revolt.

But what does this mean in real terms? How can this noble intent be translated into reality in real life? In a number of ways: in the case of South Africa, we may want to start by noting that the country boasts not one or two official languages, but eleven. ‘Official’, in this broad sense, means that all these languages are recognised by law and, wherever possible, will be chosen as media of communication within their own cultural areas. They will be featured on radio and television for the benefit of the people who speak them. Beyond the practical dimension of doing all this, is the unstated, but immensely important, value of recognising and affirming the people concerned. This is how friendships are made, when regard is shown by one person for what is taken for granted by the other person. Speaking someone’s tongue goes a long way in laying the foundation for goodwill, without which reconciliation cannot take place and social cohesion remains beyond reach. But before we see what this means, and how it can be done, we shall take a look at the vexed question of the relation of justice to revenge.

### *Justice and revenge*

Just as it is easy for the quest for justice to degenerate into a craving for revenge, it is all too easy for the bogeyman of revenge to be invoked to forestall

justice. Rabbi Harold Kushner defines revenge as ‘punishment in the name of justice, tarnished by taking pleasure in hurting the person being punished’ (2001: 62). Revenge is driven by an attitude that says, ‘You must hurt because I am hurting.’ In situations that call for redress of past wrongs, the charge of revenge mongering is only too often waved threateningly to silence irate victims. One thinks here of what often happens with affirmative action and racially defined empowerment programmes, which never fail to cause bitterness in those who fear that their entrenched privileges are under threat.

In an attempt to steer clear of revenge of any kind in his discussion of justice, Kushner persuasively argues that, in the majority of cases, what victims are actually looking for in their pursuit of justice is not revenge and the perverse sweetness of watching the victimiser squirming in the hot seat of punishment; what the victim wants, he submits, is empowerment. The victim seeks to see the ‘restoring [of] the power balance to what it was before the crime’ (2001: 71).

This is a very important insight, especially when we recall that the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was plagued by a phobia of justice on the part of those who (in the grip of what has been called ‘the closed master narrative of national reconciliation expressed as Christian forgiveness and healing’) associate justice with revenge (Grunebaum-Ralph & Stier 1999: 146). The commission’s thinkers and other analysts had to juggle an assortment of formulations of justice, distinguishing between punitive justice and restorative justice, for instance. According to Kushner, the latter, as we have just encountered above, is the driving quest of the victim.

However, as a general rule, in the case of cultural justice in postcolonial Africa, some significant differences from Kushner’s model are to be noted. Of special interest is the fact that there is no *status quo* to restore, because there never was an ideal cultural balance of power between the indigenous cultures of Africa and the interloping, imperial cultures of colonialism and apartheid. What was obtained, then, were isolated, cultural monads consistent with the later ideology and practice of separate development. It was a relationship, moreover, that was characterised by what Engelbert Mveng calls ‘anthropological poverty’ or, in our case, what we may call anthropological injustice. According to Mveng, anthropological poverty:

consists in despoiling human beings not only of what they have, but of everything that constitutes their being and essence – their

identity, history, ethnic roots, language, culture, faith, creativity, dignity, pride, ambitions, right to speak ... we could go on indefinitely. (1983: 220)

The phrase ‘despoiling of human beings’ aptly encompasses what we mean by cultural injustice in this chapter, and what obtained in the days of colonialism and apartheid in Africa. If this state of affairs seemed tenable on the practical level then, it was because business and governance had not yet shunted these erstwhile discrete cultural entities together into a disparate conglomerate that, nevertheless, continued to be dominated and bullied by the cultures of the conquerors – cultures whose confidence had swelled since the European Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation (Rumscheidt 1998: 62).

Today, we cannot aspire to go back to the relatively uncomplicated bliss of voluntary, or administratively, imposed cultural apartheid. Neither can we afford the relative luxury of simple restoration. Therefore, restorative justice, as appealing as it might sound in post-TRC days, is not what we want. It falls short of our needs and aspirations, and would distort the picture for us. What we need is something more imaginative and creative. Perhaps we could call it creative justice. A form of justice called forth by the exigencies of a new dispensation of nation building and development. This is a form of justice dictated by the wisdom of common sense and summoned by the imperative of common survival. The justice part ensures that there is equity. The creative part facilitates redress and innovation, taking us forward to hitherto undreamed of vistas. Thus, we are not looking for a new type of apartheid in which the motto is each cultural group for itself and God for us all. Or where, by some reverse logic, one or more of the indigenous cultural forms (language, for instance) dominates. Our search is for such respectful interest in our neighbours as will allow us to sing their praises and, thereby, come to know them and appreciate their plight.

### *Praise therapy*

Let me offer a few examples of what may count as models of the right attitude or spirit for reconciliation. I shall call these: salutation, conception and appeasement. Throughout southern Africa, and in many other parts of Africa, the way to show that one knows someone is by placing the person within the network of his or her relationships in the family, the lineage and community.

This is usually done by reciting the praises of that particular lineage. The specific context may be that of greetings and salutations or in expressing gratitude. To thank this one person is to invoke his or her people, both living and dead.

Conception, in this particular instance, refers to a practice of the Karanga people, a branch of the Shona of Zimbabwe. It is said that when the Karanga get down to the business of making babies, husband and wife sing to each other the praises of the other's people (Ashwanden 1982: 3–4). A cultured Karanga man shows his class and good upbringing by his ability to sing, with the permission marriage confers, the right blanket praises of his wife's people; likewise with respect to the polished bride or wife. It is said that in this mutual demonstration of respect and recognition, the ancestors of both sides draw close to supply the spiritual raw materials for the conception of a new life. It is all wrapped in praise.

The last model falls more directly in the area of reconciliation. It is said that when a Shona man has wronged another, and there is real danger of an inter-family feud breaking out, a go-between is sent to the injured party on a peace-making mission. Upon arriving among the offended group, the peacemaker, well aware that nothing he has to say can melt the hardness of wronged hearts, starts working on them to soften them. He does this by singing, over and over, the praises of that lineage and pleading for reconciliation. It is said that no injury is deep enough to resist the effects of praise therapy.

In each one of these cases, the desired result is achieved only because the people concerned know the other person's or group's praises. They know how to reach into the depths of the other's being and touch them where it matters, where, in the evocative words of the writer of the New Testament Letter to the Hebrews (4:12), we encounter the parting of the soul and the spirit. But how can you sing my praises when you do not know me, when you have made no effort to know anything about me beyond that critical minimum required for control, be it in law or in the workplace?

We live in a world made by makers of history. Makers of history, by definition, also become makers of knowledge. In the making of knowledge by history-makers, other knowledges are pushed aside, denigrated, silenced, erased and forgotten. Among these is the knowledge of how to sing people's praises, the praises that cheer their hearts when they are sad, that affirm them in their

happiness, that bring life to embryos in the womb, that thaw the ice of chilled relations and cool the flames of anger and hurt. Maybe that is why we are so quick to pick up the sword to fix the world. That may be why we do not see the absurdity of taking up arms in the name of democracy, justice, human rights and even God!

Cultural justice requires that we go back and forage in the lean pastures of forgotten praises, customs and languages.

### *The way forward*

How should we proceed from here? I wish to propose a few things that can actually be done by individuals as well as by public and corporate entities. Firstly, there can be no doubt regarding the importance of awareness-raising about the cultural burden of our social intercourse. Every adult person, as well as every young person and child, needs to know this. This knowledge should form a critical element of the socialisation process. This means that school curricula, public policy, corporate mission statements and staff policies, and many others, should serve as vehicles for this enterprise.

Secondly, it should be made a requirement that every South African be proficient in at least one European-based official language and at least one African-based official language. It will be up to government policy, at various levels of society, to inculcate this value and provide a means of recognising and rewarding satisfactory and above-average commitment, effort and achievement in sharing the cultural burden of the social intercourse of a diverse and changing society.

The rationale and expected outcome is not only that a burden shared is a burden halved, as the saying goes; it is rather that the sharing of the burden will be, at the same time, a revelatory experience. It is especially expected that in the process of sharing the burden, discovery is made about the humanity of those others who otherwise seem not to matter, yet are the ones who bear the brunt of the cultural burden of the nation's social intercourse – without which, development is hard to imagine, let alone achieve.

Thirdly, the discovery and expected change of heart takes place in continuous centrifugal and centripetal exchanges as in one moment, one sings the praises of the other and in the next, one hears one's own praises being sung by the

other. Ideally, change of heart will lead to behaviour modification. Sensitivity to the values, hopes, fears and anxieties, as well as aspirations, of the other person or group is created, sharpened or heightened. In this way, the gap that divides society is progressively shrunk, if not altogether closed. This, of necessity, is an ideal. The reality on the ground is bound to be a lot more complex and complicated. The hope of a change of heart, and the link of this to possible behaviour change, remains just that, hope.

We must hasten to point out, moreover, that the metaphor of singing the praises of the other should not be taken to mean always saying nice things about the other. It is not forever basking in the sun of mutual flattery. Rather, it includes, in its very essence, constructive criticism. For instance, on the official level, the Nguni *mbongi* or the Shona *rombe* can get away with scathing criticism of the ruler and the ruling class, partly by virtue of the sacredness of his office but also because of his professional ingenuity and masterly weaving of positive and negative strands of praise.

Whether on this official level, or in the more personal encounter, a distinguishing mark of this kind and quality of praise and criticism is the degree of intimate and caring knowledge it presupposes. In other words, the value and impact of the praise-criticism lies in its genuineness and authenticity, its foundation in knowledge and genuine public concern. The praise master cannot afford to be uninformed, reckless or vindictive. His motivation is always rooted in the public good, whether of family, or clan or the wider polity.

### *Broadening the circle: difference as an asset*

This social practice and the yearning for community among humans, it seems, must be placed within a broader, ecological context. It is becoming increasingly fashionable to think ecologically these days. Not that humans are only now (through the Human Genome Project, for instance) waking up to their intricate links with the rest of creation, especially other sentient animals. There has been, to varying degrees in different cultural and religious traditions, a philosophical or theological awareness and practice of human relatedness to animals. In the European Christian as well as secular traditions, animals were often seen as exemplars of right moral and ethical behaviour (Yamamoto 1998: 81). Otherwise, too often, they were seen in crass instrumentalist terms, as a means to the end of satisfying human needs.

African people all over the continent have long cherished a special understanding of their relation to animals. Expressions of this awareness and its practical outworkings abound in a variety of cultural forms. The totem system is probably the most elaborate one. This is a kind of profound discourse whereby a clan adopts an animal or a natural feature as its progenitor. The clan's praises reflect this. Each time a member of the clan is praised, the animal's distinctive traits and features are lauded. When the human ancestors are honoured with feast and sacrifice, the animal is extolled. Once again the praises of the animal are based on accurate, if informal, research and deep insight into its nature and ways. We may rightly speak of respect based on intimate knowledge.

Now, this is more than instrumental exploitation of the animal. There is not the arrogance that says, 'You are meat for my stomach and my beast of burden.' In fact, the totemic animal is considered sacred. It is taboo. It may neither be killed, nor eaten, by any member of the clan.

Of course, the system's ecological compass is limited as it leaves out other animals that are not sacred to that particular clan. In mitigation, however, it may be pointed out that, taken as a whole, the system tends to be fairly inclusive as animals that are left out by one clan are likely to be sacred to other clans. However, this may be a beginning, an entry into the makings of an African ecological discourse. The point we are making is not that animals should model good behaviour for humans (although that exigency cannot be taken lightly). That debate, important as it is, may be for another place and time. Nor are we trying to include animals in the pale of culture. Our concern here is that African orientations towards animals might model for us the right way, socially, to engage difference without co-opting it or sacrificing its integrity.

It may be objected that where humans are meant to hear their praises being sung to them, animals, by virtue of their linguistic limitations, do not have the same privilege. However, we do not exactly know that. Those who practise the totemic system believe that the relationship is reciprocal, that totemic animals recognise and take care of those humans with whom they are totemically linked. In southern Africa, especially among such Xhosa groups as the Mpondo and Mpondomise, the mystical bond between humans and animals takes the form of *amatyala* or *izilo* – Mpondo and Mpondomise respective designations for ancestors (*amathongo*). In this form, the ancestors protect, provide and care for their living descendants (Hammond-Tooke 1975: 26–27).

The simple lesson is that in African thought and practice, animals matter. They are not simply 'good to think', they are good to know, respect and take heed of (Levi-Strauss cited in Yamamoto, 1998: 80–89). By the same token, difference matters. If approached with mutual respect and in the spirit of reciprocity, it can yield profound social benefits. Indeed, it can be the basis of social cohesion. The rapprochement with radical difference, represented in the human-animal encounter, underlines the centrality of community and respect in African discourses of the human. It says that human self-identity and social viability is only possible through the mediation of that otherness, which is essential to the reciprocal differentiation that makes the community possible.

Related to, but different from, the praise singing of everyday salutation that we discussed above is the illustrative practice among some southern African groups, such as the Shona, of formal greeting. Often greeting may be directed to one focal point, such as the chief, but if there is a gathering the greeting will have to be so inclusive as to recognise all present by their praise names. This is a feat of such magnitude that even a person who is the most accomplished in the cultural skills of social finesse may be at a loss as to how to include everyone without prejudice.

The Shona found a solution in co-operative greeting, just as they invented for themselves co-operative work, learning and many other ventures. The new arrival asks the congregation to help him 'raise a greeting'. Once the greeting has been raised to the chief, or the most eminent person present whose praises are common knowledge, the task passes on from being the initiator's responsibility, as it is taken up by the congregation in a domino-like flow and as each person identifies a neighbour who has not been recognised and proceeds to raise his or her praises. In this way, community and solidarity is built through careful recognition and acknowledgement of one another.

I cite these as resources that indigenous black African culture offers to stimulate thought and cross-fertilise social practice. By citing them, I mean to lift them up from being treated as mere ethnographic curiosities and marvellous exotica. I mean further for them to be taken seriously as cornerstones of value systems that inform social practice among indigenous people throughout the African continent. If this is to be the African century and even the African millennium, as some propose, then those orientations that define what Africans take for granted need to be delineated and explicated. They need to be distilled

and injected into the global culture as a corrective and stabiliser. For this to happen, these cultural ways must first be practised at home by all those who are proud to carry an African identity. These practices will then radiate outwards to encounter, if not confront, the global cultural scene.

Thus difference is neither an impediment nor a hindrance to social cohesion. It is rather a facilitator, and indeed, the ground of unity. The African example of human-animal relations highlights difference on two important levels. There is the all too apparent inter-species difference between humans and animals, and there is the intra-species difference where human clans are differentiated on the basis of different classes or types of animal within the animal species. Both boundaries are casually crossed and vigilantly patrolled at the same time: crossed in obedience to the ecological imperative and patrolled in the interests of that differentiation that allows for respect – based on knowledge, in the first case and, in the latter case, facilitating legitimate (as opposed to incestuous) human self-reproduction.

In singing the praises of animals, we learn what it means to sing the praises of our fellows and in singing the praises of others, we come to understand something about ourselves, and our own identity, at a fundamental level. For those of a religious disposition, it goes without saying that it is in praising a deity that humans discover themselves and gain a perspective on otherness. For Africans, this does not necessarily contradict the above observations about praises to animals. To the extent that otherness to humanity forms the common denominator between animals and divinity, praising the one has a similar effect to praising the other. Moreover, Africans may further argue that animals may actually be closer to a deity than humans are.

On the other hand, what we find in humans is quite spectacular. Mark Diller attempts to tease this out by asking a poignant question: ‘If you had truly god-like powers, how would you behave?’ (Diller 2000). Admittedly, he was introducing a discussion of the power computers place in human hands. But in a very real way, humans do possess godlike powers, in the sense that they are capable of touching others at the very core of their being. This author’s instrument of choice for this task is praise therapy. In the search for social cohesion, difference – whether cultural, linguistic, racial, ethnic or class – cannot be used as an excuse for apartheid-type thinking or practice. As we have seen, difference can help rather than hinder unity. It is the ground, the basis, of social cohesion.

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## *Part II: Production*

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## 4 *Labour, globalisation and social cohesion in South Africa*

Tony Ehrenreich

I am going to try and present our view on globalisation and what that means to workers and those of us in organised labour. By way of introduction, I want to observe that we are always fascinated by many of the extremely good, high quality intellectual presentations that are made by academics on globalisation. This is because they help to draw our attention to real issues that lie beneath the obvious. They also provide empirical evidence that helps us, in some way, to quantify the day-to-day experiences of working families. What I would really like to share with you today is somewhat different to the empiricism of academic discourse. Statistics do not bleed. Working families do. It is the consequences of globalisation for workers, and the problems that they experience arising from this phenomenon, that we want to share with you in some way.

We believe that in our attempts to transform, redefine and build a commitment amongst the inhabitants of our beautiful country, we need to strive for a South Africa 'incorporated'. This means seeking to build and harness all the prospective energies of our diverse people around a common programme for transformation, so that people benefit in a very different way from the way in which society advances if led by market forces alone. The issues that need to be addressed are underpinned by the different cultural experiences that make for our experience of society. Therefore, it is absolutely essential that we engage in a dialogue and talk around the issues that confront us all, whether we are in government, business, labour or the community.

We in organised labour are committed to the institution of Nedlac because it provides institutional ways to talk through many of the differences that we have with employers, the government and even with the community. It is also central to ensuring that we are able to direct our policies in a way that is mindful of the very real experiences of key constituencies in our society. Our examination of many of the international examples, be they Holland, Ireland or

some of the Scandinavian countries, is based on one common feature that stands out in these societies. It is self evident that all these countries have achieved economic growth, sustainable development and greater social equity through the promotion and enhancement of social values, especially solidarity. That, to an important extent, becomes for us in labour, a requirement of the success of a society.

The rise of globalisation and its manifestation in South Africa has tended to expose the harsh side of this phenomenon associated with capitalism. This is not a blanket condemnation of globalisation because, without a doubt, there are many important opportunities that present themselves and arise from, or are a result of, globalisation. However, the negative aspects of globalisation have equally profound effects in our society because the power that transnational corporations, among the more important organisations, have obtained within the globalising world over the last few decades, has meant that they completely undermine the sovereignty of the state so that they can define policies in their own best interests. These are usually measured against the needs of their own people. These days, policies are measured against what is defined as acceptable by the neo-liberal agenda and have pushed us towards an economic trajectory that, according to our own experiences, is making it difficult for South Africa to realise many of its developmental objectives.

Many of the multinational corporations which are active in South Africa pose the biggest challenge to us because there is no way in which we can discipline them to play a role in where the country needs to go. One of the biggest problems we face is that multinational corporations are interested only in the opportunities whereby they are best able to maximise profit, regardless of the needs of our society. This interest has proven itself to be out of synch with the aspirations of the majority of people in this country. What we are seeing in our engagement with globalisation is that, apart from the growing inequalities, globally, between persons and between nations, the phenomenon has directly contributed to an increase in the inequalities that existed in South Africa in the days of apartheid. We have the second highest levels of inequality in the world and we have not been able to address that in any significant way. If anything, the levels of inequality between black and white have increased both in relative and in real terms. If we think of our society as a cup of cappuccino, the white froth on the top of the coffee now has a sprinkling on top that is the chocolate. These few new entrants to the elite, black people who

have benefited economically from the transition, some of whom have even become obscenely rich within our society, have done so at the expense of the programme of transformation and the advancement of the majority of black people. We believe that the inequality that continues to exist in South Africa is one of the crucial factors that is tearing apart the social fabric of this nation because we are not able to address the backlog and the increasingly harsh conditions under which working families find themselves.

In many respects, the dominant contradiction in our society is no longer one simply based on race, but is one in which people are starting to align themselves behind class interests because, in some ways, race, unlike in the past, is no longer the only obvious contradiction. The new government has focused on resolving the issue of national grievance; and resolution has been successful, to some extent, with the 1994 elections and what this delivered. However, the economic consequences of apartheid have not been addressed in any significant way. Cosatu has been particularly unhappy about government's economic policy and openly condemns the policies that have led us to the juncture at which our country now finds itself. The overwhelming problem of unemployment has been largely a consequence of our agreements with the World Trade Organisation – when we were reintegrated into this new globalising world after the isolation and protectionism of apartheid – as well the cutbacks in social expenditure, which has seen a number of state, or public sector, employees losing their jobs and joining the sea of unemployed in our country. Job losses are a hugely negative feature in our society in that there are a million people who have been effectively sentenced to unemployment as a result of incorrect economic policy choices. Privatisation of basic services is another aspect of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) policy that has a further devastating effect on the lives of people in South Africa. That is why people went on strike on 7 October 2002 – ultimately, privatisation provides opportunities for the wealthy while turning the basic services that the majority of people rely upon into commodities that are sold at exorbitant prices to our communities. This has an extremely disempowering effect on our people and weakens the state's ability to play a role in developing the economy.

I now want to come to the point, which I suppose is closer to home for us, that is, the issue of labour laws and where workers find themselves in the post-apartheid labour market. Without doubt, after 1996, with the introduction of

a new *Labour Relations Act*, we have seen amazing advances in the area of labour legislation that have improved the lives of workers significantly. The weaknesses are that we have not always been able to implement these legislative changes in ways that actually improve, in very practical terms, the lives of people in South Africa. Labour rights are important human rights in our country and we should all be playing a much more active role in ensuring that they are applied. This means that all constituencies have a role in this regard, whether government, community, labour or business.

However, the one thing that must underpin an agenda in our country is the fact that those labour rights, as great as they are, mean nothing if one is unemployed. Unemployment relegates labour legislation to being simply an academic concept located somewhere in the many books of our society. So the key issue is that we have to make sure there are jobs and that these are sustainable enough to meet the growing demands of maintaining a decent standard of living and that they are underpinned by well regulated laws.

Aside from the impact that such improvements have for workers themselves, the concept of decent work has an important broader role within the economy. Decent work, employment, economic activity all function as growth drivers in terms of increasing the levels of demand in this country. If people are earning better salaries, they will consume more products. This moves the economy forward because the greater demand for products expands in the job market. Nearly 40 per cent of our population is unemployed. This means that there are almost five million people who are eligible for the job market but are unable to find jobs or provide an income in their homes. We are not like the Scandinavian countries that have social security grants and a comprehensive social security system to protect people from the harsh economic reality of globalisation. There is nothing like that here. People are starving and living under horrendous conditions, and so their commitment to a notion of working towards the future is difficult to inspire because they see that the standard of living of the wealthy continues much as before, or even improves.

In some instances, the conditions under which ordinary people live have not improved as much as they should have. I say that not wanting to undermine the very important achievements we have made so far, in terms of electrification, water provision, education and sanitation. All of those are revolutionary for women who have had to walk to collect firewood and fetch water, and then

carry that home. Those are important changes. When we reflect on these issues, we tend to spend more time on the negative rather than the positive and, hopefully, we can learn how to sing our praises along with pointing out the areas of difficulty that require more attention, more commitment and more funding to move us in the right direction.

Ultimately, we have to deal with questions of how to address poverty. In this respect, matters relating to the social wage, as well as the struggle for resources within this country are of fundamental importance. The state must take responsibility for providing some of the essential basic services, such as water, electricity, health, education and transport. In our own experience, in the Western Cape, for example, there has been a big battle between the labour movement and Metrorail around the provision of transport services, which is not only about safe and comfortable transport but also has had to do with getting to your destination alive. At the moment, it is extremely dangerous to travel by train because of crime and poor maintenance. The battle is about making sure that we improve our public transport system so that poor people are more mobile and can feel part of the Western Cape, part of South Africa. We frequently hear from some of our members that many of their parents who are pensioners have never been to the Waterfront or that their kids have never been to the beach. They live in the shadow of Table Mountain and they have never been to the ocean. Why? Because we have a public transport system that is the same as it was during the days of apartheid and continues to completely segregate the different racial groupings. It is crucial that we measure the perceptions, as well as the frustrations, of our people in order to assess the enormous effort needed to make things work. People are still being marginalised from the processes that are able to improve their lives and we need to ensure that advances are made in many of those areas.

We believe that it is the government's responsibility to co-operate with the business sector to make sure that they can provide people with jobs. At the same time, it is up to the government to make sure that people do not starve, are safe and secure, are educated and protected from preventable illnesses. In any other society with the social problems we have, there would have been chaos. The fact that it has not been the case here is due to the patience of people and their trust in the government. This should not be taken for granted. The challenge we are faced with is that we have got to move faster. We have to find out what promotes social cohesion. There has to be more equity, as well

as more participation. How do we promote that? How do we get that going in different areas of governance while at the same time not reducing ourselves to inactivity?

We also need to determine what different people's perceptions about South Africa are. For example, our perceptions of security in South Africa are shaped by some of the doom and gloom we hear about through the media. I am sure that we would be a much more positive nation if we were exposed to more news of the wonderful things we are doing, our achievements and our contributions globally. But we disregard the amazing achievements of 1994 where we moved from such an intensely conflictual relationship to one of relative harmony and peace. We have to ensure that we remain in touch with the issues that affect people in our country in order to be able to address them in ways that will have an impact on their day-to-day lives. If we do not change the way we do business, I am afraid we are not going to be able to fulfil our objectives of building a better life for all our people.

The relation between the state and communities is crucial. Although communities might be formed as a consequence of state action, the nature of the state itself is also the consequence of the actions of specific communities acting out their own interest and agendas. In many instances, communities go through their own natural cycles of development that clarify their most important values. In the pursuit of their particular interests, however, the social fabric can be destroyed because people can see the state only in terms of the interests of their particular community. They see their common bond, their commonalities, reflected in the image of the state. So, when there are clashes around questions of interest, those conflicts can undermine the social fabric, destroying the social cohesion that holds the larger society together.

The challenge that faces the state in attempting to assert its role is having to do this in a context in which interests have been disturbed so thoroughly that one group in the conflict has been able to secure all its interests in society, while others have been deprived of any significant interest at all. In the South African context, with the undoing of black communities under the kind of leadership that existed in the era of apartheid, the 'white community' was involved in a conscious plan to secure certain interests, particularly its own, and to dominate and control involvement in the affairs of the country. Now we want to restore the balance, the sense of community and the values that

should have existed, but we expect that restoration to happen without a revolution in terms of the ownership and control of material resources. Is it possible to establish good governance, with regard to the huge inequalities that exist in our society, without a structured, premeditated intervention that is transformative in relation to the distribution of resources?

With respect to globalisation, we disagree with the assumption that goes along with this phenomenon that 'one size fits all'. Surely, that is not the case. The levels and stages of development in different countries around the world point us to the fact that one globalisation does not fit all. In South Africa, for instance, we are told that industrial policy must maintain certain tariff lines in order to defend new investors as they develop their business initiatives into more efficient operations. The strength of South African business, the opportunities and challenges that it faces, is not the same as that of business in the United States or Europe, where they are now at a level at which they do not need protection from other industries for them to supply basic or export products. What may be true in some other countries is also not reflective of the social circumstances in our country; for instance, where there are casualties of economic restructuring, workers and their families do not have the social security that workers in Europe do.

There is no question about the dominance of the neo-liberal agenda. That agenda is being imposed in countries all over the world. But equally powerful is the fact that there is an emergent challenge to this agenda because its hegemony can no longer simply be assumed. We only have to look at the consequences of World Bank policies and structural adjustment programmes in many African countries. The absolute failure of these policies and programmes has resulted in the admission, even by the World Bank, that they were incorrect. When former World Bank economists, such as Joseph Stiglitz, start to criticise many of those prescriptions, pointing out their weaknesses in convincing detail, we see new opportunities for developing alternatives. The global solidarity movement that we see emerging in the world social order is another demonstration that we are starting to build a new kind of social cohesion across the globe. As capital globalises much faster than responses to globalisation by states, workers, communities and sectoral interest groupings can respond to it, we now see people's movements that have been able to challenge many of the attempts to put in place an agenda that is not mindful of the needs of developing countries or of the poor in general.

Of course, this situation raises the problem of the choices that we make in South Africa. The whole focus of GEAR is to put in place an economic environment that attracts foreign investment. There may have been some attraction of investment since the year 2000, but during 2001 direct foreign investment came down significantly. Most of that investment, in any event, was speculative investment in the economy. The problem, therefore, is broader than merely a development issue. We see that our own attempts in South Africa to present the best possible picture to the rest of the world is not attracting investment, which is instead going to the United States, China and Europe. It is a mockery. We should question those with offshore projects that are now taking capital outside of South Africa, because if South African business people are not demonstrating confidence in the economy, how are South Africans going to get somebody else to think that theirs is an economy worth investing in? Certainly these unpatriotic capitalists are partly responsible for some of the problems in our economy but not for all the ills. However, it is obvious that they can play a more constructive role.

In Nepal, there might be opportunities for a regional trade block that starts to conduct business with an agenda which is mindful of what happens on our African continent. Nevertheless, it provides some opportunities that we need to be critical of. What underpins the integration of the African continent cannot simply be a GEAR for Africa. An opportunity is starting to present itself for us to shape many of the issues that apply to our neighbouring countries and therefore new governance must be able to be prescriptive in terms of the values that shape the future of our continent without this being an imposition of an imperialist kind.

A policy of prescribed assets has always been something that we, in the union, have said that we would accept. That was how the apartheid government built the infrastructure and services for the white minority. They used their savings and pension fund money to develop the country. Obviously, this was done in a skewed manner; but if they could do it why can't we do the same now, with a progressive intention? It is amazing that government is so hostile towards prescribed assets as a policy, too. The reason that government rejects this policy is because the foreigners it seeks to entice as investors, allegedly, would not like this prescription of what is going to happen to their investments.

The point that labour seeks to make is that it is important for society to drive an agenda that is aware of our particular developmental needs, which are located within the historical context of South Africa and our present historical moment. Some will argue, ‘Why do we need prescribed assets to direct investment and investors because you, as trade unions, have members on the boards of funds and companies?’ But there are also certain duties that compel such trustees to ensure investments are made with the best possible returns in mind and you must consider those. In some instances, you are not going to get the best possible return in the short-term by investing in responsible, social projects but in the longer term it contributes to the future of the country.

So there are many challenges and issues but the key point that becomes clear for us is that we must develop a vision that is independent of what the World Bank prescribes, and that is conscious of what the needs are here, in our country. The fact is that we do have money tied up in the economy that can be put to more productive uses in actually building the country and a future for all our people.

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# 5 *The poverty of work and social cohesion in global exports: the case of South African fruit*

Stephanie Barrientos and Andriennetta Kritzinger

## *Introduction*

South African fruit is an important example of an export sector that has undergone rapid transformation as a result of globalisation in the past decade. This has been combined with a changing pattern of employment in the sector and the increasing use of different forms of flexible labour. A significant feature of this changing employment pattern has been fruit producers' decision to reduce their use of permanent, on-farm labour and to expand their use of off-farm, contract labour provided by third-party agents. However, the specific nature of global integration has had an important effect in both extending and limiting the use of flexible workers (particularly contract and seasonal labour). This results in both benefits and costs for workers, with mixed implications for their experience of poverty.

Detailed analysis of how workers are linked into the global horticultural sector, and the main influences on their employment, helps to explore how the contradictory pressures of global integration are articulated in changing forms of flexible work and their consequences for workers' poverty, livelihoods and general well-being. While on the one hand, global pressures increase risk and drive down costs, globalisation also requires quality and employment standards. These two contradictory pressures lead to lowering labour costs by increasing flexibility of work, whilst at the same time addressing issues of quality and labour standards by maintaining a pool of relatively skilled and stable workers. These two pressures do not necessarily affect different groups of workers separately; rather there is an interplay between them, with mixed results at different levels of flexible work linked to the export

sector. From the standpoint of the poverty of those employed in the sector, this interplay is reflected in different pressures operating simultaneously in relation to incomes, and levels of insecurity and well-being. The result is that the same group of workers, linked to global export markets, can experience both gains and losses simultaneously.

This chapter examines the linkages between global export integration, flexible work, poverty and social well-being, drawing on an in-depth case study from South African apple exports.<sup>1</sup> It follows the global value chain through to the micro-level within a particular sector. The chapter also explores wider influences which contextualise the operation of the global value chain and the changing employment strategies within it. It argues that the pressures on employment, arising from global integration, are mediated through a combination of factors operating through the global value chain, export markets and a transformed legislative environment. These have contradictory effects on employment, with simultaneous pressures to raise the quality of output and employment, whilst offsetting the risks of export production by reducing labour costs and the level of permanent employment. The consequences are leading to a 'hierarchy of employment' that ranges from more formal to more informal, flexible work arrangements.

The effects on the incomes and social well-being of workers as we move down the hierarchy are varied. There is a downward trend, though not necessarily a linear reduction, in the incomes of workers at the lower end of the employment hierarchy. Despite the increase in employment legislation and union organisation, those in more informal employment rarely receive benefits. Poverty and social deprivation appear to be more intense for those in informal, flexible work. For some workers in the same sector, globalisation can have positive effects, but for others, particularly the increasing band of informal workers, the effects are clearly negative. Stronger measures are required and should be implemented by the state, and other means such as private sector employment codes of conduct, if those at the lower end of the employment hierarchy are to enjoy greater economic and social benefits from working in a global export sector.

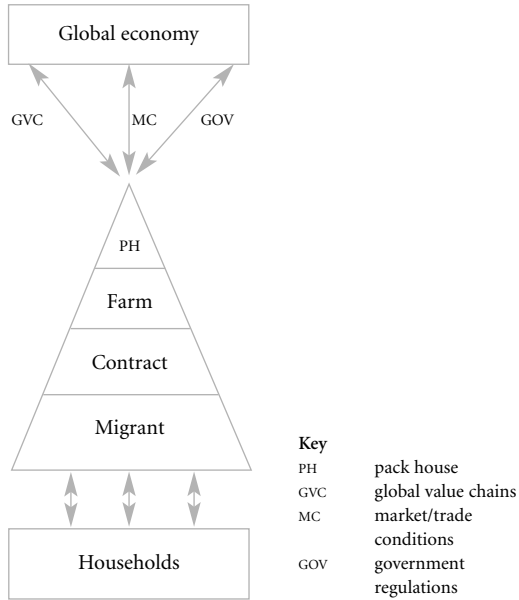
Within the above context, the main aim of this chapter is to explore the incomes, poverty levels and experiences of social well-being of the different categories of workers integrated into the global export apple chain. The first

part of the chapter examines the combined pressures coming through the market, the value chain and the government that export fruit growers are facing within the context of globalisation. The second part examines the employment strategies developed by growers in response to such pressures. Utilising the notion of a 'hierarchy of employment', the third and main part of the chapter demonstrates the work and general experience of well-being of the different categories of workers located within the hierarchy of employment. In particular, it emphasises the relative deprivation experienced by those workers operating at the more flexible end of the employment hierarchy. Given the disintegration of social cohesion for them, we explore potential mechanisms for solidarity, at both the grassroots and an institutional level, that could counter the disintegrative consequences of globalisation. The increasing segmentation of the fruit labour market, and its implications for social cohesion, is addressed in the last section of the chapter. We explore the role that the private sector, labour unions and the state can play in addressing the marginalisation of flexible workers linked to the export value chain as well as mechanisms that operate on a more grassroots level. We consider whether these could help to enhance the social well-being of workers located at the informal end of the global fruit value chain.

### *Global integration, market conditions and state legislation*

The South African agricultural sector has experienced radical changes since the early 1990s following reintegration into the global economy. These have been experienced through changes in the global value chain linked to supermarkets, deregulation of domestic, agricultural and export markets, and the increase in state legislation affecting employment. These three channels have all affected the linkages through which growers access the global economy, as depicted in Figure 5.1. The combined pressures coming through these channels have, in turn, affected the employment strategies of growers, with direct consequences for the livelihoods of workers. In this section, we examine each of the channels before exploring the consequences for employment and workers' experience of poverty and social well-being in later sections.

The first channel affecting growers' linkages to the global economy is that of the global value chain, which is increasingly dominated by large supermarket buyers. South Africa, historically, has a significant market for its fruit in

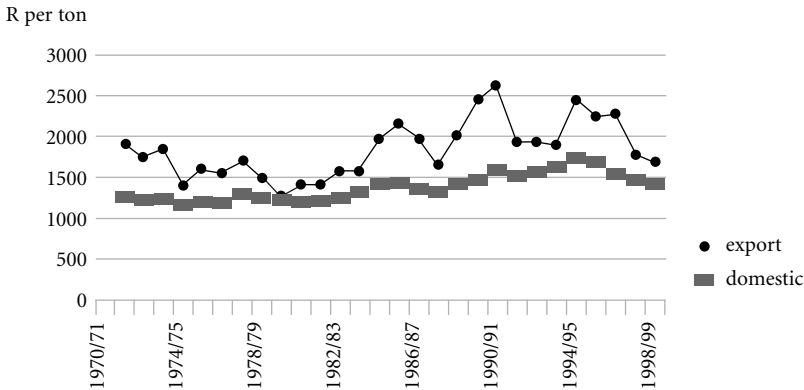
Figure 5.1 *Linkages to the global economy*

Europe, which is the destination for approximately 60 per cent of exports. Within Europe, the UK is an important recipient, and here, supermarkets increasingly dominate the retailing end of fresh produce, currently accounting for 80 per cent of retailed food. Supermarkets act as dominant buyers in the export value chain and are exerting increasing demands on fruit growers, including pressure to meet tight production schedules and high quality standards. While there is often talk of over-supply within the market generally, many producers and agents indicate that there is an under-supply of higher quality fruit. However, to access the value chain to supermarkets, producers have to be able to provide consistency of supply, and sustain higher quality, both in terms of technical production standards and, increasingly, in relation to environmental and social standards as well. Producers are increasingly required to comply with external certificates of these standards such as EUREPGAP, HACCP, ISO and SA8000. These relate to technical, environmental and social issues – ensuring that the fruit itself is in perfect condition and safe to eat, that minimal pesticides are used, that production is environ-

mentally friendly and that adequate employment standards are met. Fruit sold to UK supermarkets is largely on consignment basis, that is, prices are not agreed upon until very close to the point of final delivery. As a result, any risks of fluctuating market and production conditions are ultimately offset onto growers down the chain, and supermarkets are able to exert their dominant buying position to ensure competitive prices. Growers are thus caught in a pincer movement between rising quality and downward pressure on price. At the same time, maintaining stable commercial relationships with supermarkets gives growers some assurance of sales, and a premium for their higher quality fruit, in comparison to remaining outside supermarket value chains where growers are even more subject to the volatility of markets.

The second linkage between growers and the global economy is through the market and trade channel. Here, downward pressures on producers are also reflected in falling real prices as a result of over-supply of fruit onto global markets. Competition is coming from increasing supply within South Africa, as well as growing Southern Hemisphere supply from Chile and New Zealand (with China emerging as a future new entrant into the export market). In 1980, for example, South Africa and Chile both exported 178 000 metric tons of apples but by 2000 Chile had increased its exports to 415 000 compared to 255 000 metric tons from South Africa (DFPT 2001). This is putting a downward pressure on global prices, as well as causing increased volatility in prices and is depicted in Figure 5.2, showing the movement in real prices of apples during the period 1970–1999. In addition, apples destined for South Africa's primary European markets, at the time of the research, faced European Union tariffs. In order to remain competitive within a context characterised by global pressures, growers have to devise ways of reducing costs – especially labour costs – and increasing productivity. They also face uncertainty in a volatile export market and have to be able to meet tight production schedules to maximise their advantage. Market competition in the global economy, and changing trade conditions, are thus stimulating the increase in market supply and volatility, along with downward pressures on price and costs for producers.

The third channel affecting growers' linkages to the global economy, and the consequent affect on their employment strategies, is via the state and changes in government legislation, aimed at the modernisation and transformation of South Africa as part of its repositioning in the world. Legislation has affected producers in two ways. One aspect of the South African govern-

**Figure 5.2** *The real price of apples on the domestic and export market, 1970–2000*

Note: Three-year moving average

Source: Barrientos et al. 2002

ment's policy of global integration was deregulation, in 1997, of the single-market export system that had been dominated by Unifruco (now Capespan). This has stimulated a competitive market environment for producers and exporters domestically, encouraging the expansion of production and exports, thus putting further pressure on prices. The other aspect has been the effect of employment legislation on producers. Since 1994, the policy of increased social equity has led to an increase in employment legislation and security of tenure that was previously not applied to agriculture. Some of the most significant legislation concerns employment insurance, basic conditions of employment, labour relations and the right to strike action, security of tenure and employment equity (Hamman 1996). Growing employment legislation has stimulated many producers to 'modernise' their labour practices in order to raise labour productivity and offset higher labour costs. However, it has also contributed to broader changes to the employment strategies of many producers, with an increased use of informal labour, such as contract workers and off-farm seasonal workers. More recently, growers exporting to UK, and some European, supermarkets have also had to meet pressures from within the value chain to comply with employment standards based on the Ethical Trading Initiative Baseline Code and to ensure they comply with South African employment legislation. Those who conformed

to these upgraded production standards could attain a preferential economic position compared to their competitors. It is evident that the drive to maintain quality and employment standards requires a more stable and trained workforce with good working conditions, which runs counter to the increased use of informal employment. Hence there are counter pressures simultaneously operating on producers and employment.

### *Employment strategies of growers*

These combined market, value chain and government pressures are having contradictory effects on producers linked to the global economy, particularly on the specific employment strategies they pursue. On the one hand, growers are facing downward pressures on prices through the market channels as a result of increasing supply in a deregulated global sector – a trend that supermarkets take advantage of through their pricing arrangements. On the other hand, growers are facing upward pressures on quality and employment standards through both supermarket requirements within the global value chain and through increasing employment legislation within the South African economy. The combination of pressures on growers has led to significant changes in the pattern of employment, with the contradictory tendencies to cut labour costs as well as downsizing the use of permanent labour to remain competitive in a global market. Whilst, at the same time, growers need to retain a sufficient quality labour force to maintain high production standards, and meet government and supermarket requirements on employment and social conditions.

Our study sought to examine these contradictory pressures and their effects on both the employment strategies of producers and their consequences for the social cohesion of workers. We undertook this through a small case study amongst apple producers in the Ceres and Grabouw regions of the Western Cape. We traced and carried out semi-structured interviews with two large packhouses and 18 producers linked to the global export chain, about the pressures on them and the effects these have had on their employment strategies. We then interviewed over 40 of their workers, from different categories of employment (permanent, on-farm, off-farm and migrant). From the producers, we then traced eight contractors that are regularly used on the farms in our study, with whom we also carried out semi-structured interviews, as well as 16

contract workers who regularly work in those teams. Finally, we traced eight retrenched workers who used to work on those farms (four of whom have now found jobs in other sectors). Ours is not a representative sample but through this method, we aimed to explore the in-depth inter-linkages between the contradictory pressures coming through the global fruit value chain, and their effects, both on employment strategies and the social well-being of workers in two important, apple exporting regions of South Africa.

While fruit growers' responses to the combination of pressures identified above are varied, the overall trend has been for growers to move away from the employment of permanent on-farm labour to employing different categories of informal, flexible labour. In Table 5.1, we have divided the producers we interviewed into two groups. Group I is composed of producers that export directly to UK supermarkets, that are able to meet, or are in the process of meeting, EUREGAP standards and are financially viable to the best of our knowledge. Group II is composed of producers who do not meet at least one of these criteria or are in an adverse financial position. Apart from three producers in Group I, all other producers in our study are downsizing their use of permanent on-farm labour, whilst all the producers we interviewed use seasonal labour (a mixture of on-farm and off-farm) to meet fluctuations in labour needs. Their use of migrant and contract labour was more variable, however, within both Groups I and II. In total, three producers use neither migrant nor contract labour. Eleven producers use migrant workers and have done so for a long time. An important factor in this is whether they have established a good network for recruiting migrant labour (often through an ex-employee). Half the producers in our study have moved to the use of contract labour – again spread between both groups – a key factor in this being whether they have established contact with a contractor who, they believe, is able to provide both flexibility and maintenance of quality standards. One producer had used contract labour but ceased to do so because he was unhappy with the resulting quality and the risk of crime on the farm. Therefore, in our study overall, we found a clear move away from permanent on-farm labour to an increased reliance on more flexible labour. Within this, the pattern of employment varied between producers and within each group, although there is a discernible use of contract labour by half the producers spread across both groups in our study. This case study thus indicated a trend away from permanent towards flexible labour of different forms, including contract labour.

This finding was not entirely unexpected. In 1998–1999 fruit growers already indicated that they were planning to decrease their permanent on-farm labour and, should the need for more labour arise in future, they would recruit more off-farm flexible labour. More than 40 per cent of growers indicated that their seasonal and contract component would increase over the next five years (Kritzinger & Vorster 1999). While in 1994–1995, 33 per cent argued against the enlargement of their casual and contract component, the corresponding percentage was four per cent in 1998–1999 (Kritzinger & Vorster 1996, 1999). The employment of categories of flexible labour has become an attractive option for fruit growers within a context increasingly characterised by competitive pressures. While the trend towards the shedding of permanent labour and the employment of off-farm, flexible labour can be attributed to a range of pressures, two considerations are of special significance. Firstly, in the event of an expansion of production and the corresponding need for labour, producers or growers are reluctant to build more houses on their farms due to escalating costs. The employment of off-farm, temporary and, especially, contract labour is seen by producers as a means to cut non-labour costs, as housing is normally not provided for these categories of labour. As a rule, such workers are also exempted from certain conditions of employment and benefits. Secondly, legislation on land tenure and property rights (*The Extension of Security of Tenure Act* of 1997) affects producers' property rights. A growing proportion of growers are unwilling to fill existing houses on their farms, while others have demolished existing houses (Du Toit & Ally 2001; Kritzinger & Vorster 1996).

Overall, therefore, our study found a move away from permanent, on-farm labour (often through retrenchment) to an increased reliance on more flexible workers, including the increased use of contract workers. However, the trend towards more flexible work was tempered by the need to maintain quality in the global value chain. The result is a diverse range of employment strategies adopted by different producers. Managing the combined pressures of quality, costs and risk is thus having contradictory effects on employment and the heterogeneous forms of flexible work that producers adopt. In the following sections, we explore the hierarchy of employment more fully and what this means for workers themselves. This we do by examining the incomes, poverty levels and social well-being of the different categories of farm labour linked to the global value chain.

Table 5.1 Summary profile of producers – sample from Ceres and Grabouw

Farm code	Group I										Group II								Total
	4	13	10	1	15	2	16	12	7	9	3	14	8	6	5	11	17	18	
Hectares under fruit production	B	C	B	D	C	A	B	A	A	B	D	A	C	A	C	A	A	A	
Direct to UK supermarkets	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	
Standards **	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	
<b>Employment strategy</b>																			
Reducing permanent labour	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	15:Y 3:N
Use of seasonal labour	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	17:Y 1:N
Use of migrant labour	Y	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	11:Y 7:N
Use of contract labour	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	9:Y 9:N
<b>Facing liquidation</b>															Y				Y

\* A = 0–99 Hectares; B = 100–199 Hectares; C = 200–299 Hectares; D = 300+ Hectares

\*\* EUREPGAP or equivalent.

### *Hierarchy of employment*

The outcome of the process of retrenchment of permanent labour and increasing use of flexible work is the creation of a new form of hierarchy. Such a hierarchy existed under traditional, paternalistic employment relations but was linked primarily to gender and racial differentiation between permanent, male, coloured workers living permanently on-farm with their female partners working on a seasonal basis, supplemented by migrant African workers (Kritzinger & Vorster 1996). Coloured women also worked in local packhouses on a temporary basis. This hierarchy is being reconfigured with the increasing move to off-farm and contract labour. We traced employment using the export value chain methodology discussed above. From the 18 producers and two packhouses in our study, we found that the hierarchy of employment tended to mirror the level of the chain, although there were anomalies. Better incomes and employment conditions were generally found at higher levels of the chain, particularly amongst packhouse and permanent farm workers. As we moved down the chain, we found increasingly lower wages and more insecure employment among seasonal workers, particularly contract and migrant workers. However, we also found that some packhouse workers expressed concern about the security of their employment, and at the other end, that some contract workers were able to maintain wages and employment equivalent to some on-farm workers, despite the insecurity of their work. Gender inequality was reflected at all points of the employment hierarchy, with men receiving higher wages on average than women in every category of employment.

The hierarchy of employment is depicted in Figure 5.1. At the top of the pyramid, we found that the pay, conditions, skills and livelihoods of packhouse workers (both permanent and temporary) were generally better than those of permanent and seasonal workers employed on farms. Weekly wages (shown in Table 5.2) for female packhouse workers varied between R344 and R498, while those women working seasonally earned a wage ranging between R325 and R378 per week. Farm workers, especially permanent and seasonal workers with direct links to farms, had more variable pay, conditions of employment and livelihoods, with some relatively well off and others in a much poorer position. A number of factors affected the position of any individual farm worker. This included the particular farm on which they worked, their position within the labour force on the farm, and the composition and alternative

income sources of their household. Those growers who have managed successfully to ride the changes are more likely to pay better wages and male farm workers who do more specialised farm work, such as irrigation or monitoring orchards, receive a significantly higher weekly wage than their male counterparts or female farm workers. Workers living on farms (permanently and seasonally employed) also enjoy benefits stipulated by legislation that more flexible workers are often denied. These include Unemployment Insurance (UIF), paid leave and overtime pay. Permanent farm workers living on farms usually also receive free housing and other non-wage benefits estimated to be equivalent to an additional 30 per cent of their monetary income.

Contract and migrant workers were at the bottom of the pyramid in terms of income and benefits, and their position can be described as that of general farm worker. The income of contract workers is very much influenced by contractors securing contracts with producers, the variability of weather and production conditions. As Table 5.2 indicates, female contract workers are particularly vulnerable with a weekly income ranging between R125 and R180

**Table 5.2** Average pay levels according to status (all amounts in Rands)

Level	Status	Gender	Average months worked	Average weekly earnings	Lowest individual wage	Highest individual wage
Packhouse	Permanent	Male	12	1875.00*		
		Female	12	386.60	344.00	498.00
	Seasonal	Female	8	345.30	325.00	378.00
Farm	Permanent	Male	12	298.70	180.00	812.50
		Female	12	210.60	130.00	320.00
Seasonal		Female	7	204.10	112.50	320.00
Contract		Male	10.5	261.25	150.00	400.00
		Female	9.3	152.75	125.00	180.00
Migrant		Male	7	163.00	144.00	180.00
Ret. Employed		Male	12	296.00	200.00	360.00
Ret. Unemployed		Male/ female	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\* One senior supervisor only

Note: Minimum wage determination recommendation scale is R750 per month (R187.50 per week) for these districts.

resulting in an average weekly income of R152.75. Individual wages for male contract workers vary between R150 and R400 with an average of R261.25 per week. The higher income earned by male contract workers can be ascribed to the fact that, on average, men work for more months per year than women do. Women are often unemployed during winter months.

Although contract workers have a higher income than on-farm female workers – who are mostly seasonally employed, but also include women with permanent status – on-farm workers enjoy a range of benefits that are not available to contract workers. These can include, for example, UIF, paid holidays, contribution by farmers to medical expenses, free housing, free electricity and water, and other benefits not specified by legislation. Also, no deductions are made from wages earned by contract workers. This contributes to the fact that wages of contract workers often exceed those of on-farm workers. Not only are the weekly incomes of migrant workers extremely low, but they also do not enjoy any of the abovementioned benefits. Migrant workers (men only) earn weekly wages varying between R144 and R180 with an average of R163. As is the case with contract workers, no deductions from wages are made in the case of migrant workers.

As a comparator, our study included interviews with a small group of eight retrenched farm workers. All had been permanent and had been retrenched in the last year or two. Four were still unemployed and four had since found alternative employment outside agriculture. The latter four were all male and their occupations cover the range of garage cashier, security guard, dairy worker and driver in a chemical factory. Their wages ranged from R200 to R360 per week, which put them on average on an income equivalent to permanent farm workers. One person in our study (a security guard in a school) was unhappy in his work but the others all intended to develop their careers outside farm work.

### *Poverty levels in the hierarchy of employment*

Economic analysis of poverty has long focused on measuring the income and expenditure of poorer households, both in terms of the percentage of the population falling below a given poverty line and the extent of their aggregate shortfall. Approaches that are more critical of orthodox economic poverty measurement have extended the scope of analysis to assessing the capabilities

and functioning of poorer groups, access to basic needs by the poor, or the broader analysis of the livelihoods and well-being of poor people (Chambers 1983, 1989, 1997; Scoones 1997; Sen 1984, 1999). More recently, there has also been increasing awareness by mainstream development analysts that poverty involves wider levels of deprivation than income alone and there is now greater focus on vulnerability, lack of security and lack of empowerment of the poor (World Bank 2000/1).

This is an important shift as a basis for analysing poverty amongst flexible workers in the context of globalisation. Those whose work is linked to global exports are not 'excluded' from globalisation and do not necessarily (as we have seen above) suffer from extreme income deprivation. They are often better off than other agricultural workers confined to production for the domestic economy, as well as those who do not have access to paid work or productive means. At the same time, flexible work in the global economy intensifies the risks and vulnerability of these workers, both in terms of the security of their income and other aspects of their social and economic well-being. The heterogeneity of flexible work means that the experience of poverty amongst this group can be extremely varied. However, to understand the nature of poverty amongst flexible workers, we need to assess a range of factors, including the level of their incomes per household, their level of social deprivation and their perceptions of their own well-being. It is only through weighing up these different factors across our 'hierarchy of employment' that we can assess the complexities of poverty facing this group of workers.

One commonly used poverty line for South Africa (2000) was based on R800 per month expenditure level for a household to be above absolute poverty.<sup>2</sup> If we exclude migrant workers for the moment, all groups (on average) in our study came above this poverty line (see Table 5.3). However, we did find individual households that fell below the poverty line. None were found amongst the households of packhouse workers but amongst permanent farm workers and contract workers, individual households were found that fell below the poverty line. Three households in each group were thus identified.

Most migrant workers report the period January/February to May as the period during which their respective households' income is at its highest, while two workers identified April and May as the months that secure the highest monthly income per year. In most cases, June/July through to September are

**Table 5.3** *Household incomes by category of workers*

Level	Status	Average household size	Highest average monthly household income	Lowest average monthly household income	Highest average per capita household income	Lowest average per capita household income
Packhouse	Permanent	4.7	4980.00	3248.50	1059.57	691.17
	Seasonal	4.7	4892.00	2116.70	1040.85	450.36
Farm	Permanent	4.5	2996.72	1879.61	665.94	417.69
	Seasonal	9.2	4575.12	2188.92	497.30	237.93
Contract		4.8	2436.87	1077.06	507.68	224.38
Migrant	Seasonal	2.4	707.00	232.00	295.00	97.00
Ret. Empl.		4.5	2355.00	205.00	523.00	46.00
Ret. Unemp.		4	1358.00	715.00	340.00	179.00

the months yielding the lowest monthly income per year. In the case of migrant workers, seven of the eight households were found to fall below the poverty line. Total household income for these seven migrant workers ranges from R565 to R720 per month. One migrant worker reported a total household income of R840 per month. However, these findings could be misleading. Only a small number of migrant workers were interviewed. Furthermore, five of the eight migrant workers were not married, living in compounds or hostels on the farm where they worked, and their income was the only source of income in their respective households. The three remaining migrant workers were married with a household membership of three, four and seven respectively. During off-season, one migrant worker earned R200 per month by cleaning yards at homesteads in the Eastern Cape.

Permanent workers all have housing on farm and thus, despite a low level of household income, they were able to subsist during winter months. However, most contract workers live in government subsidised housing and shacks in informal settlements and have no access to free water, electricity or basic amenities. In the case of some contract worker households, income is supplemented by other sources of income. Some women make goods such as doilies and knitwear that are sold to neighbours in the informal settlements; in others, household members sell items like brooms and cigarettes. In some cases, female contract workers also supplement the household income by

accompanying contract teams to farms where they cook for them for the duration of the contract. Only one migrant household, however, had any supplementary source of income.

Household incomes of retrenched workers were clearly erratic as a result of the shock of retrenchment. Only four of those we interviewed had actually received any payment as a result of retrenchment and this had acted as a buffer to their income shock. UIF payments also provided a buffer but only lasted for a limited period of time. The household incomes of four of our respondents had dropped to zero for at least a period of time since retrenchment and they were dependent on church food parcels and their extended family for survival. The profile of the household was an important factor in determining the effect of retrenchment on overall income. Where the retrenched worker was a sole or main income earner, the adverse effects were extreme but where other members of the household continued to earn an income and/or receive state benefits, the shock was less adverse. This was the case for two of the unemployed, retrenched workers we interviewed, one with a son working in the building trade and the other with a partner still working as a permanent worker.

On average, with the exception of migrant workers, those working in the fruit export sector are not falling below the absolute poverty line but individual households can do so as a result of either their household composition and/or their position in precarious employment such as contract labour. Falling below the poverty line is a major risk amongst retrenched workers (particularly during the shock of retrenchment) that can be averted where alternative employment is found or other members of the household continue in paid work.

### *Housing and social well-being*

An important factor in the livelihoods of farm and packhouse workers is not only their incomes but also the conditions in which they live. Many workers, both permanent and seasonal, traditionally lived on farms, but this is declining with changing employment strategies of producers. All the permanent, and half the seasonal, workers in our study lived on-farm (see Table 5.4). The rest of the seasonal workers, all the packhouse workers and the majority of the contract workers lived off-farm (in informal settlements) or on another farm.

**Table 5.4** *Place of residency according to work status*

Type of work	Working status	Living on-/off-farm			Total
		On this farm	On another farm	Off-farm	
Packhouse	Permanent		1	5	6
	Non-permanent			3	3
Farm	Permanent	18			18
	Non-permanent	3		3	6
Contract	Contracted	4	2	10	16
Migrant		6	1	1	8
Ret. Empl.		1		3	4
Ret. Unempl.		1		3	4

Of the eight migrant workers, six lived in hostels/compounds on the farm where they worked; one lived in a shack in an informal settlement, while one worker lived on another farm.

Some retrenched workers who had lived on-farm were moved off, mainly into informal settlements or rented accommodation in towns. Only two retrenched workers in our study continued to live on the farm: in one case because a partner remained employed, in another because they had refused to leave (but were facing the possibility of eviction).

We found that the housing conditions of workers tended to reflect their position within the hierarchy of employment (see Table 5.5). Packhouse workers on the whole had the best housing conditions (indoor running water, flush toilet and electricity). Farm workers were more mixed, while contract workers' housing conditions – especially when living in informal settlements – and migrant workers' housing conditions were extremely poor. Migrant workers being housed in on-farm hostels or compounds enjoy free housing (and maintenance of housing), water and transport. The housing conditions of retrenched workers that had not found alternative employment were amongst the worst in our study, with three having no amenities (indoor running water, flush toilet or electricity). This combined with living in areas that were seen as unsafe and alienating, which was cited as a major problem by these respondents, seriously undermining their sense of social well-being.

When assessing poverty levels, packhouse and on-farm workers are more likely to perceive their households as being average or well-off compared to other

**Table 5.5** *Housing conditions according to work status*

Type of work	Working status	Indoor running water		Indoor flush toilet		Indoor electricity	
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Packhouse	Permanent	6		6		6	
	Non-permanent	3		2	1	3	
Farm	Permanent	18		15	3	18	
	Non-permanent	5	1	5	1	6	
Contract	Contract	6	10	5	11	7	9
Migrant		4	4	2	6	3	5
Ret. Empl.		4	0	4	0	4	0
Ret. Unempl.		1	3	1	3	1	3

farm workers, while contract workers and migrant workers are more likely to view their households as being poor or very poor.

In the case of contract workers, household income is not the sole basis in terms of which workers rate their respective households. Housing arrangements and conditions are a crucial consideration. Workers living in shacks and government subsidised housing in informal settlements tend to rate their respective households as being poor or very poor (see Table 5.6). Contract workers who live on farms, and enjoy free housing, rate their households as being either average or well-off. When assessing poverty levels, contract workers appear to view their position relative to permanent workers living on the farms.

Migrant workers who rate their households as being either average or well-off (only one case) appear to assess their households according to the ability to save money, which can be sent to their families in the Eastern Cape. Those rating their households as poor or very poor either compare their position to on-farm workers who are employed all year round or refer to their families in the Eastern Cape struggling to feed all the children in the household. Retrenched workers who had since found employment were more evenly spread in terms of their perception of poverty, compared to farm workers, but three-quarters of those that continued to be unemployed perceived themselves as very poor. The male partner of one of these respondents continued to work as a permanent farm worker but the majority of his income was spent on drugs, only

**Table 5.6** *Self assessment of poverty level*

Type of work	Working status	Self-assessed poverty				Total
		Very poor	Poor	Average	Well off	
Packhouse	Permanent			3	3	6
	Non-permanent			2	1	3
Farm	Permanent		4	5	9	18
	Non-permanent			5	1	6
Contract	Contracted	5	2	5	4	16
Migrant		2	1	3	1	7
Ret. Empl.		1	1	1	1	4
Ret. Unempl.		3		1		4

leaving R200 per month for her to look after household needs and feed two children. Despite income formally coming into the household, she therefore had a heightened sense of deprivation.

The above examination demonstrates the different experiences of different categories of farm workers within the hierarchy of employment in terms of income, livelihoods and general social well-being. It also highlights the contradictory consequence of being linked to the global value chain for different groups of farm workers. The employment of heterogeneous forms of flexible labour, following from pressures emanating from globalisation, raises the question as to which mechanisms operating at grassroots and institutional levels have the potential to counter the breakdown of social cohesion. This theme is explored in the following section.

### *Social cohesion: grassroots and institutional mechanisms*

On-farm worker communities have been described as close-knit social units that exhibit their own distinctive values, norms and ‘life styles’ (Kritzinger & Vorster 1996). Although workers may experience farm communities as oppressive, in that they are expected to conform to certain norms and ‘understandings’, they also emphasise the mutual help and a sense of belonging this context provides for them. These communities appear to be an important source of social cohesion for these workers to the extent that workers often refer to them as their ‘families’. The experiences of contract and migrant

workers are very different. Most of the contract workers in our study live in informal settlements close to Grabouw and Ceres. Some of these settlements are quite vast. Resident turnover is high and residents often perceive one another as 'strangers'. Lack of infrastructure and community facilities characterises these settlements and poses severe obstacles to the creation of a context in which people can develop a 'sense of belonging'. Alcohol abuse and crime are reported to be rife in these settlements and impinge negatively on the development of any kind of community life. This further serves to undermine the sense of well-being and livelihoods of contract workers, and can intensify their insecurity, vulnerability and risk. For some female contract workers, however, participation in church activities creates a sense of community and provides women with an opportunity to establish friendships and to share some of their burdens.

For those contract workers who live on farms with their families, the farm also provides a sense of community. In the workplace, the ideology of the 'farm as family' has little relevance for contract workers. However, we did find that although not all workers experience it as such, for some workers at least (especially if members of the core), the contracting team appears to be a close-knit unit that provides a sense of belonging and social support – a part of the 'family'. Migrants live in on-farm hostels or compounds when employed as farm workers. With some exceptions, migrant workers are single and experience very little, if any, sense of community during their stay on the farm. They appear not to be overly concerned by this. Securing employment is their most immediate and important concern. Their sense of community and belonging is located elsewhere, that is, in the area from which they migrate to secure work. Thus, different groups of workers within the employment hierarchy clearly have different mechanisms at their disposal to counter social disintegration.

What are the prospects for countering the disintegration of social cohesion on an institutional level? Our study suggests that different groups within the employment hierarchy enjoy differential access to institutional measures and mechanisms to bring about a greater measure of social integration and cohesion. Compared to packhouse and on-farm workers, more flexible workers such as migrants and contract workers enjoy few or no benefits and little protection is provided by labour legislation. As Theron has observed, although 'permanent' is not a category of employment that is explicitly acknowledged

in South Africa's labour legislation, the protections that the legislation provide are nevertheless premised on the notion of the 'permanent job'. The dispute resolution system and the right not to be unfairly dismissed, for example, are relevant to permanent workers only. Furthermore, all forms of labour legislation have 'evolved in response to the organisation of workers and depend on them for their efficacy' (Theron 2001: 65). The degree to which workers are able to organise themselves and articulate their interests must therefore be central to any scheme to better protect peripheral workers. Rights to organise make no concessions to the difficulty of organising peripheral workers. In South Africa, the Labour Relations Act, for example, assumes there is a workplace that is controlled by an employer. In the absence of worker organisation, there can be no collective bargaining. Thus, although unions have had a measure of success in organising agricultural workers in the past, they have made virtually no inroads into the contractor and migrant sectors (Murphy 1995). Our findings have born this out. With the exception of one migrant worker who is 'semi-permanently' employed and has been working for his current employer for a number of years, none of the contract or migrant workers interviewed for our study belongs to a union. Unions, according to these workers, do not operate in the areas or on the farms where they labour. Similar to the attitudes of fruit growers in the past, contractors do not welcome union activity in the contracting sector. Given that most contractors are not currently registered with the Department of Labour, contract workers do not enjoy UIF and other employment benefits.

The relative failure of unions to protect flexible workers has been raised in recent debates on the impact of economic globalisation and the neo-liberal approach by the state on marginalised, flexible and poor workers. Referring to the manufacturing industry in South Africa, Ray argues that globalisation and flexibility of production have serious implications for workers (1997: 27–29). Not only are they creating new divisions between 'core' and peripheral or marginalised workers but also subcontracted workers are contracted out of the legislative protection offered to core workers (and on-farm workers). Collective bargaining arrangements are undermined and workers tend to be in a much weaker situation with employers. In his discussion of flexible labour, Rees points out that:

Casual, temporary and contract workers receive lower wages and benefits than fulltime workers. They may work longer hours on shorter notice, under dangerous and dirty conditions. They have

little employment security and less likelihood of receiving any training. Migrant workers, particularly those who are illegal, are the worst off. (1997: 31–32)

Labour legislation does contain measures that could assist flexible workers, including contract and migrant farm workers. However, most of the measures are premised on the collective organisation of workers. As suggested above, given the high degree of mobility of contract and migrant farm workers, the organisation of these groups of workers is extremely difficult. Within the non-agricultural sectors, unions have played an important role in ensuring that minimum labour standards are implemented. However, observers have noted that unions tend to focus on permanent workers and to neglect more marginalised workers. This is to be expected because, as Rees has suggested, flexible workers exert downward pressure on the wages and conditions of permanent workers (1997). While legislation has limited the power of employers (or contractors) to terminate contracts with flexible workers quickly, legislation does not guarantee compliance on the part of employers or contractors. Unions need to play a much more committed role to ensure compliance with legislation by employers and contractors, and to improve the employment conditions and the social well-being of flexible workers.

The extension of employment legislation to agriculture is thus effectively bypassing many fruit workers because of the informalisation of their employment. However, the fact that they are working in a sector linked to the global economy does provide one other possible route to improve their employment conditions and the social benefits they are entitled to through their work. Private sector employment codes of conduct operating through the global value chain are a relatively new development in the food sector. Most supermarkets in the UK are members of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) and are extending employment codes of conduct based on the ETI Base Code through their supply chains. The ETI Base Code incorporates ILO core conventions on decent work (freedom of association and collective bargaining, equal remuneration, no discrimination, no forced labour and no child labour) with other stipulations regarding payment of a living wage, safe and hygienic working conditions, regular employment and working hours (ETI 1998). These codes are only gradually being extended down the supply chains of large supermarkets but an increasing number of companies linked to the food sector in Europe, and elsewhere, are moving along this path. Producers in other African

countries are also voluntarily adopting codes of conduct through their trade associations as a means of promoting themselves as 'ethical' suppliers in a competitive, global market (Barrientos, Dolan & Tallontire 2001). If the application of codes of conduct does become more extensive, and their monitoring and verification more rigorously enforced, these could prove to be with time a means of addressing the employment conditions and social cohesion of workers linked to the global economy.

In the context of South Africa, codes of conduct have been criticised because of their relative weakness compared to the employment legislation introduced since 1993. In terms of the content of codes of conduct, this is true, but their relevance for fruit workers is likely to come about by other means.

Firstly, in isolated rural areas with little government enforcement of legislation through labour inspectors, it is often easy for growers to avoid adherence to legislation. However, if growers are required to adhere to legislation through the application of a code of conduct as a condition for supplying large supermarkets, this could act as a complementary route to enforcement of employment law.

Secondly, a bigger challenge in fruit employment is the fact that many workers in informal employment (especially contract and migrant workers) are often either not covered by, or do not receive the benefits of, employment legislation. As we have seen, there is a growing number of flexible workers in the fruit sector. Codes of conduct act as a floor below which, in the absence of legislation, employment standards should not fall for any worker. Given their lack of coverage by legislation, codes could then become an additional means of enhancing the employment rights where legislation fails. This would require comprehensive monitoring and verification of codes through the supply chain in order to ensure that they reach the most informal workers in the hierarchy of employment. It remains to be seen whether codes will develop sufficiently in this regard but the potential, nonetheless, exists.

Thirdly, codes of conduct are increasingly being seen not as a 'stick' but as part of a changing culture of global production aimed at improving quality, not just of the product but also of how it is produced. Where producers improve employment conditions, while also raising their productivity and competitiveness, they are more likely to operate at the cutting edge of quality and innovation in the global economy. Thus global integration has its downside,

in terms of increasing the informalisation of work and driving down labour costs but it also has its upside, in terms of improving employment conditions and raising labour standards.

While private sector codes and unions are crucial in improving labour standards for all workers – particularly for those workers who find themselves at the more flexible end of the employment hierarchy – the state could play a significant role in providing greater social security for flexible, insecure and poor workers, thereby countering social disintegration. The ANC government and its macro-economic policy have come under attack for not sufficiently protecting the interests of marginalised workers and the unemployed. Cosatu has been especially articulate in identifying the consequences of a neo-liberal approach within developing countries like South Africa. Deregulation and privatisation have been shown to increase retrenchments and unemployment and, under structural adjustment and neo-liberalism, the government is reducing social and welfare spending on the poor. Debbie Budlender has suggested that ‘citizenship is being narrowed, rather than expanded, as citizens are being forced to expect less from the state’ (quoted in Samson 1997: 12). As Samson and others have suggested, states are not passive victims but active participants in promoting economic globalisation. While globalisation clearly holds benefits for some, it also ‘reinforces existing patterns of exclusion, deepens poverty, increases social inequality and creates new social problems for others’ (Taylor 2001: 51). To counter social disintegration, the state needs to develop the capacity to manage integration into the global economy in ways that benefit the more marginalised. The impact of globalisation on women, in particular, has been shown to be especially devastating, as poor women often act as ‘shock absorbers’ of changes accompanying globalisation. This is also true for female farm workers – especially those who are employed in the contracting sector or who have been retrenched.

### *Conclusion*

Globalisation is clearly having contradictory effects, both for producers and workers linked to the fruit export sector in South Africa. In order to better understand the complexity of change, we have followed the linkages between global exports, local production and employment via three key channels: the global value chain, markets and government. The combined pressures

working through these channels are having three simultaneous effects: firstly, increasing competition at the production level, thus reducing real prices paid to producers for exported fruit, which dominant global buyers (supermarkets) are able to exploit; secondly, stimulating a significant change in employment strategies of producers, thus increasing the informalisation of fruit work, especially through the increased use of contract labour; thirdly, driving up the standards producers have to meet to sell to large supermarkets, both in terms of the quality of their product and the conditions of employment of their workers. Producers are thus caught in what we have described as a ‘pincer movement’ between falling real prices and rising standards, which they have to negotiate to survive in a competitive global environment.

These contradictory pressures, and the trend to increasing informalisation of work, are contributing to the reinforcement of a ‘hierarchy of employment’ in the fruit sector. At the pinnacle are packhouse workers, whose labour skills are essential for maintaining the quality of fruit exported, and who are positioned higher up the value chain. These workers enjoy better wages, employment conditions and levels of social well-being than many further down the hierarchy of employment. As we descend the hierarchy of employment and the level of engagement in the global value chain, the conditions of employment and level of social well-being of fruit workers in general declines – although there are also gender imbalances in the extent to which this happens. Permanent farm workers, on average, have lower wages and levels of social well-being relative to packhouse workers but male permanent workers, working as supervisors or in specialised tasks such as irrigation, can enjoy a much better position than the average. Seasonal, migrant and contract workers are found at the bottom of the hierarchy of employment with, in general, the lowest wages, the poorest conditions of employment and, particularly, the worst level of social well-being. Retrenched workers who have found new employment have the basis for improving their position relative to those in the lower levels of the hierarchy of employment, but most retrenched workers who remain unemployed are facing chronic poverty as a result of their situation. Despite the hierarchy pattern, however, we found anomalies in our study. Packhouse workers who were aware of the pressures facing the fruit industry had a strong sense of insecurity, despite their position at the pinnacle of the hierarchy. At the same time, some contract workers, who had the least formal guarantee of employment from one day to the next, could often find work throughout the

year through their position at the core of a successful contract team whose skills were in demand.

The level of social cohesion enjoyed by the different categories of workers also reflected their position in the hierarchy of employment. Packhouse workers who lived with their families on farms or in town, as well as on-farm workers (permanent and seasonal), seemed to experience higher levels of social cohesion. Clearly, the type of residence plays a significant role in facilitating social cohesion amongst workers. While it is true that farm-worker communities impose rules and expectations on on-farm workers, these communities also ensure mutual support and help, a feeling of belonging and security. Contract workers, on the other hand, experience low levels of social cohesion as most of them live in informal settlements. From our study, it was apparent that these workers found it difficult to develop a sense of community within this social context. For migrant workers, social cohesion and sense of community lie elsewhere, that is, with their extended families in the Eastern Cape.

The prospect of addressing the disintegration of social cohesion for fruit workers is also linked to their position within the hierarchy of employment. Being a packhouse worker or permanent farm worker, with a more formal employment position, facilitates better enforcement of labour legislation and trade union organisation. Being a seasonal, migrant or contract worker, with minimal or no formal employer attachment, greatly reduces the level of coverage or enforcement of labour legislation, or likelihood of trade union organisation. To some extent, the same situation is mirrored in relation to private sector employment codes that are being introduced by some large supermarkets as a condition of supply. Packhouse and permanent workers at higher levels of the value chain are more likely to be covered by such employment codes than seasonal, migrant and, especially, contract workers. However, where the latter groups have poor cover or enforcement of employment legislation, private sector employment codes could potentially provide a means of improving the employment conditions of such workers. Because such codes are limited to employment, however, they are unlikely to address the dire housing and social conditions that our study highlighted amongst such groups, particularly with regard to contract workers. In this respect, there is no substitute for government policy, which needs to give greater attention to the housing and social conditions of informal workers if their social cohesion is to be genuinely improved.

In sum, global integration is a complex and contradictory process with both gains and losses for the same, as well as for different groups, linked to the fruit export economy. In absolute terms, most (though not all) of the fruit workers in our study were above the national poverty line, and some enjoyed a relatively good standard of living and level of social cohesion. Yet the informalisation of work that appears to be taking hold throughout the sector is substantially increasing employment risks and vulnerability to poverty, with a more precarious standard of living and disintegrating social cohesion. The plight of the retrenched farm workers in our study who remained unemployed highlighted the risks of chronic poverty that could face those who lost their jobs completely. It is unlikely that state provision, trade union organisation or private sector codes of conduct could, on their own, provide the basis for improving social well-being and social cohesion amongst workers linked to the global economy. However, more attention should be paid to innovative ways of linking different policy actors in order to develop combined initiatives that aim specifically to address the social and economic problems of the growing band of informal workers spurred on by the process of globalisation.

### Notes

- 1 This chapter is based on research carried out under the Globalisation and Poverty Programme funded by the UK Department of International Development. The views presented in this chapter are those of the authors alone. We would also like to thank all those who participated in the research: Hester Rossouw, Gerald Muller, Paula Termine, Norma Tregurtha and Nick Vink. See Barrientos et al. (2002).
- 2 'Free State, Eastern Cape Poorest', *Business Day*, 7 September 2000.

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# 6 *Together and apart: African refugees and immigrants in global Cape Town*

Owen Sichone

## *Introduction: social cohesion in a globalising world*

‘What holds us together when everything seems to be tearing us apart?’ This, of course, is an old sociological puzzle and since humans have always been social animals, the answers that sociologists have provided in the past are still relevant today. However, in the case of post-apartheid South Africa, as noted by the editors of this volume in their preface, it would appear that national identity is not what holds South Africa together. The nation-building project that started after the 1994 democratic elections coincides with a post-modern situation in which national borders, and even national identities, are no longer as important as they used to be. Indeed, there are those who would like to argue that the very sovereignty of the nation-state has been eroded to such an extent in most of our economic, political and social lives that we cannot see it as the main source of social identity or security. Accelerating globalisation, as British sociologist Anthony Giddens (borrowing from Daniel Bell) has repeatedly observed, has rendered the nation-state ‘too small for the big problems of life and too big for the small problems of life’. Still, the nation has not disappeared. The nation-state may be a pre-industrial social structure but it is not yet completely obsolete, even in our post-modern, global community.

Before we go into any detail about what globalisation means for South Africa, let us look at what it means for the rest of the world. There are many definitions of globalisation, but one popular view that is held by many radical African scholars is that globalisation is simply the latest form of Western imperialism and Northern domination of the South. Despite this being a superficial interpretation of the process of globalisation, it could prove to be very influential in a South African context where the long history of imperialist domination has left a tradition of national resistance.

My understanding of globalisation is influenced by the work of Anthony Giddens. It is not necessarily the best nor is it entirely correct. In fact, I am in serious disagreement with the way Giddens analyses a number of social trends and processes of change. Nevertheless, his discussion of globalisation in the 1999 BBC Reith Lectures, which have now been published in a small book entitled *Runaway World*, provides a useful summary of the problems of our time (Giddens 2000). This little book sums up the main points in what is a complex and ongoing debate. Despite its length, it reveals enough about the sociological method of the author's analysis for us to be able to disagree with his approach.

In the Reith Lectures, Giddens examines globalisation through familiar concepts, based on a unilinear model used by sociologists to explain the emergence of modernity, and applies it to post-modern or post-industrial society.<sup>1</sup> Giddens, like most sociologists, is ethnocentric and, although he tries very hard to refer to non-European experience, he fails to decentre globalisation adequately to acknowledge its many non-Western features. Giddens' definition of globalisation can be summed up as the increased integration of the world through processes of 'Westernisation' emanating from the West. From a sociological point of view, however, processes of Easternisation and Africanisation are rendered invisible, only appearing as traditional, or anti-democratic, in contrast to processes of social change rooted in Western civilisation that are regarded as universal, privileged and inevitable.

Giddens highlights the significance of new media, such as the Internet, over that of the printed magazine; he asserts the importance of Indian Internet experts over Bollywood actors, Indian restaurants or alternative therapists and gurus in the global village. The references to CNN, cellular telephony, electronic money markets and jumbo jets always ignore the way the majority of the human race lives. In a way, the quiet manner in which the average Taj Mahal or Great Wall restaurant blends in with its environment, by contrast to the loudness of the yellow and red of McDonalds, misleads many people into thinking that there are more American influences around the world than there are Chinese, Indian or Thai. As far as restaurants are concerned, globalisation is more a process of Easternisation than Americanisation. While admitting that globalisation is only partly Westernisation, Giddens nevertheless labels Easternisation as reverse colonisation, rather than as an integral part of the same process.

Although I find Giddens' view of globalisation as increased integration more useful than the US-centred suggestion that globalisation means increased homogenisation or 'Coca-colonisation', we need to pursue a global social science that is multi-sited, multidisciplinary and collaborative (Stoller 1997: 91; see also Amstelle 2002 on homogenisation). Briefly, I want to reflect on what such a global social science might bring to our understanding of the economy of risk, the role of the family and the ongoing reinventions of tradition in a globalising world.

### *Calculating risk*

Anthropologist, Keith Hart, has explored one of the main features of globalisation, the virtual global economy based on digital information. As Hart has argued:

Capitalism has become virtual (i.e. as good as) in two main senses: the shift from material production (agriculture and manufacturing) to information and services, and the corresponding detachment of the circulation of money from production and trade. This in turn is an aspect of the latest stage of mechanisation, the communications revolution of the late 20th century. The question is whether the same developments that have been responsible for the recent integration of the world society are also the cause of its increasing polarisation. The answer is yes. (Hart 2001: 313)

For those economies that still rely on bananas, copper-wire bars or even crude oil for their foreign exchange earnings, for farmers who still rely on hand tools – or even animal draught power – and for districts and provinces that missed out on the steam locomotive, all-weather roads and water-borne sanitation, we must ask the question: will technological advances, such as the Internet, satellite communications and hand-held computers, reverse their marginalisation or merely reinforce it? The human development statistics speak for themselves. As the 1998 Human Development Report (quoted in Hart 2001: 308) showed:

225 of the richest men (and they are men) own more than \$US1 trillion, the equivalent of the annual income of the poorest 47 per

cent of the world's people. Three of them have assets worth more than the gross domestic product of the 48 least developed countries. The West spends \$US37 billion a year on pet food, perfumes and cosmetics, almost the estimated additional cost of providing basic education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation for those deprived of them. World consumption has increased six fold in the last 20 years, but the richest fifth account for 86 per cent of it.

Money markets have made a few people very rich and they have also ruined the lives of many. Corruption, mismanagement and even genuine errors in the banking industry have turned billions of paper assets into worthless investments and have pauperised millions of people in the process. Free markets have failed before and it has taken state intervention to moderate the economics of greed. However, the state has never been weaker and people in government are even more ignorant than those in the banks about how the new capitalism works. Unable to regulate e-commerce, governments have turned their attention to putting up fences in order to prevent the poor from migrating to the wealthy cities.

Given that only one in 50 people is likely to leave the country in which he or she was born and, although increasing rapidly, only one in 60 people had access to the Internet by 1998, it is obvious that most people will be economically tied to old-fashioned agriculture and manufacturing industries, rather than to money markets and service economies. Inequality threatens both economic well-being and political stability but it is only an irresponsible government that will allow genetically modified foods produced by big corporations to replace peasant farmers' bananas, sorghum and vegetables. Equally irresponsible is the government that leaves welfare matters to charitable organisations at a time when education and health interventions are required to prevent the destruction of an entire generation of young Africans.

The 9/11 attacks in America showed that there is no Great Wall separating the barbarians from the civilised world. The American treatment of Guantanamo Bay prisoners-of-war and the ethnic profiling at home that has made Muslims, Arabs and Middle-Eastern types less American than before has opened a Pandora's box. In a way, the treatment of terrorist suspects in America and Europe suggests that we are all savages now and that the moral high ground necessary for 'the end of history' to be realised has been lost. If

there is a single explanation for the new 'terrorism' it is that some people are angry and the anger of the French man, or Swedish youth, hurling rocks through the windows of fast-food restaurants is not very different from that of the 9/11 hijackers. They are not opposed to individual freedom but to the lack of choice that fast-food restaurants represent. This is the same point about freedom that Amartya Sen makes. The violence from below and violence from above are equally barbaric. The confident claim that there is 'world order' is certainly going to be tested during the current so-called 'clash' of civilisations as the difference between the just wars fought against Saddam Hussein and absolutised or banalised 'terror' become more and more difficult to discern in the eyes of the majority (Hardt & Negri 2000). If international law is only the concern of small countries and if war criminals in army uniforms of powerful countries cannot be tried by a World Court, the sense of injustice that fuels most of the terrorist activities around the world will probably increase rather than subside.

While Giddens accepts that external risks were experienced by people in traditional society, he has difficulties comprehending that people without nuclear power stations can also experience risk created by the very impact of our developing knowledge upon the world. What is poison gas but a pesticide writ large? Whether the poison is put in a well and wipes out a village or is delivered by missiles and kills millions, the crime is the same. Many people have long been concerned that so-called natural disasters – floods, plagues or famines – were really the product of human actions. Giddens apparently has not recovered from the belief that capitalism, science and liberal democracy are responsible for the beginning of modern history in the same way that the end of the Soviet Union marked the end of history. He thus sees risk as a peculiarly modern response to hazards.

Risk is socially constructed and the capitalist conception of risk is merely one of numerous models. The actuarial reckoning of risk is modern but this does not necessarily make it an adequate way to assess risk. The major difference between traditional notions of communal risk (sins that affect all generations) and capitalist calculations of individual risk due to technological hazards, is one of form. In both communal society and high modernity, there are no accidents and, although risk is experienced differently, it is an ever-present fact of life. Whether a drought is explained by scientists as a result of global warming, or by diviners as being because of incest in the royal family, it is human agency

that is blamed. Why should the scientific explanation be more important? In terms of influencing human behaviour, science is not unique as a body of knowledge that drives or informs practice.

As already noted, Giddens is trapped in Western paradigms and this is his major weakness. His analysis of globalisation is Eurocentric even when he makes references to life in other parts of the world as a way of highlighting the differences. Where in the past the sociology of industrial society was a well-developed discipline, the sociology of globalisation is an inadequate social science today unless it can be comprehensively multilingual.

### *Forms of the family*

In many traditional societies, a woman might have up to ten children. If she were part of a polygynous household where babies were breast-fed for several years and strict taboos about combining sex with nursing were observed, this would be very unlikely. Having said correctly that tradition is recent, Giddens nevertheless falls into the trap of seeing the always pregnant and barefoot peasant woman as a product of a previous society and not a product of modernity. Female virtue in its Christian, guilt-ridden format is hardly what all traditions are about, and much sexual banter and licence is encouraged in many non-Western societies. Similarly, homosexual activity may be widespread but different societies call it by different names. By being so monolingual and thus universalising his own meaning, Giddens confirms that what people dislike about globalisation is the inability to hear other voices. Giddens can show that the European traditional family was in fact a transitional phase from the 1950s but he cannot say the same for the Indian or African models. However, have we not already established that tradition is invented? Is the present not always transitional? Why does Giddens now assume that sex and reproduction have been divorced and the final family form has arrived? Coupledness and single person households that appear in social trends are surely an economic fact. When and why are residence, family and employment not linked? Sexual equality and democracy are good but they too manifest themselves in many different forms; that is what human life creates. Sexual equality is believed to be new and incompatible with the 'traditional family', meaning, in Europe, the peasant family. But there has always been a great variety of marriage forms and sexual practices.

Giddens' sociological repertoire is just too limited to do justice to the great variety of examples of human inventiveness and this has nothing to do with current global integration. If, for example, African children lacked rights in relation to their parents, this did not apply to all adults. In relation to grandparents or uncles, they enjoyed many rights and privileges. Furthermore, childhood need not be a status acquired through age but a relational one. A ten-year-old boy could be the uncle or classificatory father to a twenty-year old. Once all these alternative configurations are identified, the confident claim that modernity liberates sounds quite arrogant. Even polygamous marriage can liberate and empower women from frequent pregnancies, domestic and other chores that assume their most exploitative form in the monogamous peasant family. The experience of many children in different parts of the world similarly suggests that it is not the children growing up in the traditional family who are at risk, but those without families.

With regard to homosexuality, Giddens suggests that its growth and acceptance in the West is due more to the separation of sex from reproduction than from a growth in liberal tolerance. Despite his awareness that traditions are invented and re-invented, Giddens relapses into describing a time, in the past, when tradition was the norm and 'a bit like a state of nature' (2000: 60). However, it has always been more complex than that and even though the Reith Lectures do not allow him to cover everything, I strongly suspect that part of the problem lies in relying on limited, non-Western sources. There are many different democracies of the emotions, and globalisation, as universalisation, has been trying to outlaw non-Western models. Needless to say, many battles are going to be fought over this issue.

### *Reinventions of tradition*

All traditions are invented traditions. Giddens makes this sound like a great discovery – and maybe it is. Sociology has tended to teach us that tradition ends where modernity begins and that therefore invention is an attribute of modernity. To invent is human and even though nothing is ever invented whole, but partly inherited or learned, the key issue with traditions is present ownership, not origins. It has little to do with the past in practical terms. The influence of custom and tradition on our behaviour will not shrink, precisely because we will all continue to invent new customs. Marshall

Sahlins once joked that when new cultural expressions emerge in Europe, it is a renaissance but when it happens elsewhere, it is the invention of tradition (1993). As with risk, tradition is everywhere, only it is produced differently. However, as with risk, Giddens suggests that in medieval European society, people did not need the concept because they all knew what was tradition and custom.

In the context of high modernity, people become addicted to work, food, sex or love, because these activities are much less structured by tradition than they once were; but does this not ignore the invention of tradition? To suggest that the communal past influences the present through tradition and the individual present through addiction, is to ignore the extent to which one person's addiction can become as communal as any traditional event. Are abusive parents not said to have been abused as children? Is such a 'family tradition' not problematic because the rest of society disapproves? Giddens is correct to say invented traditions are genuine and all traditions are invented. Where he errs is to see tradition as conservatism. In another sociological tradition, that of Islamic scholar Ibn Khaldun, cyclical 'return to basics' campaigns waged by fundamentalists were responsible for a circulation of elites and re-invented traditions (see Gellner 1983). Indeed, if the modern state were not so strong militarily as a result of international support, the majority of Middle Eastern countries may well have continued with this tradition. We can even suggest that on a global level, the terrorism of the Osama bin Ladens might bring about change in the seat of power in the same way that desert warriors used to shake up lethargic urban civilisations. In short, tradition, like fundamentalism, is about the present influencing the present and legitimating itself by referring to the past.

### *On democracy*

The battleground of the twenty-first century, Giddens suggests, will pit fundamentalism against cosmopolitan tolerance. But why should the cosmopolitans be the good guys? In any case, what makes this a peculiarly twenty-first century scenario? As already mentioned, Ibn Khaldun demonstrated the role of fundamentalism in replacing corrupt city rulers, in regular cycles, for centuries. Fundamentalism does not imply backwardness, or even stagnation; a potential outcome of the battle against moral, political or spiritual corruption

is renewal. The fundamentalism of Osama bin Laden is in many ways similar to that of Milton Friedman or Margaret Thatcher in suggesting that there is no alternative to their view of the world. Tolerance of different perspectives is the antithesis of this approach but it is also found in the places where Giddens does not look: villages, refugee camps and non-Western democracies. The study of globalisation would appear to demand a new sociology.

According to Giddens, the defining feature of globalisation is growing interdependence. We might say this is a type of mechanical solidarity. In trying to answer the question of what holds us together when everything seems to be pulling us apart, I have found that Emile Durkheim's theorising on solidarity is still of some relevance. Either we cohere because we are alike or we cohere because we are different and, therefore, interdependent. This latter position is implied in the inclusive versions of nationalism such as that contained in the idea of South Africa's so-called 'Rainbow Nation'. In studying the transition from a gradient to industrial society in Europe, Durkheim would have suggested that one type of solidarity is typical of small-scale societies and the other of modern industrial society. For the situation that we find ourselves in today, we would do better to look for organic and mechanical solidarity in simultaneous co-existence in a complex combination of forms of human community, which cannot be contained in one definition or even in one political, cultural or ethnic entity.

In other words, the post-modernist argument for a decentred world, in which multiple identities, multiple voices and multiple truths are possible, is of some relevance here. The European experience of nation building has been characterised as the transformation of peasants into Frenchmen, or the coming together of different communities into one imagined political and economic nation-state (Weber 1976). This was made possible by changes in industrial society, the most important ones being the development of a standard educational system and widespread literacy, which have facilitated the use of literature and newspapers to create this imagined community. As modest as the steam ship is when compared to the jet liner, we should not forget the contribution that these developments made to the creation of both nationalism and globalism.

### *The global in South Africa*

When we analyse globalisation today, the influence of new communication technologies is always mentioned. For example, the global village has been made possible by a shrinking of time and space. This has been made possible by the emergence and rapid development of jet aircraft for the mass transportation of people and goods, electronic media, and especially satellite and digital transmissions of information which enable people in all the different parts of the world to share in major events such as the Olympic Games or to watch the bombing of Baghdad by the US Airforce on CNN in real time. This sharing of a common experience is important in creating a sense of belonging. This is what is referred to as *globalism*.<sup>2</sup> This globalism is similar to the term 'nationalism', except that it is, as the term implies, on a global scale. Thus, the three billion or more television viewers that watch the official opening ceremony of the Olympics or the soccer World Cup form a community sharing a common cultural experience. They may even be united in the love of the game. The most important point to know, however, is that irrespective of the new experiences that people have that give them new identities, the old ones have not all disappeared. Thus globalisation does not mean the end of nationalism.

In Africa particularly, nationalism does not mean the end of sub-national, local, regional and sectional identities of one sort or another. Although the circumstances in which these competing identities may provoke ethnic and other political violence is well known, we also know that it is possible for them to co-exist peacefully. So when we examine the situation in South Africa today, we find that the old and the new co-exist, sometimes harmoniously and at other times in perpetual conflict.

My research on the phenomenon of xenophobia has revealed that although South Africa has been a place that has welcomed immigrants, of one sort or another, for hundreds of years, it has now become less open to strangers even though it has become more attractive with the advent of democracy. Post-apartheid South Africa has acquired the label of a xenophobic society that is hostile to non-nationals, including migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other foreigners, whether they are legally or illegally located within the country. Thus, the country that has one of the most democratic constitutions in the world, one that has paid a great deal of attention to the question of human

rights, stands accused in the eyes of many, especially on the continent of Africa, as a country that frequently tolerates the violation of human rights, human dignity and security in the name of controlling the influx of foreigners.

While bearing in mind that globalisation is made possible by the technologies of the day, we can also define it as growing insecurity, as a consequence, in part, of these new technologies. In South Africa, the arrival of new immigrants, their exotic modes of dress and different values, is as old as the country itself. In the new South Africa, however, xenophobia has not only reached unprecedented levels in the public imagination of citizens but it has replaced apartheid as the form of racism that the country is associated with. Unlike apartheid, xenophobia is not the official policy of the South African government of the day. Indeed, the Constitution and other statutory instruments, as well as pronouncements from the President and other leaders, have all distanced themselves from this social problem. Migration and treatment of migrants is as much a problem for South Africa as it is in any other country and xenophobia is not a problem peculiar to South Africa. In most other countries that have attracted a significant inflow of foreigners, in Africa as well as in Europe, xenophobia has tended to flare up in violence of one form or another. Thus, the current civil war situation in the Ivory Coast was provoked by the systematic prevention of Ivorian citizens of foreign descent from full participation in the political life of their adopted country. Barring second generation Ivorians from holding political high office has degenerated into ethnic cleansing and the division of the country. Xenophobia is more frequently displayed in Europe where it is quite an emotive issue during national elections. In Austria, France and Germany, right-wing parties openly campaign against foreign immigrants. Indeed, even the mainstream parties have, of late, been quite open about their hostility towards foreigners. In a very selective manner, these countries have admitted foreigners with appropriate skills. Thus, Germany recruits Turkish workers and, more recently, Indian computer software experts, but is less willing to accept asylum seekers from countries such as Afghanistan or Turkey.

In South Africa, many African and overseas immigrants have arrived in the country looking for better life opportunities. They have come from the traditional emigration centres in Western and Eastern Europe as well as the old labour reserves of Mozambique, Lesotho and other neighbouring countries. This, of course, is partly the continuation of a well-established system of

economic and politically motivated migration. There are, however, new features to these movements of human populations. For the immigrants who have arrived from the Congo and other parts of French-speaking Africa, the major reason for migrating has been to escape civil war in their own countries and to seek a better life, not to serve a limited time as migrant workers. What follows is a sketch of some of the ways in which relationships between foreign Africans and South African communities are developing.

As far as the gulf between rich and poor goes, the so-called neo-liberal agenda, which has gained hegemony over global economic planning, appears to be putting in place – on a worldwide scale – what in South Africa was known as the system of apartheid. The difficulties that Africans have in obtaining visas to travel or work in Europe recall the pass laws imposed in South African cities during the era of apartheid. In short, this is a system of rich people trying to secure boundaries around themselves in order to keep the poor multitudes out. It is ironic that democratic South Africa should rejoin the world community of nations at precisely the moment when global apartheid is on the rise.<sup>3</sup>

The new influx controls that post-apartheid South Africa finds itself implementing are contained in two key legislative interventions, the *Aliens Control Act* and the *Immigration Act*. African immigrants, stripped of their refugee status, cultural diversity reflected in their religious lives, the languages that they speak, the dances that they perform, the hairstyles and modes of dress that they display, are people trying to make a living in the global market place. Although there are professionals and wealthy business people amongst them, the subject of my research is mainly in the troubled informal sector where conflict between South Africans and their guests is most likely to occur.

In a study of Congolese in Paris, informal sector trading, mainly in ‘tropical goods’ sent by relatives in the home country, is shown to be a common survival strategy for undocumented immigrants (MacGaffey & Bazenguissa-Ganja 2000). Many African traders can be found at the tourist-oriented flea markets selling curios of various sorts. Senegalese traders also distribute leather products and watches from Shenzhen in China. A few Congolese vendors also sell skin-lightening creams and bootleg cassette tapes of Congolese music at the main railway station. Somali traders, however, sell locally obtained snacks and cigarettes. In this discussion, we will look at parking-lot attendants and car guards, street vendors and hairstylists, in the Mowbray area of Cape Town.

One of the main complaints that South Africans have against foreign Africans is found in the catchphrase, 'they steal our jobs'. This suggests unfair competition for work and whenever they have been asked to elaborate on what it means to steal jobs, a number of observations have been made. Firstly, South Africans assert that foreign Africans have an unfair advantage because they have had access to education in their own countries, provided by their own governments, whereas those who grew up under apartheid did not have such an opportunity. Secondly, South Africans maintain that some of these foreign Africans operate with fake qualifications. Thirdly, South Africans assume that employers, who are still predominantly white, prefer to give jobs to foreign Africans, especially the illegal or undocumented migrants, because they are docile, accept lower wages and are willing to work in dangerous conditions. Obviously, they are not unionised. In a nutshell, foreign workers are regarded as scab labour, pushing down wages by accepting poor conditions of work. At the end of the day, so the saying goes, these foreign workers threaten to undo all the gains that South African workers have made in previous negotiations with employers.

Of course, there appears to be some truth in all these concerns. Although labour specialists will need to test these perceptions, my survey of refugees and immigrants living and working in the Mowbray area of Cape Town and its immediate suburbs of Observatory and Rondebosch, found that the foreign Africans tend to work in the informal sector and lower level service sector. In this section, I will look at the main occupations of foreign Africans and their means of livelihood, these being the running of hair salons, street vending and working as car guards. I will briefly explore their working conditions and the relationships they have with South African clients and employees, employers and colleagues. The main problem I want to discuss is how stereotyping influences relations between foreign Africans and South Africans.

### *Foreign workers*

Beginning with car guards, it is said that most of the parking attendants in Cape Town speak French. In Mowbray, the parking attendants at the Groote Schuur Hospital and St. Peters Shopping Mall are certainly predominantly young men from the Congo with a few Rwandan, Angolan and other foreign

African refugees in their number. South Africans in the group are few and likely to be female. This is partly because the wages are low and the hours difficult. According to Mr MJ, a Nigerian refugee who has experience working as a security guard but is currently studying for a postgraduate degree in Cape Town, there are clear and observable differences in the way South Africans and foreign Africans approach the work of guarding vehicles.<sup>4</sup> Summarising his own observations, he suggested that South Africans have a stronger sense of entitlement and are thus more likely to demand higher wages than take on a second job as a means of improving their lot. South Africans, Mr MJ said, insist on taking all the leave days they are entitled to in their contract, including sick leave. He observed that men, in particular, are fond of taking sick leave after a weekend drinking bout and he suggested that, after they have received their wages, South African men will disappear for the whole weekend and only report back for duty after their money has run out. They thus do not save and instead live from hand to mouth. They are often surprised to see that foreign Africans who arrive 'with nothing', as asylum seekers, soon have more resources than their hosts. Speaking about his own experience, Mr MJ described how surprised his fellow guards were when they found that he lived in a furnished flat and even had a telephone. According to Mr MJ, he was only able to achieve this by working abnormally long hours on night shifts, which South Africans avoid, and by taking all the overtime that his employer allowed him. Thus, by sacrificing his holidays and leave days (including weekends), and trying to make as much money as he could, he was able to appear more prosperous than his South African colleagues.

Refugees are not necessarily better workers. Their circumstances demand greater discipline and sacrifice in order to pay monthly rents (which they suggest are higher than those that are paid by South Africans), to maintain their cellphone or Telkom lines, without which they cannot keep contact with their network of friends and relatives within the country and abroad and, of course, to buy food. As older studies of labour migrants have shown, low incomes and similar pressures on vulnerable groups in town are resolved by strict austerity. Thus, it is quite common to find between five to ten men sharing one room, with the whole floor space covered in mattresses because they cannot afford to pay individual rents. It is because of this that they succeed, where South Africans seem to have failed, as informal sector business operators and low-level wage earners.

The second example that I would like to look at is that of the barbershops. Mr CM is a young man from the Cameroon of around 25 years old. He opened his Mowbray barbershop with three shaving shears, a few mirrors and a sofa that looked as if it had been retrieved from a refuse dump or a Steptoe & Son wagon. There was no washbasin in the room and he did not sell any hair creams. He did not even keep a record of clients as the South African operated hair salons on the same street do. South African owned businesses display more capital investment, employ more staff and cater for a more sophisticated clientele. Mr CM's barbershop simply provided haircuts in a limited range of styles as displayed on a number of posters in the room, which featured African sports stars based in Europe, African American basketball players and Hollywood stars, like Will Smith.

Most of Mr CM's clients are African men who simply come in to have a haircut. Once in a while, white and coloured men also come and sit in the shop, looking uncomfortable and self-conscious. They are usually accompanied by their mothers or some other woman and appear to be attracted mainly by the relatively cheap service that Mr CM provides. The equipment, as I have already noted, is very basic. After about a year of operation, he added a stereo player and television to his equipment. He also employed his South African girlfriend as cashier for the barbershop, but also to sell soft drinks and sweets that he now stocks in the same shop. Despite the improvement in his material well-being, Mr CM's equipment still consists of paint brushes of various sizes which are used to either brush off cut hair or apply baby powder. The shears used were bought from supermarkets and designed for use at home rather than by professional hairdressers. Mirrors on the wall, as well as mirrors used for reflecting the back of the client's head, are also very basic. Thus, the service provided in the barbershop owned by Mr CM appears to be of low quality.

However, the place is very popular with a particular kind of client. Most of the clients are young African men, students from the university, fellow refugees and immigrants, and other young men who are not too fussy about the service that he provides. Coloured men were heard to complain that they would not want to have their hair cut by a black man and a number of reasons were given for this. One was that they were of the view that he would not know how to cut their hair because of its different texture. The second reason was that the service provided, as already mentioned, was inferior and much was made of the

fact that he used modified paint brushes and methylated spirits in place of after-shave. However, as we have already noted, clients of all racial groups at one point or another make use of this relatively unsophisticated barbershop.

The barbershop is interesting because it provides an excellent opportunity for the foreign immigrant to get involved in the money economy, to employ assistants, both fellow immigrants and South Africans, and also to interact with a large number of people from different backgrounds. The barbershop also provides an opportunity for the proprietor to provide other services using the shop as a front. Thus, for example, one very popular shop, which is owned by a young Congolese man on Durban Road in Mowbray, also functions as a she-been and provides beer throughout the week. It is very popular with students and, needless to say, very unpopular with the police who have raided it on several occasions for contravening the laws pertaining to the sale of alcohol after hours.

As far as street vending is concerned, most cigarette and sweet vendors along Main Road are of Somalian origin. Those who sell leather goods tend to be West Africans, especially Senegalese. Thus, we can see some division of labour, or ethnic specialisation, whereby Congolese are car guards and also run barbershops; while West Africans are in the hair salon business and are involved in street vending. Somalis tend to rely on street vending and, to some extent, have also managed to penetrate the minibus taxi industry. Amongst the cigarette vendors, they have alliances with Indian businessmen, who appear to be fellow Muslims, who distribute their cigarettes and sweets to the Somali men and then allow them to keep a share of the profits. The living conditions of the Somali men in Mowbray are very similar to those of their Congolese counterparts. Because the rents are high, the refugees and asylum seekers, and other immigrants, share a room and live in overcrowded conditions. Because of their unreliable sources of income, they work long hours throughout the week, except Sundays, and their main concern is paying the rent, telephone, water and electricity bills. Despite the low levels of profit in their informal sector activities, they are still expected to, and sometimes do, remit monies to relatives in other parts of the world. They also receive money from their networks in Europe and America.

These cases suggest changes in the ways in which production works in the economy. As anthropologist Keith Hart has argued, there have been significant

shifts in the way the capitalist economy is organised and virtual capitalism does not really depend on the production of goods (2001). Virtual capitalism, as the term implies, can profit from virtually any activities. It is therefore possible to trade in information and information about information. Trade in futures and exchange goods that have not yet been produced is beyond the scope of this chapter and of the people who were the subjects of this study. The people at the lower end of the market in the informal sector in countries such as South Africa, where services sectors are not predominant – such as the ones that we have discussed above – include unskilled workers, such as security guards, street vendors or hairstylists. Here one might include sex workers and drug dealers, but these have not featured in my research although they undeniably constitute a major part of the informal sector.

### *Xenophobia*

The phenomenon of xenophobia goes beyond competition for jobs and other scarce resources. Many of the worst newspaper reports about South Africa's xenophobia and the sorts of stories that create the most excitement at home and abroad, are physical attacks on foreigners. Refugees and asylum seekers all know somebody or have heard of somebody who was thrown off a train. There are demonstrations against police brutality and funerals for compatriots who were shot for their cellphones or money. Stories abound about refugees who were mugged and stabbed to death in broad daylight. Be that as it may, we cannot confidently tell whether the victims of such violence are attacked because they are foreigners or because they have cellphones and other things that thieves want to steal from them. South African xenophobia, however, is mentioned in other contexts. These include harassment by the police, and other representatives of the state, discrimination by landlords in the housing sector, where slumlords charge very high rents for very low quality accommodation, and insults from South Africans on the streets. Foreign Africans, identified as being too dark or identified by their national dress or by their language which does not sound similar to languages spoken in South Africa, are the ones most likely to experience such harassment.

In the rest of this discussion I would like to highlight the less studied phenomenon of xenophilia, the love for the foreigner that is part and parcel of the encounter between foreign Africans and South Africans. Here, I want to look

at the examples of church organisations providing charitable and philanthropic support to people who arrive from other countries with very little, seeking food and accommodation. I am not looking at the refugee support networks of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and other such organisations but at the marriages and romances between foreign Africans and South Africans.

In most cases, the marriages involve young men from other countries and young South African women. To illustrate this example of love for foreigners, I refer to two coloured women who are sisters and who were both married to Congolese men. The older woman is a 40-year old widow with two teenage children from her previous marriage and a four-year old girl from her marriage to her Congolese partner. She said that she decided soon after her first husband died that she was going to have nothing to do with local men. She eventually met a Congolese man at a Muizenberg nightclub. Soon after, he moved in with her and they were together for about five years during which time she bore him a daughter before she 'kicked him out'. Before this, however, she played matchmaker to her younger sister and introduced her to a Congolese man who works at the Table View Hotel. The younger sister married him, had two young children with him and then divorced. Both sisters continued seeing other Congolese men and even deliberately put on weight in order to obtain what Ms PM calls the 'African look'. A third sister is married to an Austrian man and emigrated to Europe several years ago. So, in this family of three sisters, all married foreign men.

This kind of attraction to, and preference for, foreign men is what makes it possible, in some cases, for refugees to find a place for themselves in a new society. From the men's point of view, they have no choice but to link up with local women, not only because they are cut off from their home countries but also because women are in the minority in the immigrant community. Immigrants married to local women not only receive free accommodation but also buy into the family networks of the women with whom they live. As in the example of Ms PM who found a husband for her younger sister, a network of relationships was created whereby the two communities were brought together and participated in each other's private and public lives. However, the myth that South African women prefer foreign men because they are less violent and know how to treat women better has not been borne out by the facts. Both women that I referred to above were, at one time or another,

assaulted by their Congolese husbands and boyfriends. Other marriages that I have come across between Somali men and coloured women in the Mowbray area have, similarly, been characterised by violence from time to time. So, South African men and foreign men appear to be equally capable of abusing their partners. In this regard, one of the conclusions that the South Africans who befriend foreigners reach is that they are not so different after all.

The question then arises: why are some South African women attracted to foreign men? One reason that has been suggested, especially by South African men, is that foreigners corrupt local women with gifts of money. Whereas this may be true for some of the wealthier members of the refugee and immigrant community, the great majority of the young immigrant men do not have any money to speak of and are limited in their choices of work to the lowest paying jobs. The attraction appears to be due in part to the fact that they are foreign and that they are new; they speak a strange language and they express their love in new and unusual ways. In any event, xenophilia appears in counterpoint to xenophobia, both affecting the living and working conditions of foreign Africans in South Africa.

### *Conclusion*

When we examine the impact of the new technologies and the new societies that have emerged as a result, to what extent are human relations also conducted in new and unusual ways? From what I have described of the interaction between South Africans and foreign Africans, a lot seems to be done as it has always been done. When strangers come into a new place, either they are treated with hostility or they are welcomed. In South Africa, we see both of these processes at work. My suggestion is, therefore, that there are times when people stick together because they are alike and there are other times when they stick together because they are different. In asking the question of what it is that holds us together, we have to pay attention to the fact that we are not always united. Similarly, we are not always divided. There are special magical moments when the whole country is united such as when the national team wins the rugby World Cup or the Africa Cup of Nations in football. There are also times when the same soccer-loving population is divided into Kaiser Chiefs and Orlando Pirates camps, and hurling missiles at each other. There are times, as we know, when the old racial cleavages erupt into violence of one

sort or another and there are moments when these cleavages appear to disappear. Similarly, the presence of new arrivals on the South African landscape is not always characterised by violence. Yes, sometimes foreigners are thrown off trains but so are local people. Sometimes, as we have shown, marriages and new offspring result from the coming together of foreign Africans and South Africans, and this is not new, even though for this generation, it is providing new and unprecedented social questions to answer.

### Notes

- 1 The following discussion of Giddens is based upon my review in *Social Analysis* (2002).
- 2 The difference between globalisation and globalism is explained in Cohen & Kennedy (2000: 358–373).
- 3 South African views of growing global inequalities are discussed in Bond (2001).
- 4 Information in this section of the chapter was gleaned from interviews conducted by the author in 2002. Full names are not used on request of the respondents.

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## *Part III: Exchange*

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# 7 *Building a new nation: solidarity, democracy and nationhood in the age of circulatory capitalism*

Thomas A Koelble

## *The abstract violence of globalisation and prospects for solidarity in the postcolony*

Is it possible to develop a sense of nation, of peoplehood, in the postcolonial space called South Africa under the current conditions dictated by circulatory capitalism? I argue that the mechanisms of the international financial regime make it increasingly difficult for a nation-state to direct, let alone control, its resources towards addressing the problems of domestic justice and redistribution that are key to democratic consolidation and success. The abstract violence heaped upon the people of South Africa, as in many other parts of the world, in terms of continued – even deepening – poverty, unemployment, and a general lack of resources for education, health, housing and welfare is an endemic feature of the neo-liberal economic strategy loosely described as the Washington Consensus. Further, as long as there is no concerted attempt to reform the current international financial system, emerging democracies are likely to experience currency fluctuations and economic shocks not of their making. These shocks, in turn, will ensure that any progress towards betterment is stymied and put in recession.

The commonality of interests and attachments needed to produce solidarity entails the creation of a sense of collective agency, captured in phrases such as ‘we, the people of South Africa’. However, the production of a sense of collective agency is severely compromised in the absence of economic freedom or, at least, visible progress towards such freedom.

Moreover, the second criterion for the consolidation of democracy – a vibrant public sphere that is cognisant of *both* equality and difference – can only come

about if the state is able to address these pressing issues of redistribution and equality because the persistence of huge inequities will continue the politics of acrimony based on race and difference. Yet, these injustices are not solvable by domestic elites, no matter how rich and powerful they may appear to be, but only through a systemic shift that allows for balanced economic development to occur. The development of a vibrant public sphere is also dependent upon a commitment by government not to involve itself in the day-to-day politics of associational life, cultural activity and the interactions of the populace. The creation of a public sphere that encourages solidarity thus requires a double move by the state. On the one hand, the national state must mediate between global economic forces and local communities in order to pursue the objective of equality across difference; the state must involve itself in the economic conditions of freedom. On the other hand, the national state must, at the same time, retreat from the sphere of day-to-day political association and cultural life. I will argue that the South African political elite has made several promising attempts to help the development of a shared sense of nationhood that transcends a past of division and conflict but that this project is a delicate one, subject to both internal and external attack.

### *The process of encompassment and critical theory*

I would like to begin my first argument by noting that there are currently, in fact, multiple globalisations or globalising processes in motion at the same time. At the level of individual subjects, the advent of the Internet, wireless communication and the global electronic media has allowed for unprecedented transmission of data and access to information. At the level of the state, globalisation is not, as some claim, orchestrating the demise or withering of the state but is surely transforming the conditions of sovereignty and thus the conditions of governance. Especially in postcolonial contexts, there is no longer even an approximate correspondence between the state and the economy. The notion of a national economy, with its tax revenues that might be used to promote economic freedom, seems to belong to a 'pre-globalising' world. All of this suggests that at the global level, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are fundamental issues – issues of the existence of economic asymmetries and objective dependence – which directly inform the emergence of democracy in postcolonial spaces in the age of circulatory capitalism.

The fundamental sea-change occurring in the international financial system, which I would take as the most important feature of 'globalisation', is being both overestimated in terms of its 'naturalness', the implication being that it cannot be changed, and underestimated in terms of its corrosive impact on postcolonial nation-states and the emergence of democratic regimes in such spaces (Lee & LiPuma 2002). The collapse of the apartheid regime, for instance, was directly related to the developments in the international political economy and the processes of globalisation (Marais 2001; Price 1991). The new South African democracy is part and parcel of the encompassment process of circulatory capitalism, in its financial and rhetorical form, which has engulfed most parts of the globe since 1973. The political emancipation that took place symbolically in 1994, was part of a much larger global movement towards the realisation of an ideology of human freedom, market reform and universal rights that is intrinsically connected to the circulatory, some might add predatory, form that capitalism has taken. The critical point is that the process of globalisation embodies a paradox that complicates the prospect of producing solidarity: the realisation of a new ensemble of subjective freedoms is intrinsically connected to new forms of objective dependence. In South Africa, the realisation of an inclusive democracy, one that seeks to incorporate all citizens and create an open society, coincides with new forms of globally created, circulation based, abstract violence (Mbembe 2001).

Democracy, open markets, privatisation, competition and free choice (whether as consumers, customers, voters, share-holders or citizens) are all part of a larger conversation, about what the 'good life' is and ought to be, that is Western-inspired, Western-infused and Western-dominated (Appadurai 2001; Comaroff & Comaroff 1997a, 1997b). This global exchange of ideas and concepts has provided a vocabulary for those opposing authoritarian regimes across the world. The power of the discourse of human rights and democratic accountability has been undeniable in the transformations of countries and even whole regions of the globe. However, the question must be posed as to how far the politics of emancipation and liberation has progressed in these places and spaces. While institutional, procedural democracy has been introduced to a greater or lesser extent in many parts of the world since 1989, the great majority of citizens living under these new political conditions have not experienced an upsurge in economic freedom or prosperity (Faux & Mishel 2000). If political agency in terms of economic control is waning, what are the

implications for democratic regimes, for the intentions of movements aiming to liberate and emancipate? The key question is: what kind of democratic politics is possible when transnational agents and markets begin to exert control over economies once managed by national states?

My second argument is that the concept of solidarity, or trust, or 'social capital' (I take these terms to be more or less synonymous) is one that needs to be placed into a context. The term 'solidarity', as used in this chapter, refers to affinitive and affective ties to a nation-state (understood as a collective agent) rather than to race, class, ethnicity or some other form of collectivity. The use of the word presupposes that a well functioning nation-state requires a solidaristic citizenry that will, when called upon, sacrifice its well-being for a larger – often future oriented – common good or that will, at the very least, be willing to trade off personal, for collective, gains (Seligman 1997: 119). 'Solidarity' is neither a term without history nor a term of universal meaning but represents a specific speech act with a history and with a set of meanings that need to be grounded. The question I would like to raise is: what does solidarity mean in South Africa? Is there a possibility of reconstructing the meaning of the term in the 'new' South Africa to fit a new political dispensation while, at the same time, taking into account the rapidly changing global system? To use Alain Touraine's (2000) provocation – can we live together under the current modern condition that is dividing up the planet into those committed to a form of post-modern hyper-individualisation and those committed to the defence of community, both modern and pre-modern?

To examine these issues, I will juxtapose Robert Putnam's *Making Democracy Work* with Touraine's *Can We Live Together?* This juxtaposition brings into relief the contrast between a theory that grasps democracy by separating it from socio-structural factors, such as economic relations, and a theory that grasps democracy as a relationship between social difference and economic equality that agents can and should mediate.

Putnam addresses the question as to why democracy appears to work in the North of Italy but not the South. Putnam argues that the issue of 'social capital' is central to any understanding of why democracy functions and suggests that 'social capital' originates in the civic associations of a society. The stronger these civic associations, the more effective and efficient the country's democracy will be, and the more affluent its citizens are likely to become

(1993: 163–195). The emphasis on the strength of civil society in Putnam's analysis is cause for concern, in my view, since it elides the structural conditions that shape the economic, social and political trajectories of a democracy. Without a more embedded and contextual perspective, the emphasis on the local, so obvious in the civil society approach, fails to capture the realities of many of the poorer countries and regions. It fails to capture all the forms of historically embedded economic and political inequality. One consequence is that Putnam can offer only a very narrow account of solidarity as a reflex of civic associations but he can never explain solidarity on a nation-wide basis because he has bracketed culturally and economically produced differences. As importantly, Putnam's analysis presupposes the existence of fixed and bounded social entities, such as Northern and Southern Italy, and is thus particularly poorly suited for understanding the circulatory and transversal forces that define globalisation.

In contrast, Touraine pleads for a philosophical debate on the issue of difference and equality in which these terms are not seen as a contradiction but, indeed, as compatible (2000: 170). Only then, argues the author, can a definition of democracy be developed that allows for both individual and community-based rights to flourish. Only then can a political discourse transcend the boundaries currently set by the discourse on democracy emanating from the realm of circulatory capitalism that is, by its very nature, biased towards the individual and against the group. Interestingly, Touraine offers a structural argument for the mediation of difference and equality. However, in doing so, he presupposes for its realisation the production and expression of a solidarity that his analysis does not, and probably cannot, adequately ground. His approach is based on a Euro-American model of society that takes for granted a state with capacities that were never part of the capacities of the post-colony.

I turn to the question of South Africa's 'glue' precisely because the one question that Touraine leaves unanswered is: how can a community self-produce solidarity when those agents most likely to have an interest in the creation of solidarity – civil society and the state – are increasingly unable to structure motivation? Certainly, there are several racial, cultural, religious, ethnic and organisational forms of solidarity at work in South African society. None of them, however, lend themselves to the nation-building project that is required to be able to transcend identity-based communities as they re-enforce the

politics of difference. Given the nature of the international financial regime, we should not labour under any illusions about just how difficult the process of traditional nation-building in the postcolony is likely to be. However, the South African case is one in which there is sufficiently strong cultural, historical and societal material to build a multi-cultural sense of community, reciprocity, solidarity and even nationhood. The cases of Robben Island and the new Constitution provide examples of such material that needs to be harnessed in a long overdue public debate on citizenship and belonging. I will turn to the work of Craig Calhoun and Jürgen Habermas on 'patriotic constitutionalism' to argue that Touraine's multi-cultural project is indeed one of the alternatives open to South Africans. I will, in the process, supplement and extend Touraine's viewpoint by arguing that 'patriotic constitutionalism' is also necessary to produce the conditions for solidarity.

### *Circulatory capitalism: or what do derivatives have to do with democracy?*

Ever since Manuel Castells' famous trilogy focusing on globalisation, the information economy, and the networks of capital, informatics and speculation, it has become part and parcel of 'globalisation literature' to point to the immense impact of new information technologies, new ways of speculation, and the novel ways of production and consumption reshaping the economics, politics and sociality of the planet (Castells 1997). While there are those who celebrate these innovations with the enthusiasm of all those before them that saw themselves as being on the side of progress (Toynbee 2000), there are those who argue that these changes bring with them undesirable consequences (Shiva 2000). One commentator may argue that the coming of Western values, vices and virtues represents the advent of liberation and emancipation, while others interpret such changes as a weakening of authority, morality and accustomed ways of life (Toynbee 2000). While there are some observers who argue that the global convergence at the heart of the globalisation thesis is flawed (Boyer 1996), there are few who deny that globalisation is taking place and that a process of encompassment emanating from the Western metropole is affecting all corners of the globe, be it via the Internet, via cultural icons such as Madonna or Destiny's Child, via the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or merely through the increasing contact with US and European tourists who, in long processions, file through the most

remote regions of China, Cambodia, Turkey or Ethiopia (Appadurai 2001). Neither is this process a one-way street – street vendors from Mali crowd the pavements in Johannesburg no less than in Strasbourg or New York; the music of Ali Farka Toure is featured in London and Tokyo and Wonton soup or sushi have become common in the diet of many European, South African and Puerto Rican citizens.

Yet, the sheer size of contemporary financial instruments and capital movements is likely to disturb even the most informed observer of globalisation. It is a little known fact that the size of the derivatives market was, in 2001, an astounding 100 trillion dollars (Lee & LiPuma 2002). This figure is not only impressive in the sense that it represents a one with fourteen zeros behind it, but in that it represents a market of financial instruments designed to hedge against currency fluctuations that barely existed in 1973 – a market that is unregulated by any agency anywhere and that affects, fundamentally, the value of each and every currency worldwide, not just daily but every second of every day. Not only is this market six times greater in value than all national stock markets put together, it represents a change from creating value through production to creating value through circulation. A country's currency is subject, globally, to speculation by derivatives dealers and no country, not even the US, can regulate the value of its currency. The emergence of the Internet as a carrier of unlimited quantities of information, and of financial markets as a regulator of economic development and social policy, has led some observers to argue that we have entered a new age of capitalism altogether with fundamental implications for the state, particularly in the postcolony.

The growth of the derivatives market, alongside the emergence of investment funds in the European Union and the US of unprecedented size, with their ability to move in and out of countries at the touch of a computer mouse, have seriously challenged the ability of the traditional nation-state to survive in what Paul Volcker describes as the 'sea of finance' (2000: 75). The European Union is only one attempt by smaller economies to jump into a larger vessel to ride out the waves of speculation. The EU enjoys advantages over yet smaller economies such as South Africa, not just as a result of its technological advancement, its skilled labour force or other production related factors but also by virtue of the fact that lesser developed countries, in order to show the outside investors that they are stable economies, have to buy EU and US denominated bonds as reserves to stabilise their own currencies.<sup>1</sup>

In stark language, the poorer countries not only pay for the massive indebtedness of the rich, they also subsidise the spending habits of the richer North through buying their bonds (Lee & LiPuma 2002). What Lee and LiPuma describe is an abstract form of violence in which the recipients of that violence experience the effects of decisions taken only via the medium of what appear to be local events – unemployment, poverty, lack of resources for education, housing, health and so forth. Yet the cause of discomfort is never seen to lie where it truly lies and, as a result, the search for an addressee is usually also a localised one (as in the case of Zimbabwean farmers or other ethnicities in the Great Lakes region), rather than one focused on the international economy. While there is certainly some form of local culpability, there are only few occasions when the true cause of the problem is identified and brought to account.

The derivatives market and the current financial regulatory scheme work in favour of the US and the EU. Their emergence and growth has often been regarded as ‘normal’, as part and parcel of a natural process of capitalism, yet there is nothing natural, or normal, about the workings of the system, and there is nothing that cannot be changed, or regulated, in such a system (Soros 2000). The fact that the system has contributed massively to the impoverishment of more than half the globe’s population, in the last few years, should send warning signals throughout the lesser developed world as it is likely that the sharp downturn of 1997 in South East Asia, and 2002 in Argentina and Turkey, will be reproduced in sharper and more poignant ways. In future the end result of the continuation of this system is that countries, such as South Africa, will increasingly lose control over their economic destiny, with all the negative political consequences that is likely to bring. The question as to what good is democracy, when it cannot provide for even the most rudimentary basics of modern life, such as improved housing, education, health and welfare, is likely to resonate not only in the squatter camps of southern Africa. However, just as there is an imaginary in the current economic thinking about the fact that this form of capitalism will have winners and losers, there is nothing to stop one imagining a different and equally effective system operating to ensure a more equitable distribution of resources (Eatwell & Taylor 2000).

Any postcolonial discussion of the modern condition, and the concept of social co-operation, has to begin with a reflection on the global setting of economic objectives before we can look at local constellations. To speak of

‘democracy’ or ‘nation-building’ without any reference to the global setting within which nation-building takes place, and democratising political elites have to operate, is to elide an increasingly important, even central, aspect of domestic politics (Gourevitch 1986). Its overwhelming importance, particularly for lesser developed and recently democratised countries, must be registered in the dialogue concerning regime transformation. From a practical perspective, instead of attacking the symptoms of the malaise – wars in the Congo, Angola or the Great Lakes region – the government might call for a sustained dialogue about the working of the current international system of finance and recommend both the regulation and control of that system. Such reform would aim to ensure that developing countries can embark on a course of greater economic and social justice without which democracy is likely always to be rendered unstable.

### *South African exceptionalism and its fallacies*

Much of the debate about the ‘new’ South Africa, its political dispensation, Constitution and electoral system, has been founded on the assumption that the transformation was achieved internally. The power of the union movement, the activism of the United Democratic Front, the pressure exerted through the African National Congress and even the realisation by the business community that ‘business as usual’ was no longer acceptable, are often summoned to explain why apartheid collapsed (Adler & Webster 1995; Murray 1994; Price 1991; Sisk 1996). As a consequence of these arguments, there is a sense that South Africa represents an anomaly on the African continent, that this is actually a country with a vibrant and strong civil society. This civic virtue is then often indicated as grounds to assume that democracy in South Africa is better prepared to survive than in many other parts of the continent where civil society is seen as absent (Bratton & van de Walle 1997; Joseph 1999). While the contribution of these domestic factors was surely important – and there is no intention to downplay the sacrifices made by the participants in the social movements that bore the brunt of the repressive capacity of the apartheid regime – the emphasis on the domestic situation underestimates the extent to which the local is constrained, circumscribed and limited by global financial movements, global psychological sentiments and moral, ethical, legal and ideational constructs that mirror the West’s self-image (Badie 2000).

Nowhere is this underestimation of the global more visible than in the local debate about the new political dispensation and the South African political transformation. Hassen Ebrahim's book, *The Soul of the Nation*, bears witness to the sense that a new nation has arisen from the process of change, negotiation and compromise but that this transformation was a national one rather than part of an international development (Ebrahim 1998). An extensive Constitution and Bill of Rights are in place and are the result of negotiation, as well as large-scale public involvement, with over two million citizens sending submissions (Murray 2001). An independent judiciary in the form of the Constitutional Court has taken root, and has been critical of the government and assertive of its independence. Most crucially, two elections have been conducted that have been held to be fair and free by the international community. There are few analyses that do not point, in one way or another, to international influences but these are usually seen as background conditions and nowhere near as important as local debates and actors.

One of the few exceptions to this rule is the work by Heinz Klug who, quite rightly, links the South African transformation to a much broader international phenomenon that he describes as US-driven judicial review (2000, 2001). Klug demonstrates how the South African constitutional debate was heavily influenced by the global debates regarding judicial review and constitutionalism, and how various external agents and agencies involved themselves in the constitutional debate, giving it an imported character. The debates concerning various levels of rights, the discourse on federalism, democracy and institutional structure all borrowed heavily from international texts and practices, particularly from Canada and Germany but also from India and Namibia. Moreover, the international influences working upon the ANC-led government in terms of fiscal, monetary, economic or social policy since coming to power ought not to be underestimated. While South African policy-makers might wish to create the image of having been free from such influence, there should be little doubt that the Washington Consensus has guided the socio-economic policy debate and that the legal-judicial practices of international law have shaped the constitutional debate about the form the local democracy ought to take.

The emphasis on the local has unfortunate consequences. Uncomfortable questions are being raised about the levels of commitment to the 'new South Africa' of politicians and opinion-makers alike. Such questions often end in

recriminations, particularly against the 'white' community (but also, occasionally, against the Indian or coloured communities), that their levels of sharing are not sufficient, that their critique of the current government is racially motivated and biased, that they are arrogant or behave in a racist manner, or simply that they are not part of the larger community in terms of language, culture and disposition. The question that is being posed to these communities is: are you willing to be part of the larger South African community or not? Yet the terms of reference, the actions that members of these groups are to take, remain obscure and largely unspecified. The underlying assumption is that a collective, domestic effort will ensure the success of the transition. Reasons for failure are equally to be found internally, namely with those who did not pull their weight or actively opposed transformation. However, the question remains: when can we expect individuals to partake in larger community activities willingly? Are there circumstances under which people will begin to co-operate, exhibit trust in strangers and even build loyalty sufficient enough to support national solidarity? Robert Putnam attempts to provide an answer to this question in his study of civic associations in Italy.

### *Social capital, democracy and the nation*

Putnam argues in *Making Democracy Work* (1993) that the key to solidarity, to national and democratic success, lies in the strength of a society's civic associations. Based on a contrast of Northern and Southern Italy, Putnam attempts to show empirically how effective and efficient Northern local government structures are when compared to those of the Italian South. His statistical analysis shows a clear pattern – Northern local government produces positive results and enjoys popular support from the citizenry whereas local government in the South fails to produce positive policy results and is seen as corrupt by the populace. Putnam suggests that this pattern can be explained through the strength of civic associations in the North and their relative absence in the South of Italy. His empirical evidence shows strong levels of membership in the North in an array of civic associations such as singing groups, soccer clubs, bowling leagues, bird-watching clubs and an absence of such in the South. Putnam suggests that these kinds of associations function to build trust and solidarity amongst the members that then translates into all sorts of other activities, including political participation in local government matters.

Following Alexis de Tocqueville's argument that the strength of American democracy (and, by extension, its national coherence) was based on its civic associations, Putnam suggests that the Italian North has reaped the benefit of hundreds of years of civic activism which did not exist in the South. To Putnam, the key to democratic and national or, in this case, regional success is that a society is able to build up 'social capital' or trust, and that trust in other members of the society kicks off a virtuous cycle in which trusting relationships lead to social co-operation, the acceptance of social and cultural rules, and that these levels of trust then translate into wealth creation and accountable, transparent governance. The important insight in Putnam's work is that culture is a means of creating solidarity as it forms the basis of communication between strangers, establishes modes for understanding action, and sets up systems of rules, norms and standards that allow one individual to predict what another individual might do in certain situations. Trust and solidarity may develop from a shared cultural background, set of values, symbols and rituals. In places where civil life and civic relationships are strong, the citizens:

are engaged by public issues, but not by personalistic or patron-client politics. Inhabitants trust one another to act fairly and to obey the law. Leaders in these regions are relatively honest. They believe in popular government and they are predisposed to compromise with their political adversaries. Both citizens and leaders here find equality congenial. Social and political networks are organised horizontally, not hierarchically. The community values solidarity, civic engagement, co-operation and honesty. Government works. (1993: 115)

The virtue of Putnam's account is that he is able to show that there is a linkage between cultural norms, political efficacy and historical development. Unlike the many political scientists who view democracy merely as a set of institutions and rules of conduct, Putnam ventures into the territory of history and culture to attempt to explain why democracy exists in some places and not in others. However, both on the dependent variable and his independent variable, Putnam experiences difficulties. As David Laitin remarks, Putnam's book is less about democracy than it is about good or bad governance and his explanatory variable, the strength of civic associations, may be replaced by a range of other factors equally powerful in explaining the difference between North and South Italy (Laitin 1995). Sidney Tarrow, in his powerful critique

of Putnam's analysis, argues that Southern Italy was, for all intents and purposes, a colony of the North after 1861 and that its governmental structures, its economic backwardness and its levels of corruption may have more to do with quasi-colonial structures introduced by its Northern conquerors than with the lack of civic association (1996). As Tarrow argues:

Like the merger between West and East Germany 130 years later, a stronger, richer, more legitimate regime conquered a weaker, poorer, more marginal one, inducting its citizens into political life through the tools of patronage, paternalism and the power of money – and rubbing it in by sending in commissions of experts to shake their heads over their backwardness. (1996: 394)

Moreover, there are several studies that indicate that, far from being absent, civic associations operate strongly and visibly in the South but that they are, by no means, a guarantee of democratic governance or general social cooperation and trust. In fact, all a civic association might bring about is trust among the members of the organisation but not trust at a more general level of society (Levi 1996).

Putnam's work elides any form of structural condition, be it forms of conquest and colonialism or global economic conditions that may affect the efficacy of the political regime. His is a kind of 'big bang' theory of civic associations – they arise in one part of the world and then determine the history of that part of the world for centuries to come. From the point of view of the postcolony, his is actually a quite depressing account since he points out that Italy's strong civic associations are rooted in a long, historical tradition that dates back to the twelfth century (Putnam 1993: 181). In other words, without deep historical grounding in civic activity, a country is not likely to be able to produce a public culture conducive to democracy. For any committed democrat as well as for any historian worth their salt, this kind of historical determinism is erroneous and misplaced.

Second, the argument that 'social capital' is created in civic associations and then permeates from these associations into the wider society is highly questionable. As Margaret Levi observes in her critique of Putnam, there is a degree of romanticism inherent in this argument that neglects the anti-democratic nature of much of associational life or the uses it could be put to (1996). Levi believes that trust emerges as a result of personal experience and certain

institutions that enforce trust rather than from membership of an association. She argues that institutions, such as the state that can enforce agreements and that establish costs for betrayal, are pre-conditions for developing the capacity of individuals to trust one another. The absence of state structures, as in Yugoslavia and parts of Africa, leads to the Hobbesian war of all against all.

Finally, Putnam fails to develop a notion of culture that is active and highly adaptive by viewing culture as invariant tradition. The North and the South of Italy are characterised as separate, non-interactive, fixed territories with their distinct sets of public culture. But, of course, culture is active, interactive, and consists of symbols, norms and forms that are recognisable across borders. Northern and Southern Italian cultures are mutually recognisable forms of interaction, just as Ndebele and Zulu cultures are easily recognisable across the ethnic boundary. Putnam's account ignores the circulation of ideas, concepts, norms and images when people migrate freely, interact, communicate, intermarry and mix together their cultural traditions and activities. To provide one example – a newly initiated Xhosa man, a young person who has undergone 'traditional' circumcision, isolation in an initiation hut and has been to the 'bush', will wear formal shoes, a Scottish golf cap and a suit upon returning to the community.<sup>2</sup> This is considered to be traditional Xhosa custom and represents, in a powerful manner, the fetishisation of Western clothing, status and power in African society. Putnam's argument, in other words, can never grasp that the very circulation of cultural forms transforms them, and that the transformation of forms, through their circulation, is itself part of culture. The anaesthetisation of culture is, of course, the companion to a static account of history. Indeed, whatever the merits of Putnam's account for Italy, its distance from a theory of transformation makes it especially inappropriate for a postcolonial world that is so rapidly globalising.

### *Multiculturalism, equality and difference*

From the standpoint of both political culture and social history, Alain Touraine develops a much more sophisticated analysis that suggests that domestic political systems, economic developments, social and cultural tropes and norms and principles have to be placed onto a much larger canvas of modernity in which the values, norms, practices and principles of the West are seen as agents of change and transformation in the affected locality. These

Western principles are by no means only benign, committed to progress, human rights, free markets and other positively-defined values. They elicit all sorts of responses and can be channelled into directions conducive not only for democracy, equality and recognition of difference but also for their denial. Further, as suggested in the previous section, democracy must operate in environments in which any movement towards greater internal economic equality is met with external resistance and internal scepticism, while failure to bring about a better distribution of resources and equity is likely to undermine the democratic process.

Touraine begins his opus with an analysis of the modern condition, primarily that of individualism and the current form of capitalism. His is a fairly bleak characterisation of the modern condition: currently, there is a choice between a kind of hyper-individualism emanating from the West, based upon the principles of the free market, neo-liberalism and the cult of individualism that permeates society, economy and polity, and an adherence to communitarianism of various sorts, be it religious, ethnic, racial, linguistic or ideational. He suggests that the nation-state used to supply the glue that kept societies functioning by providing institutions that created the preconditions for trust, solidarity and co-operation. The state is being undermined, undercut and emaciated by both the forces of circulatory capitalism and communalism, and cannot, in future, supply the very institutions that makes 'living together' possible. While Fordism and production-based capitalism allowed room for an interventionist state – indeed required it in order to function – the new forms of capitalism are gnawing at the very roots of those institutions that made co-operation possible. Yet at the same time, these new forms of capitalism are creating the conditions that make living together necessary as boundaries collapse, immigration accelerates and a myriad of groups – cultural and otherwise – are forced to co-exist, whether easily or not.

John Comaroff addresses this issue explicitly in an article entitled 'Reflections on the Colonial State' (2001). He argues that black South Africans experienced the colonial state as a force that destroyed their mode of production through dispossession and imposed on them a certain kind of exploitative capitalism. The main purpose of this capitalism was to impoverish, and make dependent, a servile labour force. It created an underpaid, mainly male urban labour force and a mainly female, underproductive rural labour force. Comaroff suggests that this form of exploitative capitalism – by no means restricted to South

Africa, since it is endemic to what Mahmood Mamdani (1996) would call the 'generic' form of colonialism – led to a 'nationless' state. This nationless state has produced two competing versions of modernity, one based on the precepts of the liberal ethos of universal human and individual rights, individual entitlement and autonomous citizenship. The other version of modernity is based on the assertion of group rights and ethnic solidarity. Comaroff believes that the struggle between these two versions of modernity is the true legacy of colonialism and apartheid and that it is likely to shape the political future of Africa. The political debate between community and individual is made all the more difficult by the corrosion of the state through the forces of the global economy which will, more than likely, sharpen the conflicts over which conception is to predominate.

How can we then cope with this paradox of (post)modernity? Touraine suggests that the only way forward is through the creation of new understandings of identity, belonging and democratic interaction. Touraine argues that democratic theory, for instance, in Charles Taylor's work, used to make a distinction between equality and difference – the politics of difference usually being seen as the less important of the two – but that this distinction can no longer count (1994). In order for 'us' to live together, equality and difference must be made compatible in democratic discourse. Rather than viewing cultures as separate entities, Touraine argues that cultures 'are modes of managing change as well as systems of order'. Far from rejecting outsiders as different, in a multi-cultural society outsiders have to be seen as a necessary externality, without which one's own culture cannot be defined, let alone talked about, analysed or understood (2000: 177). The important aspect of multi-cultural society is that it requires communication between the various cultural groups and emancipation from both strict communitarianism and hyper-individualism. It requires a re-composition of the world in terms of the development of cultures that as a matter of principle and self-constitution accept cultural diversity. Otherwise, Touraine warns, the globe is likely to disintegrate into a myriad of cultural wars.

Touraine's chapter on multi-cultural society ends with a plea for 'cultural democracy'. The acceptance of both the equality of cultures and their diversity demands the recognition of relations of domination. The re-composition of the world, according to Touraine, revolves around the recognition of these patterns of domination and, at the very same time, a concerted attempt to

avert a surge into communitarianism by those in cultural minorities who feel threatened by the majority, as well as a negotiation by the majority towards the true granting of equality to the minority. In other words, the dominant culture must not subordinate cultural minorities; rather, it must use its power to integrate distinctive and differentiating features of minority culture into a larger and more embracing cultural notion of nationness. This tricky and difficult act of navigation, which is made more difficult when dominant cultures define themselves in opposition to minority cultures, precedes the development of democracy appropriate to the new conditions of modernity.

In order to develop democracy, Touraine suggests, education, with a new form of pedagogy, is the only way forward. In many ways, this educational system he proposes is the antithesis of the 'classic' model that sought to impose norms and values on children by indoctrination based on the attitude that children were a kind of *tabula rasa* onto which a script could be imprinted. The new form of education should begin with the assumption that each individual comes with a history, memory and array of personal feelings that must be used to allow individuals to play their part in a world of commodities and technologies. The division between institutions such as 'home' and 'school' should be broken down as the importance of family declines. Touraine uses the example of personal hygiene as an example of where schools are taking on family functions. On the other hand, parents have succeeded in many places to involve themselves in schooling matters. While the first feature of education is to enhance the freedom of the subject, the second feature must be to encourage understandings of other cultures rather than a classic approach which aims at an understanding of one's own culture. The third feature of the new educational approach must be to recognise inequalities and to actively compensate for them.

The advantage of Touraine's approach, as opposed to Putnam's, is that he takes the concept of cultural democracy seriously, embedding his analysis in a larger world encompassed by modernity and capitalism. Touraine argues that the production of democracy occurs precisely at the contested and congested intersections between multi-cultural relations, capitalism and an increasingly transversal politics. We may quibble over his propositions and assumptions in many places of the text, yet his focus is always trained on the interaction between new forms of modernity and communication between changing cultures. Such an approach is preferable to the narrow confines of a model of

public culture and political action that limits itself to the domestic realm. Only if the local is placed into the context of the global, of modernity and encompassment, will both the dangers of communitarianism and hyper-individualism become apparent as well as solvable.

Moreover, if we locate Touraine's discourse within a global field of understanding, one that focuses rather than dismisses connectivities and conjunctures, it is possible to invert Putnam's argument and, indeed, that of a whole line of thinking on democracy. From this perspective, it is no longer possible to view the local as the fixed, stable, domesticated and enclosed arena that can serve as the unquestioned ground for an analysis of democracy. Rather, the local now appears as the result of how agents and institutions use cultural signs to temporally fix and stabilise circulatory flows. What is Northern Italy, for example, results from the ways in which agents and institutions use cultural signs – that is, history in both its institutional and embodied forms – to stabilise and fix the contested circulation of people, goods, ideas, capital, practices and so on, from North to South. By increasing the pace of circulation, globalisation has made the social imaginary of locality much more difficult to maintain or, more precisely, has made it necessary to evolve new forms of stabilisation. So long as the forms of solidarity, conventional to modernity, assume as their ground a stable and bounded place, so the forms constructed in the circulatory space of the present must shape themselves to this new environment. And, as I will indicate, new memorials, such as Robben Island, represent an attempt to produce new forms of solidarity, local, regional, continental and global, all at the same time.

In this respect, the major disadvantage of Touraine's work is that it still leaves us with the uncomfortable question: how does solidarity come about and, if it is true that neither state nor civil society are, at this point, capable any longer of providing sufficient structures of motivation for solidarity to occur, where do we turn for practical help? The fact of the matter is that solidarity requires some form of collective agency and a set of institutions to promote such social agency. If neither state nor society can provide these institutions, who can? Moreover, the proposed dialogues of difference in which pupils are taught about power relations and about patterns of dominance may not lead to feelings of solidarity but quite the contrary. So, the problem remains: how is solidarity formed in times when the institutions underlying ties of solidarity are no longer capable of creating them? This question, which imposes itself on the

metropolises, especially as their minority populations are rapidly expanding (Algerians in France, Turks in Germany, Latinos in the US, Pakistanis in Norway), is even more pressing in the postcolonial universe because, unlike the metropolises, modern forms of solidarity-making are being undermined before they ever consolidate in the first place.

### *Southern Africa's glue: from division to unity?*

South Africa's modern history is filled with examples of 'building trust', of creating communities where they did not exist previously and of undermining those that did exist. Efforts by missionaries to create 'communities of God' in all sorts of places around Southern Africa are well documented in the tales told by John and Jean Comaroff's *Of Revelation and Revolution* (1991, 1997a). Colonial rulers, in their efforts to establish trading links and military alliances, fostered the creation of 'tribal', linguistic and ethnic groups. Indeed, the creation of an Afrikaner identity in the nineteenth century is a remarkable tale of building 'trust' and solidarity among a disparate group of individuals and identities (Giliomee 1989). South Africa is a prime example of a place where multiple identities were unwoven and forced into the straight-jacket of racial and ethnic codification. Note also how deeply connected these forms of solidarity were to localities and a notion of trespassing on the terrain of others. From the start, white settler communities were obsessed with controlling circulations, through the regimentation of human movements, interracial sex and general intercourse of all types – an obsession that culminated with apartheid.

On the 'white' side, a political deal was developed, long before the eventual institutionalisation of apartheid, in which affluent white constituents struck an agreement with the 'poor white' communities to bring into existence policies that would allow the poor white constituencies – whether rural or urban – to gain an unfair advantage over labourers, farmers and small business-people of another colour (Hendricks 2001). That this coalition was by no means a natural one is illustrated by the stiff opposition of the South African Communist Party to racially motivated overtures to its white constituents at various points in South Africa's tortured labour history. The mutually beneficial relationship that was created by this deal is one that now also stands at the heart of a remarkable problem for the South African state, namely one of the

narrowest tax-bases of any developing economy (Lieberman 2001). Since taxpayers are mainly white and relatively well-off, they are also more likely to be internationally mobile and not particularly well-disposed to the current ruling party. In other words, they are prone to exit from South Africa and are not supportive of the larger political aims of the government.

The proletarianisation and impoverishment that followed from the racial system that this political deal inaugurated provided the glue for several movements amongst the black population. These ranged from the initial liberalism of the ANC that was inspired by humanist thought, to its later forms of multi-racialism, to trade unionism among the black working class, to the black republicanism of Steve Biko and the Black Consciousness Movement (Halisi 1999). While white South Africans could view themselves as citizens of the very narrowly defined nation, black South Africans increasingly defined themselves not only as victims of oppression but also as would-be members of a new South Africa in which rights, dignity and equality would prevail. This sense of belonging transcended ethnicity, religion, and even race. The multi-racialism of the ANC – and its eclectic anti-apartheid coalition built around universal principles of non-racialism and opposition to discrimination of any kind – may provide the party with an opportunity to help build a new sense of trust, solidarity and identity if it is able to provide reasons for South Africa's citizens to embrace their shared historical experience and provide a new shape that allows for transcendence. In other words, in South Africa, perhaps more so than in any other country in Africa, that process of racial codification and discrimination may provide a basis for overcoming the ideological, institutional and production-based legacies of the past in imaginative ways. In this respect, I would suggest that the power of the state and political leaders to help shape new forms of identity, of shared culture, of solidarity, may not be as limited as their ability to shape the economic fortunes of their nation-state.

While there are several overt attempts to create a new sense of unity – the emphasis on the new Constitution, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the miracle transformation, President Mandela's support of the 1995 rugby team, the elections, all being prime examples of politically symbolic acts of nation-making – there are plenty of examples where a sense of South African collectivity is being forged in a perhaps less obvious manner. The conversion of Robben Island into a place of remembrance, a site for both negative and positive historical interpretation and re-interpretation, is just one

example of this consciousness-building process that is at the heart of a new self-understanding, Robben Island's location made it a convenient place for the removal of undesirable social elements, whether lepers or lawyers. Today, the Island functions as a place of pilgrimage. It allows those South Africans who suffered under the system to commemorate a history of deprivation. At the same time, it allows those South Africans who might have profited from the system to pay their respects to the leaders of the opposition movement and celebrate with them the relatively peaceful transition of the 1990s. It allows them to dissociate from the past, to disown it, in a sense, and affirm their sense of belonging to a new set of circumstances. The Island transcends racial and ethnic barriers. Robben Island is then an analogy for the state of apartheid and its encompassment by the democratic order: liberation not just for those imprisoned by the system but also those who were themselves deprived of freedom by imprisoning others.

Symbolically, Robben Island stands for a great deal more than just a place for remembering the past, recalling the imprisonment of political leaders, even icons such as Mandela, or the claustrophobia of apartheid. It stands negatively for a rejection of racial Fordism, of white supremacist thought and positively for a commitment to overcome the legacies of this past. The fact that Robben Island did not become a prison for the leaders and soldiers of the previous regime nor the independent state proposed by some right-wing Afrikaner nationalists, testifies to a commitment to a new set of political, cultural and social values expressed most vividly in the Constitution, the Bill of Rights and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Still, we need to ask: is this new glue strong and pervasive enough to further corrode the old glues that held this society apart? If some of the public opinion surveys of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) are to be believed, the new glue is not setting particularly well, while old glues have corroded significantly (IJR 2000, 2001).

The gulf between 'black' and 'white' in South Africa still appears to be cataclysmic.<sup>3</sup> As writers, poets and even academics portray race relations in South Africa, there is still a long way to go until a truly multi-cultural society emerges from the segregation of colonialism and apartheid. Stories and poems by authors such as Sandile Dikeni indicate a great deal of mistrust towards 'whites'. In one of his more recent articles Dikeni writes:

I am in Oslo now. And the anger is simmering a bit. The anger against white people in South Africa. The anger against white racists in Cape Town.... A hatred that bordered on the absolutely insane. Then I felt like picking up a gun from somewhere in the Cape Flats and shooting anything with a white skin. Mowing down the first thing that resembled the arrogance of whites in that city. Especially among the white liberals with their false tongues and defiled brains. (2002: 116)

Sandile Dikeni calls for a racism monitor to be established in the *Cape Times* or *Cape Argus* newspapers. The presupposition is that only if racism is brought into the local debate will it abate, as if it were a personal, individualistic failing and not a systemic condition.

In contrast, the words of Breyten Breytenbach, himself not an unknown quantity in the liberation struggle, summarise a large proportion of 'white' sentiment:

When modernity – in this instance commercial farming, but the same can be said for the campaign to combat AIDS – is equated with the 'West', and thus seen as an imposition of Western interests, the very notion of a functioning nation-state within the parameters of international systems becomes problematic. What do we intend to put in its place? When we have unleashed uncertainty, fear and instability (by, for example, refusing to speak up because of historical scars, or using patently false propaganda as in saying 'there are two nations, one poor and black, the other rich and white' or again 'in South Africa, 13% of the land belongs to blacks and 87% to whites' – these are old anti-apartheid slogans from before 1994), how do we go about finding solutions to pressing problems of development? What in all fairness can the minorities do? They are the products and protagonists of expansion, even conquest – though since some time already not the only beneficiaries. To put it bluntly: modern states in Africa came about because of Western greed. But it is untenable to expect the descendants of these minorities to now live in abnegation and grief. Those who feel threatened because of their skin colour or their language or their way of life will inevitably bond. Blackness

and whiteness become essential conditions, ideologies even, obfuscating class difference. (2000: 50)

Breytenbach follows up on these words by quoting Bessie Head who reputedly said that ‘South Africa is not like the rest of Africa and is never going to be. Here we are going to have to make an extreme effort to find a deep faith to help us live together’. Breytenbach argues that the effort to find such a faith should already be seen as a success (2000: 50).

There are, of course, also attempts to create new senses of community based upon the past. An interesting foray is the one by Jacob Zuma, who appears to be building a rather interesting coalition within the ANC between groupings in the ANC’s Women’s League, the ANC’s Youth League and the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa (Contralesa). His recent appeal to the traditional leaders to take a stronger role in ‘bringing back good values’ to Africans could be interpreted as yet another attempt by a decidedly urban political movement to bring those in the hinterland into the political fold; but it represents more than that. Zuma’s appeal is based on a widespread perception that African society has fallen apart in its very core and that it is only through a return to ‘past practices’ that identity and dignity can be regained. The debate about ‘past practices’ touches upon the dislocations in the social structure that have occurred in terms of generational, gender and status relations. Should the chief still dominate village decision-making? And, if so, in what form should the council of elders determine the public good? Can there be a ‘democratic’ chieftaincy? What about the relationship between children and their parents in view of the dislocations caused by the ‘children’s uprising’ since 1976, where the struggle for liberation was not only fought in the streets and cities against education and apartheid but also in the homes against parental authority and morality (Tin 2001)?

Interestingly enough, it was Jacob Zuma who told the international press that the elections in Zimbabwe had been legitimate and that the West was not listening, as he put it, to ‘what Africans were saying’.<sup>4</sup> While it is unclear to me what is to be made of the suturing of various forms of anti-Western, anti-imperialist rhetoric and the kind of pan-Africanism used to describe the cultural strengths and roots of the African experience, the defensiveness of parts of the South African political elite about the Zimbabwean crisis is certainly a

worrisome turn of events. It may well signal a much more anti-integrationist stance towards the minority communities in South Africa as has evolved in other parts of Africa under conditions of economic duress.

### *Constitutional patriotism: an option for South Africa?*

Craig Calhoun argues that democracy, more than any other form of governance, requires a sense of nationhood and identity to function (Calhoun 2002). Democracy is, above all, about differences in opinion, personalities, interests and ideas. If it were not so, there would be no need for a public forum to debate differences and to bring about solutions in terms of practical policies. To make democracy work, one needs a framework for the creation and maintenance of social relationships. Calhoun suggests that it is possible to view cultural changes, for instance the growing sentiment of European unity as opposed to nationality, as an encouraging signal that certain forms of multi-national or multi-cultural identity are possible; but there has to be an institutional foundation that reinforces the rules of engagement. I would add to this that an institutional base is not sufficient on its own to create a sense of unity, a common purpose or a desire to co-operate and collaborate towards the reproduction of a collective agency. The reason for this is that for rules of engagement to work practically, the relationship between agents must be something more than contractual.

The German case may provide some useful perspectives on the current South African situation. The adoption of the West German Constitution, based on the Weimar Constitution of 1919, was greeted with a great deal of scepticism by a largely apolitical, suspicious and apathetic German public. Several public opinion polls and political culture studies of Germany in the 1950s and 1960s indicated low levels of enthusiasm for the institutions of the German political system. Nevertheless, the institutions took hold and, by the 1970s, the proportion of German support for the democratic system was overwhelming. While twentieth-century Germany did not face exactly the same kind of nation-building challenges that South Africa faces today, none of the now unified states of Europe or North America avoided periods of turbulence and violence in the process of forging a nation-state. Germany 'unified' as a result of three major wars in the nineteenth century. The imposition of a legal, political apparatus on its citizens took place in a manner that few found attractive.

What emerged in West Germany was, according to Jürgen Habermas, a form of constitutional patriotism in which the Constitution became a central element in describing what the German nation stood for after the Hitler regime and all of the evil that went with its tortured history (1989). Germans of all political persuasions could find common ground in the Constitution and a certain pride in the achievements of the post-war experience.

However, the notion of constitutional patriotism is relatively thin, seeming to be more of a starting point than a genuine social history. Such a history would explore the cultural meaning of the constitution. For example, the modern German Constitution created itself as an incarnation of the Weimar Constitution and literally codified the understanding that the democratic intent of that Republic was the true trajectory, and genuine ground, of German nationness, as opposed to what was represented by the intervening years in the shadows of National Socialism. The Constitution also signalled that the real German nation was the open nation of West Germany as opposed to the East, which represented a continuation of the closed and fascist regime by another name. As a concept and political project, constitutional patriotism must also provide an account for solidarity. One of the touchstones of German solidarity-making has been the ritual of rejecting the fascist past. This rejection is coupled with spearheading the pan-European movement to create a union that transcends all narrow nationalisms. Constitutional patriotism must also develop a self-locating device that places its project within the orbit of global circulation. The German version assumes very correctly that Germany lies at the epicentre of the structuring of globalisation, both because it possesses the strongest European economy and because the German Mark has been the proxy of the Euro since the inception of the union. A multi-cultural nation on the periphery of the global economy might adopt some version of constitutional patriotism. It might even expressly seek to emulate the German example but it will, and must, be on different terms because the socio-structural conditions for the production of both constitution and patriotism are different.

Such appears to be the case for South Africa. The hopes pinned on the new South African Constitution by authors such as Ebrahim are therefore not completely misplaced. In Hannah Arendt's terms, the Constitution is a document in which the South African nation embodies not only a set of guarantees (such as the freedom of speech) but also a set of promises that can

potentially bind people together and set out a vision of their future (1977). The promise and the vision is that if people embrace multi-culturalism, transcend the racism of the past and take on the nation as a foundational community, then the good life, the prosperous life of jobs, security and peace will follow. This is a future that depends on a certain imagined form of solidarity and that sets out a vision of what the society ought to look like at some point in the future in terms, not only of the rights, but also of the public and private goods enjoyed by its citizens.

### *Conclusion*

This chapter has analysed the relationship between solidarity, the democratic nation-making project and the current capitalist system of global finance. It suggests that the implication of the new system of financial and speculative capitalism is both being over-estimated, in terms of its naturalness, and underestimated, in terms of its corrosive force upon the nation-state, particularly with respect to economic policy. Any hope of building a nation-state must begin with an attempt to regulate the current international financial system. Otherwise, the forces of circulatory capitalism are likely to undermine efforts to achieve any form of redistribution towards greater equality. Furthermore, the forms of abstract violence that circulatory capitalism inflict on the local population will ensure that a local addressee is found on which to blame the afflictions of the system. In a situation such as that which prevails in South Africa, it is likely that this blame will be directed at one or more minority groups.

An inclusive sense of culture, a vibrant public sphere and feelings of solidarity are essential for the building of a 'nation'. Culture ought to be seen as a constantly changing, active, participatory project rather than as a static object. Once culture is seen as a constantly changing, adaptive series of forms of communication, action and understanding, it becomes easier to see culture as something that can be affected by the state, and by concerned non-governmental actors, through activities designed to foster greater understanding and communication across several intra-national cultural groups that could otherwise easily be mobilised to some form of defensive or communitarian isolationism. These interventions can take a myriad of forms in education, sports, arts and cultural activities. If Touraine, Calhoun and

Habermas are correct, the educational process can be used to encourage multi-cultural values and support the emergence of a society based on communication, tolerance and trust.

The political elite is seeking to construct a notion of nationness using the South African Constitution as a publicly visible point of departure. Robben Island is an example of the effort the South African state is investing in furthering a shared understanding of the nation's history, illustrating the kind of meaning the new political elite wishes to impart to its version of constitutional patriotism. The history of segregation and discrimination may, in fact, provide some potentially powerful glue in the impetus to overcome these legacies in holding South Africans of all colours, ethnic backgrounds and religions together despite their differences and despite unfavourable global conditions for the creation of a new nation-state. The Constitution does provide a powerful basis for a re-orientation of public culture away from the *laagers* of the past to a multi-cultural interaction that provides for both equality and difference. For the Constitution to become a central aspect of a new South African identity, a vibrant civil society – in all its various forms – is an absolute necessity. However, any attempt to build a truly multi-cultural, open society will have to face the immense pressures emanating from the international marketplace, with its concomitant pressures towards possessive individualism and exclusive communitarianism.

### Notes

- 1 M Legum, How the Third World Pays for the First World's Debts, *Mail & Guardian*, 21–27 June 2002, p. 16.
- 2 An extraordinary account of the tradition of male initiation and circumcision was published by an unknown source as 'The Making of a Man', *Mail & Guardian*, 19–25 July 2002, p. 14. In this remarkable piece the question was asked how Western shoes and a suit and a Scottish cap could ever become 'traditional Xhosa' culture.
- 3 There is a great deal of disagreement as to how wide this gulf is. See for instance Gerwel (2000), who argues that there are many commonalities between black and white, whereas Mgxashe (2000) argues precisely the opposite.
- 4 Mbeki's Zim Crisis, *Mail & Guardian*, 15–21 March 2002.

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# 8 *Building a better world: using the positive forces in globalisation to counteract the negative*

Jan Hofmeyr

## *Introduction*

I am a product of both the academic and the business environments. As an academic, I used to look for complicated ways to say simple things and tended to hedge everything I said but as a business person I have found that making things complicated impedes communication and that too much hedging wastes time. For this reason, I have decided to go the route of exclamations, rather than theses. We are told in business that we should begin by telling people what we are going to say, then say it and then remind them about what we have just said. My proposition is simple: while some of the processes which we refer to as 'globalisation' are certainly destructive of local or traditional forms of social organisation, globalisation creates its own forms of healthy social interaction. In contrast to the way many may be inclined, it is these forms that show us how the future looks. It is a future which is more tolerant of diversity, not less so; which is more democratic, rather than less so; and which is more harmonious.

Allow me to ground my views in a brief personal history. If I have a profession then it is as a teacher of religions. I was trained in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Cape Town and taught there for many years. I have spent a lot of time looking at, and thinking about, what people worldwide, throughout history, have thought was important: ideas about what's good for people, how the universe works, what life means and so on. In the course of this work, I looked at the process of religious conversion.

The first social research I ever did was into processes of religious change in an Indian community in Durban. More precisely, it was about Hindus convert-

ing to Christianity. There I came across a phenomenon that I thought was pathological, even if human, and that was our inclination sometimes to cling to things that make us unhappy. In other words, what I saw were the dejected, downtrodden faces of people who were that way *by choice*. In this case, it had to do with sticking to forms of religion that were not working. Yet, it could have been anything: a job, a husband or wife, a country. So, my question was: what locks people into choices like this? Answering the question led to a general theory of commitment and conversion and this led, in turn, to a marketing research method which is now used by businesses worldwide. How committed are people to Coca-Cola, to tap water or to tea? How committed are people to cellphones? How committed are they to Visa credit cards? Developing this measure ripped me out of the academic environment and propelled me into business. I now run a company which supports the resulting product, 'The Conversion Model™', in more than eighty countries. My team and I travel around the world up to 500 000 miles a year, working with the world's best marketers and training people to implement our method. We measure the commitment of anyone anywhere to anything better than anyone else, or so it seems. Our measure has become a global business and we are the world's market leaders.

I am a person who is involved in a business which is global but have a training in what people traditionally value most and think of as their most important beliefs. What I would like to do is bring my experience to that training. In short, personal experience will be the main source of my exclamations about global processes and social cohesion, and about what may help to put a smile on people's faces.

### *The value of the entrepreneur*

In 1987, I was a comfortable academic. I had developed a theory of commitment and was using this theory to try to understand processes of political commitment and conversion in South Africa. In addition to being an academic, I was politically involved in a small way. As part of this involvement, I was doing survey-based research into political commitment. The political organisation with which I was working had sub-contracted fieldwork for this research to a company called Research Surveys. That is how I began to understand what entrepreneurs do.

Butch Rice and Henry Barenblatt are two entrepreneurs who, in 1979, worked out that they might be able to make a living doing marketing research. However, instead of being employed by a marketing research company, they created one. Ten years later, they had created work for more than 2000 people. When I got to know Butch and Henry in 1987, they were very successful and still entrepreneurial. Butch looked at how I was analysing political data and concluded that it might have commercial value. In late 1988, we initiated the first implementation of what we called ‘The Conversion Model™’ for one of South Africa’s leading banking groups. In early 1989, we got the results. I shall never forget Butch’s response when I showed him the outcome of that first analysis: ‘We are going to make a lot of money.’

Entrepreneurs create something where there was nothing. More specifically, they create work. Although money matters, most of the entrepreneurs I know are not motivated merely by money. They do it for the challenge, for the excitement and for many other reasons, including the sheer pleasure of doing business. Great entrepreneurs find ways to draw everyone around them into that excitement. Like every other human activity, business does both good and bad but I have never been more poignantly reminded of the value of what Butch and Henry did, than when my company was recently recruiting new people for our data-processing department. Wardah is a coloured woman in charge of our data-processing. She has been with us for seventeen years. In the United States, the work she does would usually be done by people with degrees in statistics. We were about to follow the overseas example and recruit people for her department with degrees in statistics. However, I believe in participative management and so Wardah joined us to interview the first candidate. After the interview, I could tell that she was agitated. She told me that she wanted to see me. When we met, she got straight to the point. ‘Jannie,’ she said, ‘how much say do I really have in who will get this job?’ Seventeen years ago, Wardah was one among many talented young people from disadvantaged communities in Cape Town who did not have the money to go to university. Butch and Henry recognised their talent and employed them to create the data-processing department of Research Surveys. As much as I thought I knew about the value of the entrepreneur, I never understood just how much it had meant to Wardah until this meeting. ‘I want to give other people the same chances that I’ve had,’ she said. ‘There are so many talented young kids who are like me and who can’t get a job. I want to do for them what Butch and Henry did for me.’

South Africa is awash in new entrepreneurial activity. By global standards, we still have a long way to go but we have come a long way from the cosseted, over-protected, minority-regulated economy which benefited the few at the expense of the many. This has resulted in entrepreneurial activity, by force of circumstance, it is true, on an unprecedented scale. If it has the same outcomes as Butch's and Henry's did, then we should not underestimate the extent to which this activity will improve the quality of life for ordinary people in South Africa.

### *Businesses care*

As someone who has participated in politics more on the left than on the right but as someone who has made a living from doing business in the classical mode, that is, in an open, unprotected and intensely competitive situation, I am struck by the polarities that exist in our society and in our discourse about business. Business is usually reified (as I am doing here) and then celebrated or demonised. I am going to engage this argument by leaning in the direction of the positive – because I do not think the extent to which business people care about what they're doing is fully appreciated by those whose tendency is to demonise it.

For the most part, businesses care about their customers and their employees. It is called customer and employee satisfaction. Whole industries have arisen around this obsession in business. In fact, that is my industry. My job, with the help of people like Wardah, is to tell business whether or not they are putting a smile on the faces of their customers and their employees. If they are not, then I am supposed to be able to tell them what they are doing wrong and how they can do better. I am aware that the drive to meet human needs and desires is not necessarily altruistic since it is mainly driven by the pressure of competition and the need to make a profit. Upsetting your customers and employees turns out not to be a good way to do business – but should it matter if it is not altruistic? In my experience, discipline introduced by competition is a good thing because it is one of the best methods I know to ensure accountability. I have been involved both in academia and politics, and I have had first-hand experience of the sloth, the carelessness and the downright damage that is done to stakeholders when the mechanisms of accountability are weak; or when they fail to be aligned to stakeholder needs. I tend to be positive about

human nature but personal experience has taught me that appealing to the good side of people is a weak regulatory mechanism. Regulations did not cause businesses to invest in my industry. Competition did. If I were asked which of politicians, academics or business people are most likely to be accountable, then I would say, without hesitation, that in my experience, it has been business.

To the *power of competition* as a mechanism of accountability, we should add the *power of public scrutiny*. As much as I am in favour of businesses, I am also in favour of the existence of critical social voices. Many businesses abuse their power. For example, predatory pricing can kill the very competition which acts as a break on the abuse of power, and most businesses fail to take account of all the costs of some of the things they do – costs like the social and environmental impact of factory emissions. So focusing on customers and employees for the sake of shareholders is not enough; you have to factor in the wider society too. Yet, more than most (as far as I can see), businesses respond when put under the spotlight. Globalisation has intensified this process. Businesses are in the spotlight as never before and the more global a business is, the more likely it is that it will be in the public eye. Globalisation therefore helps to move the good that entrepreneurs do in the direction of making it more, rather than less, likely that they will contribute, on balance, to social well-being.

### *Global businesses create harmonious multi-cultural environments*

Some years ago, the Parliament for the World's Religions was held in Cape Town. Because I was both a business person and a student of religions, I was invited to participate in a session devoted to business and religion. In my group was a mix of religious professionals and business people who were religious. All of them seemed to suffer from a heightened sense of the more carnal aspects of business – personal greed and profit. When put under the spotlight, the religious business people attempted to show that it was, at least, possible to be ethical in business. Yet I was struck by a paradox, one which I did not hesitate to voice, and it was this: here I was among people whose enterprise (i.e. religion) involves trying to provide communities with values that bind but whose colleagues, past and present, have been at least as responsible as politicians for centuries of death. It is probably unnecessary to point

out that religious groups are often a force for bad rather than good. Despite the multiple ways in which religious people do good, there is a fundamental problem with the paradigm according to which many religions operate: it is that they claim to possess ultimate values and truth. As a result, most religious formations tend only to be capable of creating socially cohesive groups for their members. When it comes to social cohesion across religious groups, religions mostly fail. I suspect (if we could count) that the historical religions, taken as a whole, have not been good for world citizenship – except (perversely) when hegemonic. In short, by the classical method of empire building.

I experienced the Parliament for the World's Religions as saturated with serious and fraught people. I suppose that is to be expected when people get together believing that their enterprise is to save the world; but I could not help comparing it with the excitement that I find when I spend time with people doing business. My company trains people by gathering them in one place from many different countries. During the day, we work and at night we relax. We come from Estonia, Malaysia, France and South Africa. We are Muslims, Hindus and Jews; and some of us have no religion. We enjoy working together and discussing a range of subject matter. If you are ever lucky enough to do this, then you will be struck by how much people want to be there, as well as by how willing they are to suspend the things which may divide them so that they can get on with each other.

Every day, multinational businesses have to solve problems of social cohesion. The modern multinational workplace is one in which people from widely different cultural experiences are learning to get on with each other. This is true both within, and across, companies. It is a condition of being able both to do business globally and to run a global business. To put it simply, multinational companies have to solve the problem of multi-cultural, multi-national interaction and they are finding that they cannot do so by asking people to leave their traditions and values at home. Some multinational business environments go further and find ways for people to choose their values and be themselves while working together in multi-cultural environments. When business leaders achieve these effective, tolerant workplaces, they do not do so by being *laissez faire*. They do so by creating workplace norms which turn multi-cultural groupings into effective business units. Some do so explicitly and some do so by example. Some are not fully conscious of what they are doing

or how they are doing it. Again, it not always done out of altruism. But by reifying business, we tend to overlook the fact that business leaders are people too and, as people, they try to create these environments because they want to – because they prefer to work in environments where people are happy. In my experience, there have been few things so enriching as being able to stand back at one of these gatherings and feel, in some small way, responsible for bringing people together across countries and cultural barriers.

### *We do share a common humanity*

When Butch started to build the international Conversion Model™ network in 1990, he started with the English-speaking countries: Australia, New Zealand, the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom. For a long time, we held off going to Japan as we had been warned about the difficulties in doing business there. The Japanese say ‘yes’ when they mean ‘no’, not because they are trying to deceive you but because they do not want to offend you. They do not hold to contracts – not because they want to cheat - but because they believe (correctly in my view) that contracts should always be flexible enough to take into account changed circumstances. Our business enjoyed success, at first, in the United States. After some years, a colleague in the US asked whether we would mind if he took our business into Japan. We agreed and months went by without success. After some time, we heard that negotiations were not going well. More months passed. Eventually, we were told that he had given up. Some months later, we got a call from a colleague in Hong Kong. He had had dinner the night before with a Japanese market researcher who was very keen to do a deal with us. We learnt that this was the same person who had dumped our partners in the US. We were not told what the problem was and we did not ask. We bought a book on doing business with the Japanese and invited them to South Africa. It took us just 24 hours to agree on a contract and three weeks later, we had made our first sale in Japan. How did we do it when our American friends could not? In the end it was simple. We used a book called *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands* (Morrison, Conaway, Borden & Koehler 1995). Three pages of this very large book are devoted to good manners in Japan and include simple things like ‘do not point’. I will not claim that it was all due to the fact that we were well mannered but it did help us to signal something deeper – that we respected them. They decided to trust us and within two months, I was addressing an audience of over 200 people in Japan.

It was not difficult to break through the gloss of cultural differences. All it took was respect and good manners. Once we had broken through, it was very obvious to all of us that we shared a common humanity. Moreover, our common humanity seemed to lie quite close to the surface. Good manners lifted that humanity to the surface. In my experience, there is nothing which crashes through cultural barriers more effectively. In fact, this is so important that in my company, which deals daily with people from all over the world, we have found that we operate successfully by obeying one rule: there is no excuse for bad manners.

When I say that ‘good manners’ bring our common humanity to the surface, I do not mean that in a superficial way. We knew that our Japanese colleagues would be well mannered. For our part, we made a conscious effort to reciprocate but the result was not a carefully regulated, well-mannered and polite series of interactions. It went much deeper. In the 1960s, the anthropologist Paul Ekman presented research which suggested that human beings are able to recognise universal human emotions in each other no matter what their cultural backgrounds (Ekman 1993). Across the world, the facial muscles responsible for true smiles are different from those responsible for the ‘false’ smile and, across the world, we are able to recognise when a smile is truthful. That is what I mean when I say we discovered our common humanity. I believe that it really is possible to create coherent societies while tolerating cultural diversity and that it is possible for us, collectively, to share our common humanity in the very midst of the full preservation of these differences. However, we should not underestimate the threat that is felt by the guardians of local tradition when they see these processes in action.

### *Business taps into our common humanity and makes it recognisable*

The United States is a relentlessly results-oriented country. What counts is what works. This is clearly illustrated by Henry David Thoreau who once invented a mechanical pencil-maker for his father who was, himself, a maker of pencils. As my teacher at the time, JM Coetzee, remarked: ‘It illustrates the American knack of solving life’s problems by inveterate tinkering.’ Ceaseless experimentation characterises a lot of what people do in the United States. One of the things I think they experiment with ceaselessly is methods to enter-

tain people. In doing so, they come close to what entertains worldwide: Mickey Mouse, for example; or *The Bold and the Beautiful*!

Procter and Gamble (P&G) is the world's largest manufacturer of what are called household and personal care products. They market the world's most widely used facial skin care product 'Oil of Olay'. In building their global markets, P&G have developed a very simple but effective communications formula: problem, solution, celebration. For example, dirty clothing. No matter how sophisticated a society is, women still, for the most part, have to deal with this problem and P&G would like to be their partner in solving the problem by providing women with the solution – Ariel laundry detergent. It cleans clothes, makes them smell clean and is inexpensive. It frees women from having to beat clothes against rocks all day. It is so effective, that a celebration is called for. So we will see a neighbour who comments on how brilliantly clean the clothes are, or a male member of the household singing happily when he puts his shirt on in the morning.

My intention is not to enter into a learned discourse about the ways in which advertisers produce mythologies. I am well aware that many educated people may find such advertising nauseating. But let us note how effective this sort of advertising is and how, increasingly, these mythologies cut across national and cultural boundaries. In fact, the world's best global marketers are finding that they can produce adverts in any country and devise single advertisements which can be shown across the globe. How do they do so? By appropriating our common humanity. There could not be a more powerful illustration of the fact that we are all able to recognise each other as human, no matter what our cultural circumstances or backgrounds.

I would now like to turn to some examples of the kinds of advertisements which, I think, reveal our commonalities. One of the great contemporary campaigns is associated with General Electric (GE), maker of products such as jet engines, electric turbines and medical scanners. Consider their slogan: 'We bring good things to life.' We enhance the quality of life. We make your life better by the machinery we bring to it but we also give life to machinery. We make machinery humane. It is a brilliant slogan. One of GE's most recent adverts starts with an Italian soccer player getting injured. In a few seconds, we see a variety of sectors of Italian society reacting to this disaster in operatic fashion (i.e. the music and style are operatic): a priest sings '*disastero*', a

young woman getting married sings '*tragedio*' and the player rolls around holding his knee in pain. He too is singing. He is rushed off the field and to hospital. Unaware of the drama, a young technician in the United States sits in front of a computer, monitoring the performance of a number of scanning machines around the world. He notices that there is something wrong with the scanning machine in Rome. He picks up the phone and says, 'Hello Rome ...' In a few short minutes, he helps the Italians fix the machine just in time for the machine to establish that the soccer player is fine. The soccer player is rushed back to the game and scores the winning goal. Everyone cheers in operatic style: 'We bring good things to life', sings the chorus!

The Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank (HSBC) calls itself the 'the world's local bank'. It is one of the top five in the world. One of its most recent adverts could have been taken straight out of the book, *Kiss, Bow, or Shake Hands*. A Japanese and a Western business person face each other having just concluded a deal. Behind them stand other members of their management teams. Just as the Japanese business person sticks out his hand to shake hands, the Western business person bows. Seeing what each is doing, the Japanese business person withdraws his hand to bow just as the Western business person pulls out of the bow and sticks out his hand. The two then laugh and manufacture, spontaneously, a sort of hybrid shake hands-bow manoeuvre. Humour, it is said, is culture specific. Clearly, not in this case.

Jackie Chan is an 'action hero' who has made most of his money making movies in Hong Kong. Some years ago, he turned his hand to movies in English. They are absurd, slapstick, brilliantly choreographed movies in the martial arts, action tradition. Chan performs all his own stunts and uses a limited range of expressions, but all are easy to interpret no matter what one's culture. Staples include dead-pan, wide-eyed surprise, the dead-pan double take, alarm, a sense of urgency. They are hugely successful. If humour is culture specific, no-one told Chan.

Some years ago, the Coca-Cola Company ran an advert for Coca-Cola. Two attractive young people, a woman and a man, are sitting opposite each other in a train travelling through what looks like Europe. The young man tries to engage the young woman in conversation but she does not speak English. He, in turn, cannot speak her language. After some clumsy, linguistic interaction he stumbles across the phrase 'Coca-Cola'. Her face lights up. 'Coca-Cola,' she

says. He rushes off to get a Coca-Cola and we are left to conclude that they will enjoy the rest of their journey.

In the past few years, we have seen some very entertaining movies come out of the United Kingdom about Indians living there. *East Meets West* and *Bend it like Beckham* are just two. These movies, written by Indians, are mainly about people from one culture (Muslim, in one; Sikh, in the other) settling into a country in which they are in the minority. The subject matter is by no means trivial. Ordinary people, every day, face the personal pain that comes from being attracted to someone from ‘the wrong background’. We follow these ordinary people through their attempts to negotiate new identities while staying in touch with their parents. In these two movies, all ends well – new identities are negotiated, workable compromises are found and we all feel enriched – because what we have witnessed is the resolution of a difficult situation by simply being human. Children are introduced to the ways in which they differ because of culture, and parents decide that the ordinary happiness of their children is more important than the more dogmatic aspects of tradition.

In the real world, of course, happy endings do not always come easily. Sometimes they do not happen at all. Tradition and culture clash with modern urban life. If you had to ask me which of the two is better for people, I would have no hesitation in saying that we need to find ways to relax the tyranny of culture. But what is really great about these movies is that the struggle is not set up in terms of the destruction of culture. It is set up in terms of the discovery of a wider common humanity which respects cultural differences and which allows ‘culture’ to evolve by allowing people to be themselves. Differences enrich rather than divide when ‘humanity’ comes to the surface and culture evolves by choice.

### *We know what the key ingredients of our common humanity are*

The most elegant expression of the key ingredients of our common humanity that I have come across is by Stephen Pinker, a neurolinguist at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) who argues that it lies in the common things we strive for as human beings: it is about being warm and reasonably well-fed, having opportunities to indulge in mating behaviour and the company of good friends, and having meaningful things to do (i.e.

working) (1997). Essentially, we are hard-wired to stick to life no matter how good or bad, meaningful or meaningless, we think it is. All that elaboration that we layer on top of food, shelter, friends and work is just showing off of one kind or another, whether it be on an intellectual or artistic level.

Now, to the core ingredients, we have to add a few more that make us the restless, paradoxical animals that we are. Firstly, I think Buddha was right: we are ineluctably hard-wired to become habituated to what gives us pleasure. When Buddha realised this, he seems to have become what I like to call ‘constructively depressed’ – how else to explain someone who nearly kills himself by not eating enough and then sits under a tree for a very long time? However, most of us stay in the state that Buddha referred to as ‘a state of perpetual becoming’. That is to say, we seek endlessly to overcome the habituation and set off those natural brain drugs again so that we can experience pleasure.

Secondly, how we feel about ourselves is absolutely tied to how we judge our success, whatever that may be, against *relevant* others. This means we feel better about ourselves when we feel we are better than others; and we experience an irrepressible satisfaction when those we envy face misfortune. If we cannot be better than others, then we would prefer them to be at least like us. This extends beyond the material to the psychological: unhappy people would like others to be unhappy. This means that unhappy people are happily unhappy, when others are unhappily so. Put together, what we strive for and our need to feel better off than others means that we cannot help being competitive. In fact, I would go so far as to argue that we cannot help wanting to structure society in a hierarchical way in which some people are lauded and some fail. Life loses its richness when we cannot compete. It becomes flat, boring and dull. By contrast, the extent of our inventiveness comes fully to life when we look at the range of ways in which we compete because the best way to excel is to find something new to excel in. If we cannot do this then we have, at our disposal, a truly amazing array of strategies for explaining to ourselves that we are not doing too badly compared to others, after all. It is a testament to our psychological ingenuity.

A third element of our common humanity is this: blood is, after all, thicker than water. I think Asia has it right: family comes first, then tribe and others who may be admitted to the tribe (it has always been possible to gain honorary admission to tribes), then communities and nations. At a stretch, we

may think of groupings of nations and the globe. If this is true, then we are, by nature, racist. I wish it were not so and it is something we have to work against. Throughout history, people have mostly married close to home; and when they have not – when they have reached across ethnic barriers to live together and reproduce – the guardians of culture have tended to get in the way. Culture still is, even in this post-twentieth century world, an expression of ethnic identity – and it truly does have to do with structuring individual identity in an ethnic way. The higher up a person is within a cultural hierarchy, the more power and influence they are likely to have; but also, the more heavily their personal identity will be invested in the maintenance of that form of cultural identity. That makes anything (any relationship, any intercultural transaction) that is a threat to personal identity, a candidate for potentially violent confrontation. I need hardly dwell on the obvious implication: to the extent that we have been able to subvert harmful ethnic commitment, it is mostly globalising processes which have helped us to do so – from the subversion of village identity in the first big cities to the subversion of national identities in today's multi-national city centres.

However, for the moment, let us return to the village and note that we have arrived by two or three briefly stated 'leaps' to the point of recognising that it is the very elements of our common humanity that drive us to conflict – that threaten, if you like, social cohesion – irrespective of 'globalisation' and other such forces. We are inclined to fight. I have absolutely no doubt about this. Conflict is utterly hard-wired into the human frame – and not just conflict between nations, but conflict between neighbours and conflict within families. So the question: 'how do we stay together when things seem to be pulling us apart?' is one that should be asked generally. We are the problem, not globalisation. While it is true that blind globalisation involves forces which inflict pain – economic pain, social pain and cultural pain – and that it certainly involves forces which are inimical to the way local authority, from parents to cultural institutions, structures our lives, it is also true that globalisation draws us together in new and very powerful ways.

Let us consider just one way, namely, international sport. No half decent anthropologist can fail to have been struck by how much the soccer World Cup of 2002 meant to nations of people. What an elegant channel by which to express national ambitions. It was possible to feel good about oneself even in loss, as both the Koreans and Japanese showed us. Watching the World Cup

made me feel good about people. I became happy when I saw others happy and sad when I saw others sad. When Germany lost to Brazil in the final, I was both happy and sad at the same time. I was happy when the TV cameras panned across the crowds celebrating in Brazil and sad when I saw the dejected faces of fans sitting in beerhalls in Germany. I frequently said to myself, 'What a pity there has to be a loser' but then I thought to myself, 'Better to lose this way than by conventional war'. This last World Cup worked so well because it sent out a signal to all of us about our common humanity. Facial expressions and body language communicated by modern mass media told the story. What was it, if not our common humanity, that made it possible for so many people to take so much pleasure in the pleasure that the South Koreans took in themselves?

### *What is good for people*

This could be a question or it could be a statement. I have expressed it as an incomplete statement. We have been focusing on 'what unifies South Africans' in the context of a globalising world. One of our assumptions is that some of the forces of globalisation pull us apart as South Africans but a second assumption (I have been pleased to note) is that economic development is a good thing. In other words, we seem to agree that it is not good to be poor. It is easy to make the case that poverty attacks our humanity. It prevents us from satisfying the key drivers that define much of what we do – the search for food, the creation of a comfortable living environment, the ability to sustain a family and be among friends. Poverty is also obviously associated with a lack of meaningful work and it means not having resources which, in turn, means lacking an essential quantum in which power comes, thus making it harder to pursue personal goals and easier to be exploited.

I have spent a great deal of time among intellectuals and therefore know how complicated they can make this question about 'goodness for people' and I have seen some of the most gloomy people I know trying to answer the question. I have learned to be wary of our tendency to make the answer into such a difficult proposition that we subvert our common humanity and come up with solutions that are just plain awful. The world I live in is very much a world in which data, rather than speculation or anecdote, are the basis for theory development. People in my business do not shirk from trying to say how

to measure things. We plunge in – and then improve what we are doing by looking at the outcomes as we go along. I may not agree with the United Nations’ methods for measuring ‘human and social development’ – a method which puts Canada somewhere very close to the top and which involves things like longevity, deaths at childbirth, average real incomes, literacy rates and so on. However, I applaud the effort because, at least when they use the words ‘human and social development’, I know exactly what they are referring to.

I am a great believer in the democratisation of all processes. In other words, I would rather have people tell me what is good for them than impose my version of what I think they ought to choose in terms of ‘goodness’. I say this with full cognisance of the problems of false consciousness. I strongly believe that only God (if there is such a being) should be allowed to dictate goodness. Not even those who say they speak for God should be allowed to do so. So pressing on in the tradition of allowing people to speak for themselves, let us make a wild leap and propose that ‘what’s good for people’ and ‘what puts a smile on people’s faces’ are not too wildly divergent. Furthermore, here is my simple proposal for a measure: more happy people is an indicator that ‘what’s good for people’ is happening. Fewer happy people is a sign that we are going backwards. One of the reasons I like this approach is because, while saying what ‘goodness’ is and measuring it may be hard, measuring ‘happiness’ is easy and because it is easy, it is also relatively easy to tell what goes with it.

### *What ‘happiness’ is and what goes with it*

‘Measuring happiness’ has become an industry. Of all people, it seems we have economists to thank (not priests – I hasten to point out). They measure it because they believe that policy should not be planned without it; and they have found that it can be measured with a few simple questions because people apparently know themselves well enough to answer such questions without self-deceit. The question remains: what goes with ‘happiness’? People tend to be happiest when they are young or when they are old. Sometime between 30 and 35 is when they feel life is at its worst. I think this has to do with ‘hope’ to begin with and being reconciled to reality at the end. You are unhappy at around 35 because that is when you are wise enough to know that you may not achieve all you set out to achieve and so you begin the painful process of adjusting your expectations to reality. Women tend to be happier than men

and both genders tend to be happier when in a couple (note, neither single nor in an extended family) – with or without children. This confirms for me that it is not about actually having children but it is about being able to indulge, within trusting relationships, in the activity that nature devised for having them. It also says to me that the nuclear couple who are free to choose to roam or not (as the case may be) constitute the social relationship which is most positively experienced. This has obvious implications for many cultures.

Health also contributes to happiness; and although some of the most obstinately unhappy people I know are people whom I would describe as over-educated, education goes with happiness. But what about poverty and wealth? Would it not undermine our assumption that development is a good thing if we found that poor people were happiest? What about the myth of the ‘poor but happy, simple folk’ and the unhappy rich person? The myth of the ‘poor but simple and happy’ human state is something that only an academic or a world-weary sophisticate, drowning in his or her own scepticism and self-doubt, could have devised. I am happy to report that the evidence is unequivocally in favour of the elimination of poverty. People are measured as happier in wealthier countries than in poor countries. Yet, increases in average wealth do not lead to increasing happiness. Taken as a whole, people in the US are not much happier today than they were in the 1950s. So it is not wealth itself that matters. What really matters is relative wealth. Moreover, it is not how wealthy you are in absolute terms. It is how wealthy you feel relative to the people you define as your reference group. People are happier when they are wealthier than the people with whom they believe it is relevant for them to compare themselves. What matters within countries is how you think you are doing relative to your reference group and what matters across countries is how you feel your nation is doing relative to others. This causality runs from relative income to happiness and not the other way round. It is not that happy people end up earning more. It’s that higher *relative* earnings lead to greater happiness. I invite you to think seriously about what this means for ideologies based on the notion of equality. We do care about others – I am convinced that the motivational appeal of ‘equality’ as a value is rooted in what I have been referring to as our common humanity. However, so is our tendency to be happiest when we can feel really good about ourselves, which usually means ‘doing better than others in relevant reference groups’.

### *What does this all mean?*

I began by talking about the contribution that entrepreneurs make to the quality of local life and noted that people who build businesses do a lot of ordinary good. I have argued that businesses care about whether or not they make their customers happy, unequivocally, but not out of an altruistic motive. It is to stay in business. What forces this accountability is competition. Globalisation has been a powerful engine of competition and I have no doubt that we lean in the direction of eliminating competition when it comes to ourselves, largely because it eliminates accountability. The third point I made is that global businesses, in particular, tap into our common humanity and make it visible. Again, business is not driven by any special sense of its 'duty to humanity'. By tapping into our common humanity, global businesses offer what ordinary people are happy (and I do mean 'happy') to pay. I also pointed out that the people in global businesses are human too. The profit motive is not so dominant that business leaders refrain from responding to their situations in ways which are considered humane. Like all other people in powerful positions, they vary in their responses, with some being more humane than others.

Ultimately, 'globalisation', if anything, encourages humanity rather than discourages it, in a great variety of ways. All the evidence suggests that it is when business is allowed to hide behind protections that it is more likely to be inhumane. Having said that, global business gains access to what is common in our natures and I went on to suggest that what constitutes our commonness is not such a mystery anymore. What we have in common is the need for warmth, shelter, friendship, coupling and meaningful work. In addition, what is common is our need to feel better off than others, our tendency to favour relatives and hence, our tendency to compete with and even kill each other. Conflict and social disharmony are not a specific consequence of globalisation; they are fundamental to the human condition. Globalising processes merely open up new opportunities for conflict but they also open up powerful new avenues for the elimination of conflict. Global businesses, in particular, are bringing people from multiple cultural and ethnic backgrounds together in rather wonderful ways. I have been particularly struck by the fact that the process appears to work best when people are allowed to be themselves – when they are neither forced to abandon their local identities, nor forced to keep them; when spaces are created that are tolerant, and that allow cultural and personal differences to be worked out by choice.

Is this good? Is it good when a young man born to Muslim parents says to his parents that he will no longer go to a mosque and that he plans to marry a white woman who is no longer practising Christianity? I posed the question about 'goodness' and what's good for people – and suggested that 'happiness' be used as a barometer of 'what's good for people'. I cannot answer the question because I do not know what the quantum of effects in such situations may be. However, we do not have to remain clueless about these processes anymore. 'Happiness' can be measured. As we settle political disputes in democracies, so we are closer to being able to settle these kinds of disputes too – by counting and by seeing 'what' wins. So far, the couple who is free to roam is winning.

### *Conclusion*

The pain that globalisation inflicts is felt on two fronts. First, on the economic front, it is felt when global processes sweep away weak local economies. People become poor. Communities collapse. This leads to the second front of culture, in which global processes can end up wrecking local cultures. All of this is true. Moreover, it hurts us as human beings when we see it. Humans appear to be hard-wired to react to vivid anecdotes and striking instances. We are so habituated to this that we resist people who suggest that we should do a count. We say things like 'suffering cannot be counted', or 'one person dying is one too many', which means that we do not like to counter the vivid anecdote and the striking example with statistics. However, we should, because in the end it is about what, on balance, is good for people – or, to put it in my language – what, on balance, puts a smile on people's faces. I'm afraid to say, contrary to those who are against globalisation, the evidence is overwhelmingly in favour of globalisation for the elimination of poverty. Problems arise when markets are less free rather than more free (for example, the Common Agricultural Policy which eliminates Africa's competitive advantage in food production); and when businesses and politicians collude to avoid accountability (as in Indonesia, where politicians give business-people the license to clear forests for agriculture or in Europe, where politicians give fishermen the right to fish the North Sea to extinction). When the calculus is in favour of opening markets and increasing globalisation, the proper response of a concerned human being is to understand the ways in which people with less power are being harmed and to find ways to mediate that. The proper answer

is not to save the few at the greater cost of the ways in which the majority of people would benefit.

Which brings me, lastly, to a third kind of cultural pain that globalisation sometimes inflicts – and that’s the pain that results from people willingly abandoning the ways of their grandparents. I am afraid my view is that it is perfectly acceptable, as long as cultural change advances by choice. My experience as a global traveller has been that many aspects of the globalising process are profoundly positive in their ability to break down social divisions, and to eliminate the dogmas and values that set us at war with each other or make us slaves to the past. I think we live in a golden age. There can have been few times in history when so many people were as free, as they are now, to fill their days with doing what they want to do. Certainly, it is true that there are more people living in absolute poverty today than there were, say, forty years ago, but it is also true that the proportion of people living in absolute poverty has been on a downward path. Also, it is important to distinguish between those whose poverty is a result of globalisation and those whose poverty is a result of bad government. When we do the sums, we see that globalisation has been a force for good, not bad; that it has created more wealth than poverty; that it has freed more people than it has enslaved and that it has set in motion processes which lead to less conflict, more tolerance and understanding – and greater social cohesion.

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## *Part IV: Connections*

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# 9 *The family and social cohesion*

Susan C Ziehl

## *Introduction*

The family is generally regarded as a major social institution. Along with the economy, polity, education and (sometimes) religion, it has been viewed as one of those essential ingredients without which no society can function. The primary role of the family is that of socialisation, that is, ensuring that each new generation knows and abides by the cultural values and norms of the society in question. In this way, the family contributes to the smooth functioning of society and thus, to social cohesion. However, there is a long tradition in sociology of questioning this view of the family. A typical response has been to argue that this is an idealised view of the family, which does not reflect the lived experience of family life. Rather, the argument goes, the family may have been the building block of society some time in the past but it can no longer perform that role today. In short, the family is in trouble.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the different ways in which the family has been problematised and, by extension, its role as the foundation of social cohesion has been theorised and questioned. The focus is mainly theoretical although some empirical data will be provided. Since debates around the well-being and future of the family have their origin in North America and Western Europe, most of the discussion will focus on those regions. However, in the final section, the focus moves to South Africa where similar concerns are increasingly being raised.

## *Is the family OK?*

It would seem that the family is an area of enquiry that few scholars have approached in a morally or ideologically neutral way. Consequently, debates

around the condition and future of the family have never been solely about theoretical and academic issues. One can categorise the various permutations concerning how well the family is doing and the moral position adopted, as follows:

- The family is dying and that is bad.
- The family is fine and that is good.
- The family is dying and that is good.
- The family is fine and that is bad.
- The family does not exist, only families, and that is good.
- The family was in crisis and that was bad.

### *The family is dying and that is bad*

Concern with the welfare of the family is nothing new. It seems that every generation laments the passing of a time when family life was better than it is during its own lifetime. Muncie claims that the idea of the family constituting a social problem dates back to the eighteenth century when, as French family historian Philippe Ariès claims, childhood was first ‘discovered’ (Muncie, Wetherell, Dallos & Cochran 1997). Previously, there was no distinct phase in the individual’s life course called ‘childhood’. Rather, individuals from all social strata moved abruptly from infancy to adulthood, and the kind of responsibilities and behaviour expected of a twelve-year-old were very similar to those expected of a forty-year-old. This contrasts with the situation in modern Western society where childhood is associated with being carefree, dependent and unproductive. Being unproductive is probably the most important feature of childhood in a modern setting: it is seen as important that children are free from the responsibility of work, their only obligation being to attend school. Indeed, Ariès argues that it was the rise of the formal education system and, in particular, schooling that was responsible for the emergence of childhood as it is known today (1973).

The debate in the eighteenth century was not about the family in general but rather the working-class family. In response to concern about the capacity of working-class parents to properly socialise and educate their children (by middle-class standards), voluntary organisations, and later the state, established industrial schools for ‘neglected’ children and reformatories for those who were deemed ‘delinquent’ (Muncie et al. 1997: 33). This can be seen as

one of the first attempts by the state to intervene in family life – a controversial move that continues to be debated today.

In the 1940s and 1950s, the family was once again described as being in crisis. In fact, Talcott Parsons' theory of the family was largely a response to the doomsday predictors of his time. The idea that the family is in serious trouble is still prevalent today and, in academia, is being kept alive by Francis Fukuyama, whose writings on the family are discussed later.

### *The family is fine and that is good*

Immediately after the Second World War, the family became the topic of heated debate in academia, among the public in general and in political circles. This was particularly true of the United States. During the war, many married women took up jobs vacated by men fighting in the war in Europe. Some have argued that the government of the time engaged in a massive ideological campaign promoting the family and placing specific emphasis on the importance of motherhood. The rationale behind this campaign was to get working women back into the home and thus avoid the anticipated problem of male unemployment when the soldiers returned. Some of the concerns expressed at that time were that the fertility rate had dropped so low that depopulation was immanent; that the divorce rate had risen sharply and that the 'older sexual morality' no longer applied. Another concern was that the family had lost so many of its functions that it was on the brink of becoming obsolete (Parsons 1980: 178–198).

Parsons responded by asking whether these developments were really symptoms of 'a general trend towards disorganization' or merely what he called the symptoms of the 'disorganization of transition'. In his view, it was the latter. He pointed out that although the divorce rate did rise sharply after the Second World War 'the upward trend of divorce rates has been checked, though it is too early to judge what the longer run trend is likely to be'. He furthermore pointed out that most divorces occur in childless marriages and that there is a high rate of remarriage after divorce (1980: 178–180).

On the question of the birth rate, Parsons agreed that it had declined since the beginning of the twentieth century, but argues that, had this not occurred, the United States would be facing a population explosion given the prior decline in the death rate. In other words, Parsons regarded the decline in fertility as a

good thing 'suggestive of a process of readjustment rather than of a continuous trend of disorganization' (1980: 181).

Parsons further provided empirical evidence of an increase in the demand for residential buildings or what he calls the 'family home', something that would not have occurred if the family was indeed in decline. From this he also concluded that there is no evidence of a decline in the older sexual morality such that 'the having of children is a simple index of irresponsibility' and that 'we have ... produced a generation of "spawners" as contrasted with "family builders"' (1980: 183–184).

Parsons' views on the family were in line with his more general theoretical approach to societal analysis, that is, structural functionalism. According to the structural functionalist paradigm, societal evolution is synonymous with the process of structural differentiation, which, in turn, involves the emergence and increasing specialisation of social institutions. Parsons regarded the family as one such institution, which, previously, had performed a variety of functions (educational, political, religious and economic) and, in a modern environment, had become functionally specific. It had lost some functions but retained two basic and 'irreducible' functions: socialisation and 'the stabilization of the adult personality' (1980: 184). He called these 'root functions' (1980: 192) 'which must be found wherever there is a family or kinship system at all' (1980: 185). Thus, the family retained its utility and importance even in a modern industrial society. Indeed, Parsons argued that the family is even more essential in a modern society given the other changes that have occurred – particularly in the occupational sphere. What marked the emergence of a modern industrial society, in Parsons' theory, was the fact that production had been moved from the home/family to the factory and became part and parcel of a distinct institution: the economy or occupational system. Crucial to an understanding of the specific type of family that dominates in an industrial modern society, is the distinction he drew between the two value systems that govern the family and the economy. Drawing on Max Weber, he drew a distinction between a particularistic value system and a universalistic one. The first applies to the family and has two features. Firstly, it involves treating each individual differently depending on his/her (family/kin) relationship to you. So, for example, a woman will treat her first-born son differently from her youngest daughter and differently from her husband. The second feature, Parsons called the 'communistic principle' of 'each according to their need'.

This contrasts with a value system based on the principle of universalism, in terms of which, the only statuses that count, are achieved statuses (rather than ascribed ones) and all individuals holding the same achieved status are treated in the same way. Achieved statuses are occupational statuses that are acquired through formal educational processes such as attending school, university or undergoing formal training for a job. Another feature of a value system based on the principle of universalism is that rewards are apportioned according to performance rather than need. This is the value system which dominates in the occupational system (the economy). Parsons referred to it as the ‘social antithesis’ of the value system that governs family life.

In setting up this juxtaposition, Parsons created the backdrop for his contention that the family has evolved in positive ways. In pre-industrial times, Parsons contended, the family was a large, multi-functional social entity in which all activity, production in particular, was organised on the basis of kin relationships. Industrialisation changed this by increasing the importance of non-kinship structures (church; state; the university; business) and causing the family to be reduced to its basic core: the ‘nuclear family’, which is ‘relatively isolated’ from the larger kin group it is part of (1980: 184–187). In a modern environment, this type of family (system) has certain advantages over its predecessor. These are:

- Individual nuclear families are more mobile than large kinship groups, which means that workers can respond to job opportunities more effectively.
- The increased independence of individual nuclear families also allows for greater social mobility as family obligations are decreased. (Elliot 1986: 37)

The role of the breadwinner plays an important part in Parsons’ theory. Firstly, by engaging in productive labour, the breadwinner contributes both to the economy (by providing goods and services) and the family (by providing income to pay for the subsistence of non-working family members). But more important than this, the breadwinner role performs an important societal function. It is the means through which the now differentiated and specialised institutions of the family and the economy are integrated.

Parsons had no doubt that ‘in the normal case’ it was the husband-father who performed the breadwinner role and the wife-mother who cared for the home and the children. He simply asserted this as an empirical fact, claiming that there was no general trend towards a swapping of gender roles and argued that

working women tended to be childless and/or husbandless and, where this was not the case, the wife's job was qualitatively different from that of her husband – bringing in less income – and she was therefore secondary in determining the social status of the family (Parsons 1980: 191–192).

He also supported this contention theoretically by asserting that his collaboration with Robert Bales (regarding small group behaviour) showed that, when faced with a particular task, all small groups have a tendency to develop an authority structure and to specialise in terms of function. This results in a two-way division between those who hold power and those who do not; and between those who specialise in the instrumental function (getting the task done) and those who specialise in the expressive function (concerned with emotions and keeping the group together). Parsons saw the nuclear family as but another example of a small group that has a tendency to develop in this way (that is, to differentiate): husband; wife; male child/ren; female child/ren, fitting neatly into the four boxes thus created.

For Parsons, this particular structure of the family was not only an empirical reality but also had a number of positive consequences for society and the individual, as it was responsible for the socialisation of individuals. Parsons described socialisation as the process through which children internalise the culture (value or institutionalised patterns) of the society into which they are born and identified a number of preconditions for successful socialisation.

The second primary function of the (modern) family, according to Parsons, is the 'regulation of balances in the personalities of the adult members of both sexes'. Parsons saw the emotional support between husband and wife as one of the means through which this function is achieved. This is important, he believed, because the family is now 'relatively isolated' from the wider kin network, which means that the couple is in a 'structurally unsupported' position should things go wrong (1980: 195–196).

Another way in which the stabilisation of the adult personality is achieved is through the parent-child relationship. In short, Parsons saw parenthood itself as a source of emotional balance. He argued that the socialisation process is never completely smooth, with the result that certain 'residua' (from childhood) are left in the adult personality. He acknowledges that these could represent obstacles to the achievement of a healthy adult personality. However, he

also believed that they 'have important positive functions for the adult personality'. More particularly, he argues that the presence of children allows parents to act out some of the 'childish elements of their own personalities', something that is necessary for 'a healthy balance of the adult personality' (1980: 197).

In sum, Parsons did not foresee the imminent demise of the family. Rather, he saw it as changing in accordance with the demands of a modern society, particularly a modern industrial economy. He counter-posed the economy and the family, the latter being presented as cold, uncaring, bureaucratic and hostile while the family was depicted as a type of refuge from it, an escape. For Parsons, the modern family is 'relatively isolated' from the wider kin network, which creates strains but has more positive than negative consequences. He depicted this particular type of family system as functional for society (ensures integration of economy and family), for children (ensures that they are socialised) and for adults (provides them with emotional support and allows them to express emotions, which have no place anywhere else in society). In short, he argued that the family is doing fine and continues to have an important and necessary role to play in a modern industrial society.

### *The family is dying and that is good*

Talcott Parsons has been described as 'the most notable' and even 'the modern theorist on the family' and his theory as 'coherent' (Morgan 1975: 25), 'carefully elaborated' (Elliot, 1986: 35) and 'critical to the development of [a] sociology of family' (Aulette 1994: 11). It was also described as the 'common sense' approach to the family – at least in the 1940s and 1950s. At that time, it was the reigning orthodoxy, or what Cheal calls the 'standard sociological theory' of family life. However, from the late 1960s, this approach became the subject of widespread attack producing what has been referred to as the 'Big Bang' in sociological theories of the family: 'That explosion blew the field apart, and the separate pieces have been flying off in different directions ever since' (Cheal 1991: 8).

The first set of attackers came from outside the field of sociology. They were a group known as 'radical psychiatrists' whose main argument was that far from being the foundation of the good society and necessary for healthy personality development, the family is a place of violence and destructive of

healthy personal growth. Two of the most well known writers in this group are RD Laing and D Cooper. In *The Politics of the Family* (1971), Laing placed great emphasis on the power relations between family members. He saw power as something that family members use against each other (for their own ends), the result being the suppression and repression of individuality and autonomy. He saw family relationships as dyadic relationships played out against the backdrop of triadic relationships. For example, he talked of the mother-father dyad and mother-daughter dyad and claimed that family members form such 'alliances' and strategise against each other to get what they want (out of each other). He further claimed that family relationships are internalised as 'dramas' that play themselves out, generation after generation, with destructive consequences. Laing drew heavily on his work with schizophrenic patients and, while indicating that there is a great deal of confusion about what schizophrenia actually is – 'Schizophrenia is the name for a condition that most psychiatrists ascribe to patients they call schizophrenic' – he claimed that we must look to family relationships for the origin of this condition (1971: 40). To illustrate his thesis, Laing used the example of one of his patients, Jane, who had a recurring dream in which she was a tennis ball. 'This ball was served, smashed, volleyed, lobbed, sometimes hit right out of court – so small, so passive, yet so resilient.' He claimed that this dream was a metaphor for her place in her family where her father was in an alliance with his mother and her mother in an alliance with her father, and where her mother and father never communicated directly with each other, only through her (1971: 14–15). The whole tenor of Laing's writings on the family is dark and war-like. In essence, what he wanted to argue is that, far from the common sense idea of bad family relationships resulting in abnormal behaviour, it is 'normal' family relationships that have this effect. There is also a strong sense of pessimism in Laing's writings: he diagnosed the problem but offered no way out (Elliot 1986: 123).

Cooper was more optimistic but the idea of the family as suffocating and, ultimately, destructive is also present in his work (Elliot 1986: 122). He, at least, offered an alternative to the family: the commune. In *The Death of the Family*, Cooper described those who mourn the family's passing as engaging in 'false mourning' since 'the happy family' does not exist (1971: 8–9, 516). Cooper's work has more in common with sociology than Laing's as he draws on Marxism in his analysis of the condition and future of the family in society

today. In a similar vein to Engels (who drew a link between the family and the institution of private property), Cooper claims that the family is a means through which the capitalist class retains its power, 'providing a highly controllable paradigmatic form for every social institution' (1971: 6). The problem with the family, as Cooper perceives it, is that it teaches children binary distinctions: us (inside the family) and them (outside the family) or mother–father, son–daughter. He claims that these act as a template for other binary distinctions: good–bad, white–black, rich–poor, etc. Cooper's diagnoses of the problems associated with the family that lead to 'stultifying consequences' are as follows:

- The family produces incomplete individuals who consequently are not able to stand on their own in society.
- By teaching people roles, the family has a stultifying effect, preventing individuals from freely choosing their own identity.
- Through socialisation, children are taught far more control and suppression of feelings than they need to operate in society.
- The family instils in a child 'an elaborate set of taboos' that goes well beyond the incest taboo and is achieved through the imposition of guilt. (1971: 24–27)

Cooper showed a strong dislike for what he calls 'family words' like mother, father etc. For him, the mother role need not be confined to the biological mother of a child. Rather, 'the maternal function can be diffused into other people beyond the mother – the father, siblings and, above all, other people outside the biologically grouped family' (1971: 29).

As noted, for Cooper, the alternative to the family is the commune, which he defined as:

a micro-social structure that achieves a viable dialect between solitude and being-with-others; it implies a common residence for the members or at least a common work and experience area around which residential situations may spread out peripherally. (1971: 47)

It is in this context, he believed, that people will find the mothering and fathering they are not presently getting in the family and avoid the 'restrictions and subtle violence of the family' (1971: 46). It is also in that context, that individ-

uals will be free to develop into autonomous, whole adults. Cooper did not believe that communes could be wholly successful while capitalism is still in place. He referred to communes in capitalist societies as 'prototypes' that will only develop to their full potential in a post-revolutionary situation.

The ideas and work of Laing and Cooper are in line with the more general anti-establishment social movements of the 1960s and 1970s. The family was being attacked because it represented the ultimate 'bourgeois' social institution. This anti-family stance found its most extreme expression in the words of Edmund Leach (spoken during a Reith Lecture) to the effect that the family is the source of 'all our discontents'. These ideas not only reflected the times but also had an impact on society. Many communes were set up in the United States and Britain in the sixties and seventies. Researchers also started taking an academic interest in these attempts at finding an alternative to the family. Abrams and McCulloch are a case in point and their general conclusion was that, on the whole, the commune movement was a failure. They indicate that the most common reason for the break-up of communes was 'a familiar domestic crisis, a crisis of emotional possessiveness with all the usual reduction of people to commodities'. This finding is consistent with Cooper's contention that communes cannot succeed in a capitalist society. However, Abrams and McCulloch also went further to suggest that one of the major problems with communes is the lack of structure – the very 'thing' that the family was being criticised for and that the commune movement was trying to avoid (1980: 426–427).

The 1960s anti-establishment movement consisted not only of the civil rights movement, the hippie movement, the movement for the equality of gays and lesbians but also of the women's movement. This was to have a far greater and more lasting impact on family studies than the work of the radical psychiatrists.

### *The family is fine and that is bad*

The initial phases of the second wave of feminism produced a very negative appraisal of the family. For example, Kate Millett referred to the family as 'patriarchy's chief institution' (1971: 55) while Juliet Mitchell claimed that the 'true' woman and the 'true' family 'may both be sites of violence and despair' (cited in Segal 1997: 298). Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir declared in

*The Second Sex* that the 'desire for a feminine destiny – husband, home and children – and the enchantment of love are not always easy to reconcile with the will to succeed' (cited in Lindsey 1997: 193). This critique of the family tended to focus mainly on three areas: the family's role as agent of socialisation, the sexual division of labour within families and the mother role.

Starting with the distinction between sex (biological and physiological attributes) and gender (social attributes), most – though not all – feminist accounts of the 1960s and 1970s sought to show how families create gender differences and inequality. It is in the family, they argued, that male babies are turned into boys and men and female babies are taught to accept their place in a patriarchal society. This was achieved through the differential allocation of toys, parents having different expectations of boys and girls, treating them differently, encouraging them to wear sex-specific clothes, etc. In this way, the family creates those very gender inequalities which feminism sought to eradicate.

The sexual division of labour was another major area of concern. In her groundbreaking work *The Sociology of Housework*, Oakley elevated domestic labour to the category of 'real work' (1974). She did this by applying concepts to women's activities in the home, which up to that point, had only been applied to blue-collar work in a factory setting. Having drawn a comparison between work in these two different settings, Oakley concluded that housewives are even worse off than factory workers. This is because, in contrast to factory work, domestic labour takes place in social isolation, is more monotonous and fragmented and is not paid. Using Marxist terminology, Oakley's main argument was that women performing domestic labour experienced higher levels of alienation than factory workers. This, in turn, was seen as manifesting itself in higher levels of depression among married women than unmarried women and married men and a general sense of unhappiness and lack of fulfilment among women (see Bernard 1972). In the 1970s and 1980s, it became commonplace for the housewife role to be depicted in these very negative terms. For example, Barrett and McIntosh described the housewife's role as involving 'long hours of working banged up in a solitary cell while the guards attend to other, more important business' (1982: 58). While Comer commented, as follows, on her research on housewives: 'I expected to hear complaints, but I never dreamed for a moment I would encounter so much sadness, bitterness and disillusion' (cited in Barrett & McIntosh 1982: 63). The general theme to emerge from this phase of feminist thinking was that house-

work is something unpleasant which, given the opportunity, any rational person would avoid. It is therefore not surprising that the advice given to women at that time was to seek fulfilment in careers, that is, outside the family.

The depiction of housework as drudgery and alienating fitted in well with the critique of motherhood as restrictive and confining to women. In its most extreme form, this notion found expression in Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, in which she talked of 'the tyranny of ... reproductive biology' as well as the 'tyranny of the biological family' (1970: 11). In Firestone's view, the different (biological, physiological) roles of men and women in human reproduction are the ultimate source, not only of women's oppression but also of all other forms of social inequality, such as class and race. It is pregnancy and childbirth that put women at a disadvantage vis-à-vis men and accounts for their lesser economic and political power. Firestone argued that women would only be equal to men when extra-corporeal childbirth is possible and practised. In other words, removing gestation and childbirth from women's bodies was the solution from Firestone's point of view.

By placing so much emphasis on biology, Firestone differentiated herself from other forms of feminism (liberal, socialist, Marxist and Black feminisms) that went to great lengths to deny any connection between biology and women's oppression – presenting, instead, a social constructionist account. These other accounts were, however, also critical of the 'mother role', arguing for a sharing of child-care activities between men and women within the family and/or the socialisation of child care as ways of freeing women from the excessive burdens of motherhood. For example, in 1970, Rochelle Wortis presented a paper at the British Women's Liberation Conference in Oxford entitled, 'Child-Rearing and Women's Liberation', in which she took issue with John Bowlby's maternal deprivation thesis 'documenting societies where multiple attachments are the norm', that is, where the mother-child bond does not enjoy priority over other social relationships. What a child needs for healthy personality development, she argued, is not an exclusive strong bond with the mother but 'a stable, sensitive, stimulating environment' (Wortis cited in Segal 1997: 300). Similarly, Barrett and McIntosh rejected the notion that biological differences between men and women necessarily led to different social roles and therefore different degrees of investment in child care. 'Women,' they wrote, 'are no more innately gifted for intensive child-care than men' (1982: 145). For them, the connection

between women's role in biological reproduction and their social roles was created by society rather than biology:

Without denying the physical and mental demands of pregnancy, childbirth, lactation and child-care, we can properly question the assumption that these inevitably lead to women's dependence. In a society where contraception was readily available, where medical technology was geared towards minimising the rigours of childbirth, where the breast-feeding of infants in public was not regarded as a social solecism, and where responsibility for children was not used systematically to block women's employment prospects – the material conditions of women's dependence on men would not exist. The fact that we do not live in such a society should not be laid at the door of biology: it is a political question. (1982: 36)

This very negative appraisal of the family and motherhood later, if not gave way to, then found itself challenged by, feminist perspectives that celebrated that which is uniquely female – the capacity to give birth and the practice of mothering (see Rich 1976; Chodorow 1978). In *The Second Stage* (1981), Betty Friedan apologised for her previous anti-family stance claiming that the feminism of the 1960s and 1970s was wrong to stress women's need for autonomy and to emphasise their dissatisfaction with being mothers and housewives (see Segal 1997: 303). Chodorow too, sought to overturn the classic Freudian account of personality development by describing masculinity as a loss (separation from the mother) and femininity as a continuation of the mother-daughter bond. In this way, Chodorow contributed to the valorisation of motherhood and the role of the mother.

These more recent developments in feminist thinking do not detract from the fact that the earlier versions had an important impact on the field of family studies. At the very least, what the earlier versions did was question the notion of the family as a unitary entity in which all share the same experiences and have the same interests. Put differently, these accounts deconstructed the family into its constituent parts and made the point that, what may be in the interests of one member, may not be in the interests of another and that different members of the family have different experiences of family life. So, for instance, Parsons' contention that it was important that adult family members

had roles outside the family, and that one of the remaining functions of the family was the 'stabilisation, of the adult personality' clearly applied more to men than women. It also became clear that men were able to perform their economic roles because of women's domestic activities. Thus, what these early feminist writers did was to ask for whom, and because of whom, is the family functional, instead of treating the family as one undifferentiated unit.

It is somewhat ironic that the feminist critiques of the family discussed above were based on the assumption that families were like Parsons described them – that is, effective agents of socialisation and based on a sexual division of labour. What differentiated these accounts was the value judgement made about that state of affairs. For Parsons, the conventional nuclear family in which the man performed the breadwinner role and the woman the role of mother and housekeeper was good for society and the individual. From a feminist perspective (of the 1960s and 1970s), the fact that the family is structured in this way may be good for men and children, but not women. In short, the family is fine and that is bad. It is because the family functions effectively as a socialising agent and women, in particular, perform this job that it was criticised. However, this was only part of the feminist critique of the family.

### *The family does not exist, only families*

Since roughly the 1990s, a hegemonic view emerged in the field of family studies. It stated that, given the enormous social changes that have occurred in the course of the twentieth century, there is today no such thing as the family, only families. Diversity is said to be the major feature of the family today (Aulette 1994; Muncie et al. 1997; Zinn & Eitzen 1990). Factors that are seen as responsible for this development include: greater acceptance of 'alternative' life-styles (such as being gay), the increasing divorce rate, increasing participation by married women in the paid labour force and the devaluing of marriage. As a result of these trends it is argued that there is, at present, such a variety of domestic and household arrangements that it is inappropriate to talk about, or theorise, about the family as such. Rather, what we should be researching and theorising about is family diversity or families. Against this background, it is families, in their various forms, that constitute the basis of society and social cohesion – no particular type being privileged above the rest. In other words, all family types (gay, straight, one parent or two parents)

are seen as capable of effective socialisation and promoting healthy personality development.

Closely allied to this valuing of difference and diversity (rather than uniformity and conformity), is the view that popular/conventional conceptions of the family were ideological rather than a reflection of real life experiences. So, for instance, Barrett and McIntosh referred to the family as an 'ideological configuration' and wrote of the 'cultural hegemony of familial ideology' as well as the 'utterly hegemonic status of the familial perspective and familial ideology' (1982: 129–130). They found evidence of this in the increasing tendency for non-family institutions to be modelled on the conventional nuclear family: the housemother and housefather in the case of boarding schools, for example. They also saw the economy as modelled on the family – the sexual division of labour in organisations mirroring the sexual division of labour in the home. For women, they claimed, paid work was little more than domestic labour in a different context. The media and the state were also seen as promoting an ideology of familism. In the case of the media, this was achieved through advertisements and soap operas that assumed that most people live in comfortable conventional nuclear families and would find any deviation from this model 'intrinsically' funny and/or entertaining. In the case of the state – the conservative British government of the time – it was seen as promoting an ideology of familism through marriage laws – which privileged the conventional family – and an aggregated taxation system which denied women and children (under 16) the right to independent social security. In this way, they argued, the conservative British government of the time sought to maintain patriarchy – reinforcing paternal (as opposed to collective/social) responsibility for the welfare of women and children. Left-wing political parties were also accused of promoting an ideology of familism. Indeed, Barrett and McIntosh described the left as both 'familialized and familist'. This is because of the use they made of 'family terms' (like brother and sister) as well as their support for a family wage. The latter was related to the fact that being a provider was an important source of self-esteem for the working-class male.

Barrett and McIntosh 'dissented strongly' from the view that the family is in decline. According to them, the ideology of the family is alive and well and extends beyond the domain of concrete households (1982: 31). 'It is irrelevant to mourn the death of the family when our society is more profoundly "familized" than ever before' (1982: 129). There was another sense in which

Barrett and McIntosh questioned the distinction/opposition that is often made between the private world of the family and the public world of state, economy etc, the cosiness of the family and the harsh, uncaring world outside. In their view, the privileging of the family makes the outside world harsh and uncaring. For Barrett and McIntosh, the family was both privileged and anti-social. Being so privileged, the family made every other domestic arrangement seem second best, pale and unsatisfactory. The overvaluing of family life, devalues other lives: 'The family sucks the juice out of everything around it leaving other institutions stunted and distorted' (1982: 78–80).

They oscillated between describing the family in purely ideological terms (as a myth), on the one hand, and as both an ideology and a concrete domestic arrangement, on the other – which most people experience on a daily basis. They also oscillated between writing about the family as if there was something essential about the variety of domestic arrangements that made them all 'family' and avoiding essentialism and universalism (1982: 81–82). As such, they made explicit the difficulties around redefining the family in a way that incorporated a variety of domestic situations without privileging one family form over another. But for present purposes, what is important is that on certain occasions, Barrett and McIntosh, like many other writers in the field of family studies, described the family as an ideology, that is, a set of ideas which *masked* rather than *reflected* the reality of people's lives. In her 1980 publication Barrett stated clearly: "'The family" ... does not exist other than as an ideological construct' (1980: 199). And in the *Anti-Social Family*, Barrett and McIntosh declared that:

the hegemonic family form is a powerful, ideological force that mirrors in an idealized way the characteristics attributed to contemporary family life. It has only a tenuous relation to co-residence and the organization of households ... the major significance of 'the family' in Britain today is ideological. (1982: 33–34)

They went on to suggest that if the family was more than a set of ideological ideas, one would expect the majority of the population to be living in households composed of 'mum, dad and the kids' – something which is not the case.

It is not possible here to go into the details of the debate that has elicited comments such as those mentioned above. Except to say that it raises a number of

methodological issues of relevance to the study of family life in any society (see Ziehl 1997; Chester 1988). These issues relate primarily to important distinctions that need to be made between:

- The structure of the household (who is living with whom) and sexual division of labour (who does what in and outside the home).
- Households as they are, at one point in time, and the domestic life cycle (the series of households that people participate in during a lifetime).
- A trend and the consequences of a trend.
- An ideology espoused by progressive sociologists and the public at large.
- An ideology espoused by progressive sociologists and the actual configuration of households placed in dynamic perspective.

When one takes all these methodological considerations into account, one notices that, despite an enormous increase in the divorce rate and other social changes, the vast majority of people in the developed world follow the conventional nuclear family pattern (see Table 9.1; see also Ziehl 2001). This suggests that even in a post-industrial society, the family and the various ideas associated with that concept represent something far more than 'mere ideology'.

In sum, the reigning orthodoxy in family studies is that the conventional nuclear family, characterised by the traditional division of labour, does not describe the experiences of the majority of people today. Rather, it is argued, a variety of family and household arrangements exist and all of these are capable of successfully raising children, preparing them for society and, thereby, being the basis of social cohesion. The ideology of the family is fine but that is not good for those who live outside its purview.

### *The family was in crisis and that was bad*

Fukuyama provided a more sophisticated and complex version of popular conceptions of the state of the family. In contrast to the view that it has been in long-term decline, Fukuyama claimed that the family's fortunes comes in waves. He distinguished between a number of phases in human history: the period of 'moral decline' (end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century), the period of 'moral recovery' (middle of the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth century), the period of the 'Great Disruption' in moral values (1960s to the 1990s) and, lastly, the reversal of the

‘Great Disruption’ or the reconstitution of social order. In short, his thesis is that in the 1960s, families started crumbling, which, in turn, led to an increase in crime, a decrease in trust and a decline in social capital.

Fukuyama defined social capital as a set of values and norms that makes social co-operation possible. He pointed out that, along with physical capital (buildings, land, etc.) and human capital (skills, education), social capital is essential for the smooth running of society, for maintaining a strong and stable democracy and for the production of economic wealth. However, he believed that these values and norms cannot be just any values and norms. They must be the ‘right ones’ such as truth telling, reciprocity and the meeting of obligations (1999: 14–17).

Fukuyama saw the family as both one of the most important sources of social capital and the primary means through which it is transmitted from generation to generation. When families fail, he contended, social capital is reduced, crime rates go up, other forms of deviance increase (drug taking, tax evasion, etc.) and social order is threatened. At the same time though, he claimed that family norms must not be too strong, and the values and norms which families transmit must also apply outside the family (i.e. to strangers). He pointed to Italy as a society with a strong moral code and strong ‘family norms’, which, however, only apply within the family, leading to a weak civil society and an unstable political system.

Fukuyama’s theory of the connection between family breakdown and social (dis)order is not new. His approach is essentially a socio-biological one which starts with the different physiological and biological roles of men and women in human reproduction. He reiterated the selfish gene theory claiming that men have an interest in fathering as many children as possible while women have an interest in attracting a man of quality – one who can be relied on to care for her and her offspring. The mother role, he contended, is clearly rooted in biology ‘as it is in the case of other animal species’. The father role, on the other hand, is socially learned and is far less extensive than the mother role. Also, within the human species, the father role can vary from ‘intensive involvement in the nurturing and education of children, to a more distant presence as protector and disciplinarian, to the largely absent provider of a paycheck’ (1999: 95). The actual role played by fathers is a function of the amount of social pressure placed on them to act responsibly towards their

partners and children. Men, he argued, are pulled in contradictory directions. This is because the human infant is far more vulnerable and needs far more intensive care at birth than the offspring of other species. The human child, he contended, is effectively born premature 'with much of the maturation that in other species occurs during pregnancy done outside the womb' (1999: 96). There is, therefore, a far greater need for human males to assist females in rearing human offspring than is the case with other species. On the other hand, the father role is not biologically based and, for this reason, is more fragile and weaker than the mother-child bond. It must be socially induced if successful child-rearing is to take place: 'It takes a great deal of effort to separate a mother from her newborn infant; by contrast, it usually takes a fair amount of effort to get a father to be involved with his' (1999: 101). Marriage is seen as the social arrangement through which society puts pressure on men to remain with the mother-child unit and provide the necessary resources.

As noted, Fukuyama's thesis is that starting in the 1960s, families started breaking up at an unprecedented rate and all kinds of negative social consequences followed. He pointed out that, at that time, a number of different social indicators started to move together and claims that this may be indicative of the fact that they are related. He provides data, which shows that, from roughly the middle of the twentieth century, crime, social disorder, divorce and illegitimacy increased while kinship, fertility, marriage and trust all showed a downward trend. He further pointed out that these developments took place at roughly the same time, with varying degrees of intensity, in all developed societies, with the exception of Japan.

He saw cultural, economic and technological changes as responsible for the 'Great Disruption' in moral values and social order. On the cultural front, he claimed that the 1960s brought with them an excessive sense of individualism – of freedom from tradition and other forms of social constraint. He wrote of a philosophy of 'no limits': individuals were seen as free to choose whatever they wanted to do; anything was possible and no choice could be regarded as less legitimate than another. For Fukuyama, this philosophy of unbridled individualism was problematic since it suggested that social order was possible without social constraints (1999: 15).

The second major force behind the 'Great Disruption', according to Fukuyama, has to do with the economic changes associated with the move

from an industrial economy to an information based one. These economic changes led to a decline in manufacturing (blue collar) jobs in favour of jobs in the service sector. The latter, he claimed, opened up more job opportunities for women, decreasing their economic dependence on men and marriage. He presented data on the ratio of female to male median incomes, which show that in the 1950s women were earning about 30 per cent of male wages and by the 1990s, this ratio had risen to 50 per cent. Contrary to popular opinion, he does not believe that it was middle-class women who were primarily responsible for this trend. Rather, he claimed that the major impact was on working-class women who, at the end of the twentieth century, found themselves in a much better financial position than had been the case in the past while their partners struggled to find jobs. This development led to a reduction in women's (economic) dependence on men and marriage, thus creating the motivation to end unsatisfactory marriages or not marry at all. The result was a rise in illegitimacy and single-parent families. He plotted divorce rates against female labour-force participation rates in the United States, United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries and showed that those societies with high divorce rates also had high levels of female labour force participation. He claimed that similar results were obtained if female labour force participation was plotted against illegitimacy (1999: 103).

Fukuyama pointed out that, prior to the 1960s, all developed societies had an elaborate set of laws as well as informal norms that promoted and protected marriage. He claimed that the family is based on an exchange of woman's fertility for men's resources and that those laws and norms keep this 'bargain' intact. Along with the cultural changes mentioned above, Fukuyama claimed that the contraceptive pill and abortion undermined that bargain. The significance of these technological developments, according to Fukuyama, was that for the first time in history, women did not have to worry about the consequences of sex and this, he claims, led to a change in men's attitudes towards women, pregnancy and children. In short, when a pregnancy did occur outside marriage, men felt less responsible and were less inclined to do the 'honourable thing', that is, marry a pregnant girlfriend (1999: 102).

The economic changes referred to above reinforced this trend of decreasing male responsibility. With women being economically more self-sufficient than in the past, men no longer needed to worry that divorce would result in hefty unending alimony payments or see their children 'slip into poverty'. Here,

Fukuyama suggested (rather than clearly indicated) that since the 1960s, men have felt less guilt with regard to leaving an economically independent (as opposed to dependent) wife.

The weakening norm of male responsibility reinforced, in turn, the need for women to arm themselves with job skills so as not to be dependent on increasingly unreliable husbands. With the substantial probability of marriages' ending in divorce, contemporary women would be foolish not to prepare themselves to work. (1999: 104)

Fukuyama's thesis, then, is that starting in the 1960s, cultural, economic and technological changes occurred which had the effect of undermining marriage and the family – the result being an unprecedented increase in illegitimacy and single parenthood. This he regarded as a very negative social trend:

It is my view that family norms both constitute social capital and are critical for propagating social capital to succeeding generations, and that phenomena like the rapid growth of households headed by single women is a very negative social development. (1999: 24)

Fukuyama took a firm stance in the debate that originated with the, now-famous, Moynihan report published in 1965. Moynihan claimed that poverty among African Americans was a function of the particular family structures characteristic of that community, while others argued that African American family structures are not necessarily less efficient than those found among whites, just different. Fukuyama expressed his position as follows:

Moynihan has been vindicated. I believe that any fair reading of this literature leads to the conclusion that, all other things being equal, it is much better to grow up in a traditional two-parent family than in a single- or no-parent one. (1999: 117)

He responded to those who have taken the opposite view, by saying that they underestimate the importance of the father role in the family. As noted, he saw this as a learned role and when boys have no father to act as a role model, the chances are that they will not become acquainted with the responsibilities of fatherhood. He further saw fathers as having the role of channelling male aggression in socially acceptable ways. He also made the point that having a

father present in the household means that mothers have more time to spend with their children.

In short, the break up of families results in a reduction in the amount of social capital 'represented by families themselves' and in the chances that values and norms emphasising honesty, responsibility and reciprocity will be passed down to the younger generation. From the 1960s to the 1990s, Fukuyama contended, this was the case and the result was rising crime rates in all (except one) developed society. He did not believe that the 'Great Disruption' would continue forever. Rather, he pointed out that many of the social indicators are now showing reverse trends: the divorce rate is down, marriage rate up and crime levels have been declining since the 1990s. For him, we are now in a period of moral reconstitution and this has been achieved, not by a revival in religion or interventions by the state, but because of people's 'natural instinct' to create moral rules that bind them together into communities (1999: 6).

In many ways, Fukuyama's analysis of the connection between the family and social order is a refreshing one. He is to be commended for having the courage to theorise on such a broad scale and for bringing together information on a large number of societies in one work. However, many of his ideas are not new. In essence what he did was to synthesise ideas drawn from a number of different sources, including some classical sources like Durkheim and Weber, and drew a 'big picture' of how societies and families have changed over time – particularly in the second half of the twentieth century. He did this in a manner that has not been seen since Parsons was knocked off his sociological pedestal. In this sense, his work made for a stimulating change. However, there are also a number of ways in which his analysis and theory are problematic.

Fukuyama tended to gloss over important methodological problems that, even in the twenty-first century, sociologists have not been able to resolve. As such, they emphasise the difficulties involved in accurately documenting what is happening in society even when we have the best technology at our disposal. For example, he dismissed (rather than adequately discussed) the contention that data on rising crime rates may be indicative of an increasing tendency to report crimes and better record-keeping, rather than an actual increase in levels of crime. Also, the statistic he used to 'prove' increases in illegitimacy is also problematic. The ratio of non-marital births to all births has gone up but this is at least partly due to the fact that all births have gone down.

Also, his contention that a high proportion of people living alone was indicative of the decline in the nuclear family is too simplistic and inaccurate (1999: 114). It ignores the domestic life cycle, that is, the fact that living alone in old age is a normal part of the nuclear family pattern/domestic life cycle. He mentioned this possibility but dismisses it. Statisticians and sociologists are going to have to find better ways of measuring social behaviour if our theories and empirical data are to have any relevance to what is actually happening 'out there'.

There are also problems around some of the major claims on which his theory rests. For example, he contended that increasing labour-force participation on the part of women caused a change in *men's* behaviour and that this led to divorce. However, he did not adequately explain that connection and also cannot account for the fact that women initiate most divorce petitions. Similarly, the link that he argued exists between men's sense of responsibility to children and the contraceptive pill is not adequately explained. Since both of these claims are crucial to his overall theory, one would have expected them to be covered in more than a few lines. Finally, Fukuyama did not include developing societies in his analysis – leaving us to wonder about its relevance to South African society. However, as noted, it is refreshing to see a return to the 'grand theorising' of old.

### *How is the family doing in South Africa?*

Politically speaking, the family has not enjoyed a high profile in South Africa. This is changing as HIV/AIDS has prompted numerous scholars to speculate about its impact on family life. It has also not enjoyed a high priority in the social sciences – the liberation and class struggles have always been deemed more important topics of academic debate and research than the family. This has translated into a situation where we have very little empirical data that can provide a picture of family life in South Africa as a whole. We have a whole host of micro-studies, but information about the 'general picture' is hard to come by (see, for example, Spiegel & Mehlwana 1996).

To my knowledge there are only two large-scale studies that document family patterns in South Africa (Steyn 1995; Zeihl 2001). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Steyn conducted a survey of family relationships within households in the urban areas of South Africa. Subsequently, Ziehl used data from the 1996

census to try and paint a broad picture of family patterns in South Africa. What both these studies revealed is that, on the whole, South Africans do not follow the nuclear family pattern and a relatively large proportion of households are extended. This is in contrast to the situation in Western Europe and the United States where, despite decades of media hype about the rise in the divorce rate and increasing acceptance of ‘alternative life styles’, the conventional nuclear family pattern is still the statistical norm (see Table 9.1; see also Ziehl forthcoming). In other words, in First World societies, most people follow the predictable nuclear family pattern: living with one’s parents until one reaches maturity (nuclear family household); with one’s spouse (couple household); with one’s spouse and children (nuclear family household); with one’s spouse only when the children have left home (couple household); living alone when one’s spouse dies (single person household). Steyn and Ziehl’s research showed that this is far less likely to be the case in South Africa.

**Table 9.1** Comparison of household structures and family patterns: South Africa, United States and United Kingdom (all figures are percentages)

	Urban SA 1998/1999	SA Census 1996	US 1990	UK 1998
Single person	6.3	17	37.1	28
Couple	11.5	7	27.2	28
Nuclear	41.9	20	27.7	30
<i>Nuclear family pattern</i>	59.7	44	92	86
Extended	28.5	27	0	1
Single parent	8.3	15	8	10
Other	3.5	15	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Giddens (2001), Schaefer & Lamm (1992), Steyn (1995), Ziehl (forthcoming)

In ideal-typical form, the main difference between the nuclear and extended family *patterns* concerns the question of what happens when a couple marries. In the nuclear family pattern, the couple sets up home away from their parents. In other words, they start their own household and the individuals concerned move from being part of a nuclear family household, to a couple household and they remain as such until their children are born. In the extended family pattern – and again, in ideal-typical terms – the couple joins the household of one set of parents upon marriage. In other words, one

spouse (usually the man) stays in the parental home while the other moves from her parental home to that of her spouse. If the latter household was a nuclear family prior to the marriage, it will remain as such until children are born. It will become an extended family when the children are born and revert to a nuclear family when the oldest generation (grandparents) has died. The *extended family pattern* is therefore marked by only two household types (nuclear and extended family households), whereas the *nuclear family pattern* is marked by the absence of extended family households and the presence of couple and single person households.

**Table 9.2** Comparison of household structures and family patterns; South Africa, United States and United Kingdom (all figures are percentages)

	Urban SA 1998/1999	SA Census1996	US 1990	UK 1998
Nuclear	41.9	20	27.7	30
Extended	28.5	27	0	1
<i>Extended family pattern</i>	70.4	47	27.7	31
Single person	6.3	17	37.1	28
Couple	11.5	7	27.2	28
Single parent	8.3	15	8	10
Other	3.5	15	0	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Sources: Giddens (2001), Schaefer & Lamm (1992), Steyn (1995), Ziehl (forthcoming)

When one rearranges the categories to emphasise the extended family pattern, as in Table 9.2, then one notices that the vast majority of households in Steyn's study fall within one of those phases, but this is not true of the census results. There are a number of explanations for this. Firstly, the census data show a relatively high proportion of single-person households when compared to Steyn's data. This is because in 1996, live-in domestic workers were classified as 'single person households', rather than as being part of the households of their employers as had been the case before and was also the case in Steyn's research. Also, because Steyn's research focused only on urban areas, these two data sets are not, strictly speaking, comparable. However, there are also a whole host of problems with the census data, which calls into question the quality of that information. For example, more than 33 000 mistakes were

made in the data provided by Statistics South Africa on the (kin) relationship between people in households. More particularly, the raw data from the 1996 census indicate that there were more than 32 000 households headed by someone aged zero to four and a further 25 000 headed by someone aged five to nine. These are clearly mistakes in data collection, data capture, fraud and/or incompetence on the part of field workers (Ziehl 2001). However, having said this, it is clear from the available information that living in an extended family household is far more common in South Africa than in the two first-world societies. Indeed, in the latter case, the extended family household is practically non-existent.

Against this background, the question arises: do South Africans follow a family *pattern* at all? Steyn's research suggests we do, while the census data suggest the opposite. As such, the latter lend support to the numerous micro-studies, conducted mainly by anthropologists, which show that family life in South Africa is extremely volatile as children and adults circulate between households in response to crises and opportunities (Speigel & Mehlwana 1996). However, as noted, there are numerous problems with the quality of the census data and so it is difficult to know if they are an accurate reflection of what is actually happening on the ground or the product of poor-quality research. Some of the problems not yet mentioned concern the use of the concept 'household head' and the large number of unclassifiable households. There were more than 800 000 cases where the relationship between household members was not specified. This accounted for 13 per cent of all households (Ziehl 2001). The fact is that, at present, we do not have good research on which to base our claims about what family life is like in South African society as a whole. It is possible that micro-studies do reflect the 'broader picture' and that, for the majority of South Africans, household structures are *ad hoc* responses to unanticipated events. On the other hand, it is also possible that the extended family tradition is still strong in South Africa and that a predictable pattern of household formation is being followed but, because of the inadequacies of the census, we are not able to document that on the societal level. We will not know the answers to any of these questions until good quality social scientific research on family life in South Africa, as a whole, is conducted.

Such research would include both a cross-sectional and dynamic component. The first would involve a national survey based on a representative sample of households with the aim of determining the relationship between individuals

in households at one point in time. The second would involve drawing a representative sample of individuals and documenting their life-course in terms of where and with whom they have lived up to that point. Comparing the domestic life cycles of older and younger age cohorts would go some way towards determining whether there has been any change in the family life patterns of South Africans over time. Ascertaining the reasons behind changing household membership will also provide information on how HIV/AIDS is impacting on family life in this society.

### *Conclusion*

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide a broad overview of the different ways in which the family-society relationship has been theorised. It has been argued that theories about the family have always contained an ideological component and that theorists can be categorised in terms of how they see the condition of the family and how they feel about that state of affairs. Starting with the popular conception of the family being in long-term decline, Talcott Parsons' defence of the conventional nuclear family was discussed. In the 1960s, when structural functionalism (of which Parsons was not only a proponent but a champion) came under attack, Parsons was criticised for presenting the family and its role in society (as the foundation of social order) in wholly positive terms. This was not entirely a valid criticism but it paved the way for a whole host of attacks on both the standard sociological theory of the family and the family itself. First, there were the radical psychiatrists who claimed that the family was anything but functional for healthy personality development. Then there were feminist writers who asserted that what may be functional for society, men and children, is not necessarily functional or good for women. Indeed, these scholars went so far as to depict the family as the ultimate source of women's oppression – a perspective that would be later challenged by others who emphasised the importance of mothering for women and society. Feminist writers also argued that what we think of as 'the family' is nothing more than a set of ideological ideas about how people ought to live and this ideology, too, was described as oppressive. This was followed by the idea that 'the family' as such does not exist – only families.

While having overturned the standard sociological approach to the family, those who have placed emphasis on the notion of family diversity have

brought nothing consequential in the form of actual theories of family diversity. Rather, the field of family studies has become rife with descriptions of different family types and the dubious allegation that in developed societies, non-conventional family forms have become the statistical norm. It was years before Fukuyama drew together the various strands of theoretical propositions and empirical evidence to produce a 'grand theory' of the family and its role in promoting social order that could rival that produced by Parsons in the 1940s and 1950s.

While Fukuyama's theory is not without problems, it is at least an attempt to cut through the political correctness of the 1960s and 1970s. Fukuyama clearly states his moral position on the family and his intellectual position. Both of these can be challenged but, hopefully, not through asserting an opposite moral position but through empirical evidence. One of the shortcomings of Fukuyama's analysis is that it is confined to the developed world. Thus, the connection between his theory and a society such as South Africa is unclear. On this subject, it has been argued that there is a dearth of macro-level research on family life in South Africa and that such research needs to be undertaken before we can develop a clear understanding of how the family is, or is not, promoting social cohesion in this context.

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# 10 *Global tourism, marginalised communities and the development of Cape Town's City Bowl area*

Sandra Klopper

Over the past few years, the Cape Town-based hip-hop graffiti crew, The Villainous Animators, has entertained clubbers and passers-by with their inventive spraycan murals, produced on a wall at the entrance to *The Jam*, home to famous DJs, rappers, other local musicians and their young fans. In this running visual commentary on the contemporary popular culture scene – generally in reference to the futuristic world of high tech animation and the lives of comic strip heroes – the murals of The Villainous Animators crew have been characterised, almost invariably, by a gently mocking irreverence to the very sources they seem to celebrate. In one ‘piece’,<sup>1</sup> they jokingly simulate a barcode, global emblem of our lived reality as consumers negotiating seemingly unlimited options; in another, they present an image of Superman as a fleshy middle-aged man, exposing his chest in an act that serves to unmask his petty, misplaced vanity rather than his supposedly super-human powers. As these references suggest, local appropriations of global cultural phenomena are not always as simple or as straightforward as they might seem at first sight. For, instead of the unquestioning acceptance and adulation lamented by those cultural theorists who predict the demise of indigenous cultural forms in the face of a seemingly unstoppable cultural imperialism, local engagements with America’s dream-worlds often use irony to affirm a sense of difference and distance.

In his critical introduction to the globalisation of culture in the late twentieth century, Tomlinson provides some interesting insights into this complex relationship between dominant centres and their comparatively powerless peripheries. He argues that while capitalism is undoubtedly ‘an homogenising cultural force’, it does not follow from this that the symbolic value of specific cultural phenomena produced under capitalist social relations are necessarily

predetermined, even though the 'evidence of a general drift towards cultural convergence at certain levels is undeniable' (Tomlinson 1991: 26). Approaching this issue from a slightly different perspective, others, like Hannerz, have pointed out that 'meanings and the forms carrying them are less place-bound than ever in the past' (1997: 164), largely because the impact of globalisation has led to the phenomenon of what Clifford calls 'travelling' cultures.<sup>2</sup> As Hannerz also suggests, however, cultural borrowings are not necessarily proof of the power of the centre over the periphery, or the ways in which autonomy and diversity are lost in the world (1997: 168). Instead, they often serve to further forms of local resistance, as in Sophiatown in the 1950s, where the assertion of a cosmopolitan aesthetic played a significant role in affirming the rejection of both the political structures and cultural policies of the apartheid regime.

The local hip-hop graffiti scene, which traces its origins to the impact of the 1985 video documentary, *Style Wars* – a vivid and overtly celebratory account of the early history of the New York spraycan art movement – confirms this nuanced reading of cultural 'borrowings' in several important respects. For while on the one hand, the iconography of many local 'pieces' is characterised by a mockingly irreverent response to popular global icons, on the other, Cape Town's early spraycan crews all drew on the experience of ghettoised youths in the inner-city areas of New York and Los Angeles to articulate their own experiences of poverty and displacement on the Cape Flats. In recent years, moreover, this local hip-hop scene, which has been active since the late 1980s, has become a flourishing vehicle for social upliftment programmes aimed at keeping youngsters off the street and out of gangs, largely through the efforts of former school teacher, Emile Jansen. Funded in part by Cape Town's City Council, Jansen has gradually succeeded in achieving his aim of promoting a sense of self-worth among youths from traditionally 'Black' and 'Coloured' neighbourhoods by affording them opportunities to develop their social and creative skills through group activities like break-dancing and spraycan painting, normally under the tutelage of highly respected role models, all of whom have attained national and, in some cases, international fame for their work.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the sponsorship Jansen receives from Cape Town's City Council, in recent months, hip-hop spraycan crews like The Villainous Animators have been ruthlessly hounded by the Council, which refused them the right to continue painting large 'pieces' sponsored by companies like Red Bull, especially

in the so-called City Bowl area sandwiched between Table Mountain and the Waterfront. In 2002, the Council also began to step up its attempts to prosecute offenders responsible for spraying graffiti on public buildings, bridges and traffic signs. According to Council spokespeople, this decision stemmed from their conviction that there is a direct relationship between the production of large murals and the proliferation of tagging – the spraycan signatures scribbled on sites throughout the city – which they regard as a totally unacceptable form of vandalism.

Responding to these accusations, the founder of The Villainous Animators crew, Falko,<sup>4</sup> commented cynically that the Council has repeatedly suggested that the money spent on cleaning up tags in the City Bowl area should be going to the upliftment of areas like Mitchells Plain, where he grew up.<sup>5</sup> In other words, the Council effectively blames taggers for the fact that funds are not always available for much-needed improvements elsewhere in the greater Cape Town area. According to Falko, whether or not youngsters ‘vandalise’ the central city district with their tags, the Council’s primary concern is to make Cape Town a more attractive venue for local and, more especially, international tourists. In this view, the distribution of Council funds is necessarily unfair, invariably favouring tourists by ‘protecting’ and upgrading major tourist destinations like the City Bowl area.

While it would probably be impossible to quantify the role tourism plays in determining the City Council’s funding priorities, as I aim to demonstrate in the course of my discussion, there can be little doubt that the local tourist industry has had a devastating impact on the lives and activities of Cape Town’s historically marginalised youths and homeless people.<sup>6</sup> To understand this impact more fully, it is worth pausing to consider the recent assertions cultural theorist, Garcia Canclini, has made regarding the relationship between globalisation and the intensification of inequalities in the twenty-first century. According to Canclini, the ‘term globalisation is a poorly packed suitcase in that [it] attempts to contain the joint interaction of present day economic, political, media and migratory systems’ (2001a: 1; see 1988). He goes on to note that the ‘differing interaction of these systems from country to country and culture to culture further complicates the precise use of this term’. In his view, globalisation nevertheless has the important consequence of generating processes of stratification, segregation and exclusion. In keeping with this assertion, Canclini began his recently published study on

globalisation and multicultural conflicts by pointing out that globalisation is, in fact, 'a process of fragmentation and recomposition; rather than homogeniz(ing) the world, globalization reorders differences and inequalities without eliminating them' (2001b: 3).

Viewed from this perspective, recent attempts to transform Cape Town into a 'cleaner' city capable of attracting large numbers of wealthy tourists has, effectively, led to the systematic removal of all overt – and covert – signs of difference and resistance. Ironically, therefore, it is the growing concern to feed the global imperative to savour and consume 'difference', rather than, for example, the historical allegiance of Cape Town spraycan crews to America's hip-hop scene, that poses a real threat, not only to the survival of local forms of culture but also to the complex, nuanced social networks they foster and sustain, especially in economically depressed areas on the Cape Flats.

Not surprisingly, homeless people have been particularly hard hit by the devastating consequences of this increasing tendency to marginalise, and even deny, the participation of diverse social groups in the construction of Cape Town's cultural environment. Repeatedly characterised as 'dirty' or 'criminal', their presence in the urban landscape is perceived as a threat to recent attempts to promote the City Bowl area as a safe and attractive gateway for tourists visiting sites like Table Mountain and Robben Island. This is clearly underlined by the decision to close two recycling depots in the area, both of which were serviced by homeless and otherwise unemployed people trying to eke out a living from selling cardboard and other waste materials. Transported across the city in stolen shopping trolleys, generally travelling against the flow of the traffic in giddy and often dangerous trajectories, this waste material must now be taken all the way to Scrapmania in Albert Street in Woodstock, where an entire load fetches between R25 and R35. In a *Sunday Times* report dating back to 1999, the best collectors were said to earn between R250 and R350 a week.<sup>7</sup>

When the closure of the Roeland Street recycle depot, Paper King, was first mooted early in 2000, the owner of a building next to this depot claimed that it was 'in the wrong place', citing the fact that Roeland Street is 'part of a tourist route and the collectors sort the scrap in front of the tourist buses'.<sup>8</sup> Other landowners in the area also complained, claiming that 'drug dealers and criminals hang around waiting for the street people to be paid'.<sup>9</sup> The fact that

‘millions of rands had been invested in nearby properties, including the Roeland Street Square retail and office building opposite the scrapyards’, was given as a key justification for the subsequent closure of Northern Waste in nearby Canterbury Street, which had been operating in the City Bowl since 1966.<sup>10</sup> Described as ‘unsightly and untidy’, it was said at the time that ‘potential developers, tourists and the general public’ felt that the Canterbury depot area was ‘unsafe’.<sup>11</sup>

The trolley ‘owners’ themselves have an entirely different perception of the roles they play in Cape Town’s social and cultural life. As one of them put it: ‘We clean the city. We reduce the work of the Council. We clean the streets.’<sup>12</sup> Others point out that there is a widespread but false assumption that all those involved in recycling waste materials are homeless and that all homeless people suffer from one or other form of substance abuse. This view was summed up by the claim that: ‘Most people think we are all beggars and alcoholics.’ Almost all commented on the hard work involved in getting the waste material to Scrapmania in Woodstock, the nearest recycle depot since the closure of the depots in the City Bowl area: ‘From Seapoint to Woodstock and back again. Then Greenpoint to Woodstock. Then the City Bowl, and from there to Woodstock. Every day, every day.’ Although, in most cases, the recyclers take only one load to Scrapmania on an average day, some make this trip to and from Woodstock up to seven or eight times a day, pushing their trolleys for more than 30 kilometres before retiring for the night.

Following the closure of the recycle depots in the City Bowl area, the Cape Town Partnership (CTP), located in the Central Business District, decided to adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ policy to misdemeanours, leading to 700 arrests a month.<sup>13</sup> The Partnership, which uses its own community patrol officers wearing police uniforms, insists that it is ‘absolutely necessary to clean up the city’s streets’, thereby ensuring the safety of those working and shopping in the area. However, social workers involved in protecting the interests of the homeless are concerned that this approach fails to address the interests of the community as a whole. The chief executive of the Haven Night Shelter, Hassan Khan, went so far as to suggest that the Partnership ‘is virtually running a private army in Cape Town, intent mostly on serving the needs of tourists’.<sup>14</sup>

The increasing tendency to dehumanise and criminalise Cape Town’s marginalised communities in the interest – mainly – of promoting the city as a tourist

destination, raises a number of issues regarding concepts of citizenship and individuals' rights of access to public spaces. As Doss notes in her discussion of the controversies generated in debates over contemporary public art projects in the US: 'Today's public sphere, that wide-ranging intersection of place, space and human activity, has become a contested site of cultural authority ...' (1995: 14). But since, in many situations, citizens have actually lost the ability to contest decisions regarding the use of public space, this assertion is also quite problematic. Canclini articulates the underlying relations of power very clearly when he points out that globalisation is selective in the sense that it often results in the 'exclusion of the unemployed and migrants from basic human rights such as work, health, education and housing' (2001b: 25). He notes, further, that the growth of transnational corporations, combined with deregulatory and privatising tendencies, 'has decreased the number of public voices, in "high" as well as "popular culture", with the result that the effectiveness of traditional and enlightened forms of citizen participation, such as unions and grassroots associations, have been diminished' (2001b: 26).

Partly because of this process of disempowerment, organisations and individuals have begun to devise unusual, often inventive ways of articulating the concerns of the homeless and the unemployed. In Cape Town, as in other urban centres across the globe, these attempts to give voice to the lives and experiences of the marginalised have taken various forms. In the course of 2002, for example, Ariel Cohen, who lives along the route to Scrapmania in the lower Woodstock area, began to document the heavily laden trolleys, piled high with precariously tied parcels of cardboard and other scrap materials, passing his home day after day. Later on in that year, he also decided to record the sounds generated by the wheels of these trolleys bumping and squeaking along the tarmac. This project culminated in an exhibition entitled, 'Push', which he mounted in December 2002 in an open air space in the City Bowl area owned by the San Martini Church. Comprising a series of photographs etched against flat, brightly coloured backgrounds, the exhibition included a number of statements by the trolley 'owners' themselves. According to Cohen, his decision to document their precariously-balanced loads arose from his desire to draw attention to the beauty of the trolleys, which he felt could be viewed as mobile sculptures produced in the interest of clearing the environment or our junk. As such, 'Push' serves to encourage others to value the productive social and economic roles of the homeless and unemployed.

The idea of paying homage to marginalised urban communities dates back at least to the 1970s when several highly acclaimed artists living in cities like New York and London began to devote their energies to producing both photo-documentary essays and large installations aimed at confronting the realities faced by the homeless and the unemployed. Notable in this regard were the projects spearheaded by the photographer, Martha Rosler, who produced a series of photographs entitled, *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1974/75), documenting the debris left in doorways and against the walls of abandoned buildings by homeless alcoholics. Like other, related projects, these images deliberately avoid transforming people into objects of pity and disgust by excluding the destitute alcoholics themselves from the photographs. As a result, the images are at once empty and heavily laden with associations. Subsequent projects by Rosler include a study on contested housing, *Home Front*, and *Homelessness: The Street and Other Venues* (see Zegher 1998).

Ariel Cohen's exhibition differs from most projects of this kind in one very important respect: instead of mounting his exhibition in an indoor space or established exhibition venue, where his audience would inevitably be limited, he showed his works in a semi-secure courtyard facing onto Long Street – roughly mid-way between the Waterfront and Table Mountain. Partly due to its proximity to nearby coffee shops, Internet cafes, bookshops and night clubs, but also because it is a main thoroughfare for pedestrians, this space afforded a chance of reaching a wider audience of passers-by, most of whom have probably never set foot in an established gallery, among them some of the homeless and unemployed people celebrated in the exhibition. However, much like other recent studies on the activities of the urban destitute, Cohen chose to present the productive lives of the homeless and the unemployed as creative and ingenious rather than as desperate and debased – in other words, as evidence of a material, if not a moral, triumph over the cultural hegemony exerted by industrialised societies (see Dos Santos 1999). Reflecting on this tendency to look anew at the use of waste materials, Correll and Polk have argued that recycling, in particular the artefacts that the homeless (and others) make from recycled materials, serves as evidence of attempts to resist 'globalization and its homogenizing effects' (1999: 20).

Because the homeless themselves seldom, if ever, regard their own activities as creative, some of the current literature on the urban destitute has been

accused of being too romantic (Kratz 1995). While assertions of this kind are undoubtedly relevant to recent debates on the need to voice the concerns of marginalised urban communities, projects such as Ariel Cohen's 'Push' re-visit arguably important questions regarding the relationship between creativity and work. In addition to this, Cohen challenges commonly held assumptions about the nature of artistic authorship, in part, by blurring the distinction between himself (the photographer) and the trolley 'owners' (or 'recycle artists' who construct precariously balanced loads from waste materials). It is worth noting, in this regard, that although Cohen's desire to affirm the creativity of the trolley pushers is achieved, most obviously, by displaying their 'sculpted' loads against richly coloured grounds, the realisation of this aim is also dependent on his decision to exclude the trolley 'owners' themselves from his original photographs. Ultimately, therefore, Cohen shares Martha Rosler's concern to avoid the tendency among documentary photographers of transforming already disadvantaged people into objects of 'our' pity or disgust.

The growing refusal to turn marginalised communities into victims or potential objects of our pity also takes other forms. In one notable study of homelessness in cities across the world, Dos Santos achieved this aim by recording the perceptions people have of their trolleys, many of which also substitute as make-shift habitats and mobile homes. A Vietnam war veteran told her, for example, that 'I knew how to survive in the war and I know how to survive in the city. My buggy must be well-organized, and I must pack my belongings into proper bags, to separate the food and the material to go to the recycling centre' (1999: 131). Another homeless man from Tokyo admonished her (and us) by saying: 'Don't think we're lazy and always sleeping. If this were the case, we wouldn't survive. We spend most of our time walking and picking up useful things. When we can't walk anymore, then it's time for us to die' (1999: 123).

In addition to this refusal to pity or victimise the unemployed and the homeless, many have begun to question the growing tendency to restore 'a surface calm' to cities across the world (Deutsche 1990: 108). Dictated by the necessities of control and profit, 'but legitimised by concepts of efficiency or beauty', this surface calm is achieved at the expense of the already marginalised in the interests of a fictitiously conceived notion of 'the public' (1990: 109). As Deutsche points out, quoting Craig Owen, 'the public' is certainly not an homogeneous body of people (as certain interest groups insist on maintaining

in their efforts to protect the rights of elites), but ‘a discursive formation susceptible to appropriation by the most diverse – indeed, opposed – ideological interests’ (1990: 114).

In a direct challenge to the experience of marginalisation by some sectors of ‘the public’, the New York-based artist, Krzysztof Wodiczko, designed a trolley-cum-public sculpture in consultation with several people who had been evicted from their homes in the relentless drive to gentrify that city in the course of the 1980s. Aimed at facilitating the survival of the homeless, Wodiczko’s *Homeless Vehicle* offers shelter as well as adaptable spaces for storing the city’s usable waste – bottles, cardboard and the like. In Deutsche’s view, this functional, mobile sculpture ‘implicitly expressed support for those people who, deprived of housing, choose against official coercion to resist regulation to dangerous and dehumanizing shelters’ (1990: 125). As she suggests, the *Homeless Vehicle* can, for this reason, be seen both as a practical object and as a symbolic articulation. Most importantly though, it has the potential to strengthen rather than reduce the impact of the urban destitute by increasing their visibility (1990: 126).

Unfortunately, most well-intentioned projects of this kind fail to make it onto the street, in part, because they are often very costly. In Cape Town and elsewhere, attempts to help the homeless in more modest ways – for example, through the publication and sale of magazines like *The Big Issue* – tend to be more successful. The capacity of so-called social businesses like these to address the needs of marginalised communities can be ascribed, in large part, to the fact that the unemployed benefit directly – and immediately – from selling the magazine on the city’s streets. According to the editor of *The Big Issue*, sales of this magazine continue to improve and many vendors eventually move onto permanent employment.<sup>15</sup> The vendors, she says, are ‘proud’ to be working: ‘They want to contribute to a “Proudly South African” society which gets on with the job at hand – to create a country which can sustain its people and allow them to live with dignity, to educate their children, to have a solid roof over their heads and running water in their homes.’

The success of this particular project is clearly also predicated on the fact that *The Big Issue* has repeatedly sought to validate the potential for creativity among the urban destitute. In each issue of the magazine, a double-page spread is devoted to art works and poems submitted by the otherwise

unemployed sellers of this monthly publication. The production of this work is actively encouraged through motivational, and other courses, aimed at empowering the vendors by developing both their social and practical skills. The importance of these courses is further underlined by the fact that they obviously help to affirm the humanity of the vendors by affording them a chance to explore emotional issues and concerns. In some cases, interested readers have contributed actively to this acknowledgement of the emotional lives of the vendors by contacting the magazine with a view to purchasing works displayed in the double-page spread.

Like the monthly column detailing the life experiences and successful rehabilitation of individual vendors, the publication of poems and art works in the double-page 'Streets Ahead' spread obviously has the added aim of changing other people's perceptions of what *The Big Issue* calls 'socially excluded' people, many of whom are subjected to horrendous forms of abuse, including physical attacks, by those who question their right to exist. Indeed, although the homeless themselves are constantly accused of criminal activities, many live in constant fear of random acts of violence. In a vividly suggestive poem, published in the March 2003 issue of the magazine, Marion Fischer describes the tensions generated by lack of trust and understanding between the homeless and the communities they live in as follows:

*Homeless by choice*

Is it a CRIME  
To *prefer* to sleep  
Under  
God's sky??

*Testimony*

I was 'homeless' and  
Committed no crime  
Against God OR society  
... except,  
Once or twice  
I feared

I might have to  
Shit/ in/ the/ street

(... THAT is your crime  
Against me ...)

*Fears*

Nothing more NOR less than  
Fear by slaves  
Of the UNCHAINED  
... with nothing to lose  
nothing to gain

*Enslaved*

We are enslaved by  
our HOMES  
our possessions  
our (superficial) comforts  
our LUST for money  
'position', power OVER others

*Fear, again...*

All fear of loss  
is fear of Death ...<sup>16</sup>

*The Big Issue* reports that across the world homeless 'men, women and ... children [are] harassed, kicked, set on fire, beaten to death and even decapitated'. In response to these experiences, the National Coalition for the Homeless in the US noted recently that: 'We must ensure the protection of civil rights for everyone, regardless of their economic circumstances or housing status.'<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to other 'socially excluded' groups trying to survive in the City Bowl area, the vendors of *The Big Issue* enjoy a measure of protection and even

respect. This can be ascribed partly to the fact that, unlike those who collect and recycle waste materials, the work done by these vendors bears some comparison to that done by other people earning a living from selling 'clean' or 'uncontaminated' goods of one kind or another. Further reasons for their acceptance by others in the community include the very strict code of conduct they are required to observe. Armed with official *Big Issue* vests and badges, vendors are instructed never to harass potential buyers. Requirements like these are slowly paying off, leading to the publication in this magazine of full-page advertisements in support of the project by the Western Cape Government and large commercial concerns like Clicks.<sup>18</sup> Public support of this kind has the added benefit of contributing to Cape Town's image as a city sensitive to the needs of marginalised communities, which – despite the persistent harassment of the homeless by the police and by business interests in the City Bowl area – has become a matter of some concern to the local tourist industry, mainly because it now has to cater to the needs of a growing number of 'politically' motivated tourists who come to South Africa with a view to visiting sites that mark important events in the history of the country's struggle for liberation from white domination.

Despite the impact globalisation has had on the economies of countries across the world, most governments are reluctant to admit that tourism actively disadvantages certain sectors of the population. As Hall points out, however, 'It is a value choice, implicit and explicit, which orders the priorities of government and determines the commitment of resources within the public jurisdiction' (1994: 3, quoting Simmons et al. 1974: 457). Emerging from struggles for power between 'individuals, interest groups, and public and private organisations' (Hall 1994: 3–4), officially sanctioned tourism development strategies still commonly benefit those who are in a position to promote their own interests. In urban centres like Cape Town, where 'the rules of the tourism game' tend to be 'dominated by those who uphold the ideology of development' (Hall 1994: 171; see also Roche 1992), the urban re-imaging strategies devised by these economically powerful groups to attract capital thus almost invariably marginalise already disadvantaged communities.

In 1997, the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology tried to address problems of this kind in the South African context by organising a conference on cultural tourism with a view to developing the tourist industry for the benefit of all sectors of the population. The participants included a

number of important public officials, such as the then Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, and the Deputy Director General of the Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, Francois Hanekom, who expressed a desire to make the tourist industry more representative, thereby empowering not only previously disadvantaged groups but also presenting a more positive image of South Africa to the rest of the world. As he pointed out at the time: 'South Africa has thus far been marketed for its natural beauty, its wildlife parks. This has been at the expense of the rich diversity of cultural and historical experiences that could also become a unique selling point internationally' (Hanekom 1997: 13). In keeping with this perspective, Cape Town's Community Liaison Officer for Arts and Culture, Delysia Forbes, underlined the need to redress past imbalances by assisting and supporting progressive 'arts and cultural organisations and individual artists to develop their cultural work.' According to her, such 'a grounded and structured arts and culture constituency could become the forum for education and debate. It would be best equipped to develop a code of conduct or protocol for dealing with the treatment of cultural workers involved in the tourism industry' (1997: 102).

The obvious commitment of these and other conference delegates to the idea of redressing past imbalances through the tourist industry notwithstanding, their repeated references to so-called disadvantaged communities was far less inclusive than it might appear at first sight. Thus, although the progressive political rhetoric evidenced in statements such as 'The greatest challenge facing the city fathers and mothers [of Cape Town] is to unite our divided city and to begin to focus on improving the cultural landscape outside of the city centre, to create nodes of cultural interest which would make our townships and the Cape Flats interesting places in which to live, work and visit' (Forbes 1997: 104), can hardly be faulted, there is no mention here, or elsewhere in the conference proceedings, of either socially excluded urban groups, such as the young spraycan artists who are finding it increasingly difficult to operate in the City Bowl area, or of the homeless.

Omissions like these raise a number of questions concerning the ways in which ideas about community identities and community rights are formulated. In so-called 'community' approaches to the development of tourism, where 'residents are regarded as the focal point of the tourist-planning exercise, not the tourists' (Hall 1994: 168; see also Murphy 1985), all affected

groups and parties are supposedly afforded an opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. In many situations, however, the potential impact of factors like crime are used to argue against truly inclusive, participatory processes of this kind. The experience of the homeless trolley owners recycling Cape Town's urban waste and historically disadvantaged hip-hop artists from the Cape Flats is certainly not unique in this regard, for threats of crime commonly inform attempts to restore Deutsche's notion of 'surface calm' (Deutsche 1990: 108). This surface calm is achieved at the expense of the already marginalised in the interests of a fictitiously conceived notion of 'the community' or 'the public'. Viewed from the perspective of economic elites, crime probably poses the single biggest threat to the tourist industry both here in South Africa and elsewhere in the world (Tarlow & Muehsam 1996). Its eradication from 'the community' consequently plays a crucial role in attempts to secure the safety of outsiders.

In his 1996 account of the impact of crime and violence on South Africa's tourist industry, Bloom evokes 'instability' and 'general lawlessness' as two of the most important factors capable of causing 'irreparable damage' to the country's image as a tourist destination. He also suggests, however, that a community-based approach should be taken to policing, notably by 'involving the youth in tourist protection initiatives in view of the high levels of crime committed by young persons in the South African situation' (1996: 99). According to him, this could contribute to the development of feelings of pride and ownership among marginalised youths, who often experience difficulties finding employment of any kind.

The tendency to naturalise the interests of economic elites in ways like these has led some political theorists to advocate a form of democracy inspired by the notion of rights, such as the right to housing and the right to freedom of movement for the homeless. Unlike initiatives that seek to co-opt marginalised groups or, alternatively, to render them invisible, those who advocate this form of democracy propagate demands for new rights based on differentiated and contingent needs that are often in conflict with the needs of economic elites and the increasingly globalised tourist industry (Deutsche 1996: 272–273). According to Lefort, who first formulated this notion of a 'radical' democracy, there is a fundamental contradiction in previous conceptions of democracy because, although power stems from the people, in reality it belongs to nobody (Lefort 1998). As Deutsche points out, for this reason

democracy ‘cannot appeal for its authority to a meaning immanent in the social. Instead, the democratic invention invents something else: the “public space” where the meaning and unity of the social is negotiated – at once constituted and put at risk. What is recognized in public space is the legitimacy of debate about what is legitimate and what is illegitimate.... The essence of democratic rights is to be declared, not simply possessed’ (1996: 273–274). Ultimately, therefore, marginalised groups must empower themselves by questioning the power of economic elites through a declaration of rights, like the right to freedom of movement by homeless people living and working in the City Bowl area.

At least in the foreseeable future, the global trend towards affirming a seamless, homogenised cultural identity, controlled by, and for the benefit of, the already powerful, is probably here to stay. However, since it is predicated on a refusal to accept and celebrate the contested nature of public space, this trend is also unlikely to triumph, for marginalised (subaltern) communities – like the urban destitute and economically disadvantaged youths – repeatedly challenge attempts to erase signs of their presence, like spraycan tags and supermarket trolleys, from the urban landscape. Unwilling to submit to the imperative to conform, thereby relinquishing their marginalised voices to notions of solidarity and social cohesion that may prove destructive to the articulation of difference and to the acknowledgement of experiences of displacement, they repeatedly affirm their right to social and cultural space by claiming access to public buildings and parks, freeway by-pass bridges, the islands separating massive flows of traffic, empty lots and sheltered doorways.

Despite the difficulties these groups encounter in their efforts to survive against seemingly insurmountable odds, this refusal to conform is cause, not for despair, but for optimism, not least because it forces the individuals and interest groups they encounter to confront – if not necessarily accept – the idea of difference. Ultimately, though, it is the very idea of difference that needs to be rethought, for it is largely because of the tendency to equate difference with deviance from a supposed norm that the fiction of a universal socio-cultural sphere can be, and is, sustained. Given current debates on the ownership and control of public space in the City Bowl area, it is virtually impossible to imagine the potentially radical impact such a reformulated notion of difference might have on this and other cities seeking to attract large

numbers of tourists. But this does not alter the fact that it is important to challenge the highly questionable assumptions informing recent debates regarding the development of the City Bowl area as a tourist destination.

### Notes

- 1 'Piece' is an abbreviation of 'Masterpiece' – the term hip-hop spraycan artists commonly use to describe their murals.
- 2 The term 'travelling cultures' was first coined by James Clifford. For a discussion of this notion, see Clifford (1992).
- 3 For a more developed consideration of Jansen and the early history of the Cape Town Hip-Hop scene, see Klopper (2000).
- 4 All hip-hop spraycan artists use what they call 'writer' names, i.e. pseudonyms that they write on public buildings, trains, etc.
- 5 Much of the information contained in this paper regarding Cape Town's spraycan crews and their relationship to the City Council stem from conversations with Falko, a member of The Villainous Animators, and Wealz130, founder of several crews, notably YMB and Running Lines.
- 6 Even before the recent onslaught against graffiti artists, a guesthouse owner in the City Bowl expressed his concern at the 'damage done to an otherwise perfectly respectable and decent-looking building' by spraycan artists driving a white Kombi. *Atlantic Sun*, Thursday 3 December 1998.
- 7 T Hood, 'Street People's Jobs Trashed', *Sunday Times*, 21 March 1999.
- 8 T Hood, 'Council Axe Poised over Bergies', *Sunday Times*, 19 March 2000. When Paper King was first given special permission to operate a scrap and salvage business in 1983, it was on condition that all cardboard be stored inside.
- 9 See Hood, 'Street People's Jobs Trashed'.
- 10 T Hood, 'City Businesses Want Scrapyard Closed', *Sunday Times*, 14 May.
- 11 Hood, 'City Businesses Want Scrapyard Closed'.
- 12 These comments, and those cited below, were recorded by Ariel Cohen in the course of 2002, while he was working towards his exhibition, 'Push', which is discussed at some length later in this paper.
- 13 G Thiel, 'Row Over Approach to City Policing', *Cape Times*, 9 January 2003.
- 14 Thiel, 'Row Over Approach to City Policing', *Cape Times*, 9 January 2003.
- 15 G Nevill, Editor's Letter, *The Big Issue*, 6: 64, 2002, p. 3.
- 16 Reprinted from 'Real Change, Seattle, USA', in *The Big Issue*, 7: 68, March 2003, p. 32.

- 17 *The Big Issue*, 6: 60, July 2002, p. 4.  
 18 See, for example, *The Big Issue*, 7: 68, March 2003, pp. 7, 19.

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# 11 *Grounding 'globalisation from below': 'global citizens' in local spaces*

Steven Robins

We are doing the daily savings not only to collect money but to collect the lives of the people. We do this so that they can know what is happening next door, what is happening today and tomorrow, how can I help, how can we involve each other daily. (Member of the South African Homeless Peoples Federation [SAHPF], Phillipi, Cape Town, July 2002)

In India you learn a lot of things. Those people are very hard workers and they can look very well after their money. They are very trusting of each other ... They are very united. There is no crime there, not like here where you can't leave your house for half an hour to go around the corner. (Member SAHPF, Phillipi, Cape Town, July 2002)

The language of the Federation is saturated with [social capital] imagery: 'We build houses in order to build people'; 'we don't collect money, we collect people'. That is all over the show. (Joel Bolnick, director and founder of People's Dialogue, the NGO partner of SAHPF, Observatory, Cape Town, July 2002).

## *Introduction*

The cover of Zygmunt Bauman's *Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World* consists of a photograph of seven free-falling parachutists holding hands as they plummet towards earth with the last traces of a blood red sun setting on the horizon (2001). For Bauman, the parachutists represent the

hyper-transience of the experimental communities of late modernity – communities built on the freedom to choose to belong and the freedom to terminate membership on short notice. This freedom to ‘bale out’ at will represents community without long-term commitments. The phenomenon of the hyper-transient community of late modernity is a far cry from the ‘traditional community’ built upon primordialist myths of ‘natural belonging’, characterised by involuntary membership and long-term, if not life-long, commitments and solidarities. While the latter relies on narratives of cultural and historical continuity and coherence, the transient community has no such requirements – anyone is free to sign up as long as you pay your membership fees! Maintaining these transitory communities requires enormous effort to avoid dissolution, whereas ‘traditional communities’ appear to take on a naturalised sense of permanence. But do these traditional communities still exist, and if so, where can they be found?

The perennial social science and public policy problem of how to create social cohesion in times of rapid social change seems to have come full circle from Emile Durkheim to Robert Putnam to Zygmunt Bauman. Writing primarily about northern countries, that is, ‘the West’, Bauman argues that under contemporary conditions of late modernity, the citizen’s identification and loyalty towards the nation-state has waned and, at the same time, the state is less concerned with the cultural/ideological mobilisation of its subject population through evocations of nationhood and patriotic duty. Neo-liberal states have surrendered control over economic and cultural processes and handed these functions over to ‘the market’. As a result, ‘identity stories’ and membership of community is rapidly becoming a matter of ‘personal choice’ – choosing your identity, life style and group membership can become much like shopping at Woolworths, Pick ‘n Pay or Sainsbury’s. So what kinds of solidarities and forms of social cohesion and ‘social capital’ are possible in this marketplace of identities and instant communities? For some self-sufficient and resourceful individuals – for example, the middle classes – belonging without commitments may be less of a burden than longer-term communal ties that could intrude upon their ‘freedom to choose’. For less self-reliant and resourceful individuals, however, there is likely to be more of a need and desire for the shelter and security of belonging in a community built on solid foundations, even if the price tag is an involuntary, lifelong belonging – one that one cannot simply terminate on demand.

‘Trust’ and ‘social capital’ have become fashionable keywords in current academic and public policy discourses that seek to understand how social cohesion, democracy and ‘good governance’ are possible under conditions of late modernity. Robert Putnam’s *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* is the classic statement of the problem. According to Putnam’s influential thesis, the higher the level of civic activity and associational life, the more likely it is that government will be both democratic and efficient. Drawing on his study of the political differences between Northern and Southern Italy, Putnam concluded that active citizen participation in bowling and football clubs, baseball leagues, chorus groups and bird-watching societies created positive social capital, which is good for democracy (Koelble n.d.; Putnam 1993). Putnam’s work has generated an enormous World Bank-sponsored research industry addressing the role of trust and social capital in creating the conditions for ‘good governance’ and democracy (Hardin 1998; Seligman 1997). Trust, networks and norms are also seen as the crucial ingredients for the creation of social capital and the maintenance of co-operative economic relationships.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter focuses on two community-based organisations (CBOs) that consider the building of social capital and horizontal relations of trust and exchange to be at the heart of what they do. The discussion is part of a larger project that focuses on new post-apartheid conceptions of citizenship, ‘community’ and civic action promoted by Cape Town-based NGOs and CBOs involved in struggles over access to land, housing and AIDS treatment. The organisations discussed in this chapter are the People’s Dialogue (PD), a Cape Town-based NGO of middle-class professionals that ‘services’ the South African Homeless Peoples Federation (SAHPF), a community-based organisation connected to networks of slum-dweller organisations based in 14 countries, including cities such as Mumbai (Bombay), Calcutta, Nairobi, Bangkok, Karachi and Bogota. SAHPF is a mostly women’s organisation that is involved in a wide range of activities including savings clubs, housing and land issues, income-generation projects, community policing, AIDS intervention and so on.

The World Bank, NGOs, activists and anthropologists have become fascinated with these global networks, which are sometimes referred to as, Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs). The savings groups in Cape Town and Mumbai are part of the Slum Dwellers International (SDI), a global network of homeless people’s organisations that are connected through federation members vis-

iting each other's cities.<sup>2</sup> This form of 'horizontal exchange' assists poor people to exchange ideas through direct peer learning, a 'ritual' referred to in the SDI literature as 'the poor peoples' pedagogy'. These organisational networks, increasingly described in academic and donor discourse as 'grassroots globalisation', or 'globalisation from below', are recognised as playing a crucial role in the creation of an international civil society representing the needs of the poorer 80 per cent of the population of the world (now totalling six billion).

It is not entirely coincidental that this 'global civil society' is emerging at the same time as global capital is undermining the autonomy of nation states, and donors and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank structural adjustment policies are prescribing the contraction of the Development State. Poor people living under conditions of neo-liberal austerity and the 'downsizing' of the welfare state seem to have developed sophisticated survival strategies by simultaneously enlisting themselves as global citizens *and* citizens of cities, regions and nation-states. Through various ritualised practices – for instance daily savings, 'self-enumeration' and 'horizontal exchange' – women's savings collectives in Asia, Africa and Latin America are becoming increasingly successful in lobbying, pressuring and shaming the state into meeting its 'social contract' with the poor in terms of the provision of housing, healthcare, policing and so on. This chapter will critically evaluate whether these new associational forms and strategies are, in fact, viable alternatives for large numbers of poor citizens disillusioned with the limits of national liberation. To what degree are these developments signs of the emergence of a 'global civil society', and what are the implications of this global connectivity for democracy, community and citizenship? To what degree are these locally embedded but globally connected organisations and networks capable of creating new forms of social capital and new solidarities that span local, national and global spaces (see Kothari 1996; Leal & Opp 1998)?

### *Social capital: from northern Italy to southern Africa*

The concept of social capital features prominently in the SDI literature and in SAHPPF slogans such as 'we do daily savings not only to collect money but to collect the lives of people', 'we build houses in order to build people' and 'we don't collect money, we collect people'. Whereas the dominant academic usages of social capital (based on networks, norms and trust) derive from

rational choice theory and economic conceptions of *homo economicus*, it will become clear this is not the case with SAHPF's deployment of the term.

Social capital and trust, like the concept of civil society, are very vague and elusive terms. Nonetheless, considerable effort has gone into trying to stabilise and 'fix' these protean social science concepts. The most influential and definitive statement of social capital theory can be found in the work of Robert Putnam. Despite the enormous influence of Putnam's work, especially within mainstream US political science, social capital and trust theory can be criticised on a number of fronts. For instance, it simply assumes that trust is the outcome of mutual calculations of interest, thereby revealing the pervasive influence of rational choice and game theory. However, as numerous critics have pointed out, decisions about whether to trust are not based only on calculations of interest (Lyon 2000). There are also non-calculative, habituated practices and social relations that are not reducible to economic or other forms of self-interest. For instance, extra-economic incentives to create co-operative and trusting relationships can draw on information about reputations, sanctions and moral norms. In other words, conventional understandings of trust fail to acknowledge the domain of cultural expectations, social pressure and community conceptions of reciprocity and obligation.

One of the most significant areas of social capital theory concerns the role of trust in creating and consolidating institutions of civil society – the professions, industry, associations, unions, self-regulatory organisations, businesses, schools, churches, families and so on.

While trust and social capital are seen as self-evident virtue and 'good for democracy' in the writings of Putnam, there is no clear consensus on what this 'civic virtue' actually means and where it is located. As Thomas Koelble points out, 'social capital and horizontal associations can have their "dark side", for example, Timothy McVeigh (the Oklahoma City bomber) met his co-conspirators in a bowling club and many of Rwanda's genocidal killers were part of horizontal associations which, according to Putnam, are more likely to support democratic outcomes' (n. d.: 8). In addition, differentially situated citizens and members of diverse institutions within 'civil society' do not necessarily agree on what constitutes 'civility' and trust. Contestation is at the heart of political life, in all its dimensions, and there is no Archimedean vantage point from which to judge what constitutes civility, trust and virtuous citizenship. Civil

society organisations may be built upon the foundations of horizontal trust and civic engagement, but their actions may not be perceived as ‘civic virtue’ by government officials, for example, in the case of violent police action against anti-globalisation demonstrators from Genoa to Johannesburg. What constitutes ‘civic virtue’ or ‘positive social capital’ depends on which side of the barricades one stands! Similarly, assessing the benefits of decentralisation policies that are meant to promote local social capital formation depends on whether you are situated in ‘civil society’ or ‘the state’.

Dominant conceptions of ‘civil society’ and social capital also tend to be of a highly normative, universalising and prescriptive nature. This not only fails to acknowledge the embeddedness of local hierarchies and patronage networks but it also ignores the possible political consequences of attempting to dislodge these local structures of power. While local age and gender hierarchies may certainly go against the grain of ‘Western’ liberal democratic notions of ‘good governance’, there are difficulties involved in changing these ‘non-democratic’ and ‘non-liberal’ forms of internal organisation as is shown later in this chapter.

Despite these problems, the current interest in ‘social capital’ has led to a proliferation of studies, most of which rely on extremely vague definitions. Putnam’s normative interpretation of ‘real’ social capital as the associational ties built on horizontal norms of identity, trust and reciprocity continues to dominate contemporary academic, donor and World Bank discourses. Neither the solidarities of family, nor vertical and authoritarian patronage networks of trust and reciprocity are recognised as ‘proper social capital’ within this framework. Not surprisingly, donor and academic interest in ‘good governance’ and ‘deep democracy’ tends to valorise and romanticise horizontal association ties of trust within civil society. These celebrations of the benign ‘invisible hand’ of social capital need to be balanced by the recognition of undemocratic and hierarchical aspects of social capital formation. It also requires a sober assessment of the limited capacities of civil society to ‘scale up’ social capital under conditions of extreme poverty, unemployment, everyday violence and AIDS. Unless this is taken into account, the social capital paradigm could be deployed as an alibi for the downsizing post-development state to withdraw even further from meeting its obligations toward its citizens. This takes us to a discussion of the limits and possibilities of community-making in a global culture of neo-liberalism.

### *The quest for community in an age of globalisation*

While the term ‘community’ continues to conjure up warm and ‘good’ feelings of comfort, safety and security, it is becoming a notoriously elusive ‘paradise’, especially for the poor who are in most need of its comforts, protection and security. For the poor, the ghetto has become a space that represents ‘the impossibility of community’, a place of ‘social disintegration, atomisation and anomie’ (Wacquant cited in Bauman 2001: 122); as a document on the SDI website puts it: ‘poverty is a relentless isolator’.<sup>3</sup> According to Wacquant, ‘Whereas the ghetto in its classical form acted partly as a protective shield against the brutal racial exclusion, the hyperghetto has lost its positive role of collective buffer, making it a deadly machinery for naked social regulation’ and isolation (Wacquant cited in Bauman 2001: 122; see also Merry 2001). Meanwhile, the middle classes in the leafy suburbs retreat behind electrified fences, vicious dogs, private security companies and confine themselves to mass private spaces such as mega-shopping malls and entertainment centres. Mike Davis has written eloquently about ‘Fortress LA’ as the archetypal Northern American city – perhaps even the quintessential global city – characterised by middle-class, suburban enclaves and gated communities (1990); elsewhere I have written about post-apartheid Cape Town as ‘Fortress LA at the tip of Africa’ (Robins 2001). Ghettos and gated *communities* in these divided cities are, clearly, very different kinds of communities but both draw attention to the difficulties of forging solidarities across fortified enclaves and racialised camps.

Given this scenario, how can relations of co-operation and exchange be forged amongst poor people, as well as between the urban poor and those beyond the walls of the ghetto – ‘the state’, ‘civil society’ and the gated communities of the urban middle classes? Are the middle classes interested in looking beyond their high walls and electrified barricades? Are the suburbs not attractive to the wealthy precisely because they appear to allow for disengagement from the urban problems of poverty, crime and violence? Community also offers comfort, hope and security to those ‘inside’ while specifically excluding others and creating new forms of oppression. It is clearly a Janus-faced phenomenon riddled with contradictions and paradoxes. So what kinds of new community solidarities and social commitments are possible in post-apartheid South Africa and what could ‘the globalisation of civil society’ look like from the tip of Africa?

### *Globalising citizenship, localising community*

On 17 September 2002, about two hundred people from diverse race, class and ethnic backgrounds gathered at the Centre for the Book in Cape Town's city centre to hear the internationally known housing activist, Sheila Patel, talk about the work of an alliance of Mumbai-based slum dwellers' federations. The audience included a large group of black African women and youth from the SAHPF, as well as other NGOs and development activists, Members of Parliament, judges, academics and ordinary citizens. This was Patel's twentieth visit to Cape Town, as part of a decade long exchange programme between housing and NGO activists and slum/shack dwellers from India, Thailand, South Africa and 11 other developing countries. Patel spoke of her organisation's strategies for empowering the urban poor in India – of the 'horizontal exchanges', savings schemes, 'toilet festivals', self-enumeration and self-census exercises – and various other empowerment rituals deployed by these Indian women's federations. Patel concluded by noting that houses, savings, 'good governance' and accountability were not the objectives of these slum dwellers organisations. Instead, the aim was to create poor people's networks and 'scale up' social capital in order to fight the isolation and disempowerment produced by conditions of poverty. SAHPF members, many of whom had visited India, spoke of their own experiences in establishing savings groups and building their houses in Cape Town's African townships. This 'town hall' meeting in the heart of a still hyper-segregated, post-apartheid city certainly provided a glimpse of what a global civil society could look like.

With the steady support of its NGO partner, PD, SAHPF has grown into a 100 000-strong post-apartheid CBO – perhaps even a social movement in the making – that is both locally-embedded and globally connected. The SAHPF-PD website reveals that some members of the organisation have engaged seriously with issues relating to the building of 'social capital' and understanding, and interrogating, the relationship between local knowledge and 'expert' power. The website literature also draws attention to debates on various strategies for negotiating and lobbying with officialdom to access state resources and shift the balance of power between poor people and hierarchical, technocratic and bureaucratic states. What all this suggests is that 'globalisation' is not only a source of structural disempowerment for the millions of poor people in developing countries but it also offers opportunities for creative financial, technical, cultural and social transactions, and interactions

between professionals, activists, state officials, donors and hundreds of thousands of homeless people and shack dwellers from Cape Town to Calcutta and beyond. However, what kinds of communities and forms of social cohesion are emerging through these global exchanges?

These days, concepts such as 'global citizenship', 'global civil society', 'global governance' and 'grassroots globalisation' or 'globalisation from below' are common currency and in constant circulation in academic and policy discourses (Appadurai 2001; Falk 1998a; Heater 1999; Held 1995,1997). They have become keywords in a celebration of the emancipatory possibilities of globalisation in a context in which the nation-state is seen to be increasingly incapable of delivering resources in the form of enforceable rights, goods and services, political participation and so on. In addition, the influence of multinational and intergovernmental institutions over people's lives calls for an acknowledgement of the need for accountability and rights to be enforceable across national borders (Jones & Gaventa 2002: 20). Even the World Bank has got in on the act with international conferences on 'connecting the local to the global'. Global connectivity has also been linked to calls from Third World leaders such as President Thabo Mbeki to 'narrow the digital divide'. Notions such as 'digital citizenship' are also bandied about despite the extremely limited distribution of cyber technology within developing countries.

Globally connected social movements have mushroomed, addressing a diverse array of issues including AIDS, medical technologies, biotechnology, the environment, indigenous land rights, Third World debt, trade liberalisation, housing, as well as struggles over abortion and gay rights, and the cultural politics of racial, linguistic and ethnic pride. This rise in 'global citizen action' has been described in a vast and burgeoning academic literature as cross-border activism, global social movements, global civil society, global governance and 'global citizenship'. However, relatively little reflection has gone into assessing exactly who belongs to this global citizenry and what this form of belonging could mean for different social classes. Highly mobile middle classes seem to be particularly drawn to the idea of global citizenship and the cosmopolitan lifestyle possibilities offered via the ceaseless flow of commodities, ideas and images across national borders. By contrast, working class Turkish migrants in Berlin are likely to have a very different experience and understanding of transnational culture. Similarly, many of those unable to purchase the

cosmopolitan fruits of the consumer capitalism of late modernity have opted instead for more defensive and parochial responses, including the deployment of discourses on autochthony and xenophobia, territorial citizenship and defensive patriotism (Falk 1998b: 2; Geschiere & Nyamnjoh 2001). Clearly, 'globalisation' means different things to different folks. It also produces a multiplicity of outcomes for differentially situated citizens. For instance, it may weaken, or strengthen, territorial ties between citizens and the state; it can also produce a variety of responses ranging from the construction of 'post-national' cosmopolitan identities to exclusivist forms of ethno-nationalism and chauvinistic communitarianism. It can also produce the isolation and alienation characteristic of the hyper-ghetto and the gated community.

Citizenship is meant to erode local and communitarian hierarchies, statuses and privileges in favour of national jurisdictions and contractual relations based, in principle, on equality of rights and the individual right-bearing citizen. In other words, the liberal individualist conception of citizenship implies 'self-interested', 'autonomous' citizens, a construct 'critiqued by communitarians who argue that an individual's sense of identity is produced only through relations with others in the community of which she or he is a part' (Gaventa 2002: 4). In other words, the communitarian conception of citizenship is that of the socially-embedded citizen. The notion of the communitarian citizen becomes particularly important in the South African context where, in certain social spaces, the liberal individualist conception of the autonomous citizen is often misplaced and inappropriate.

Alongside these communitarian identities and solidarities, new, globally-connected, community-based organisations are emerging that appear to counter these parochial tendencies. For NGO activists, academics, donors and policymakers, this emergence of a burgeoning 'global civil society' is seen to offer the prospect of a renewal and deepening of the liberal democratic project. But what is all this talk of 'grassroots globalisation' and 'globalisation from below' really about? Do these new forms of grassroots participation really represent accountable and democratic practices, or do they not often simply reinforce local power asymmetries? While the rallying cry 'think globally, act locally' has been part of the activist's lexicon for at least two decades, the notion of 'thinking locally' about the impacts of global institutions and global forces, and 'acting globally' upon them, is perhaps a relatively new development. However, the questions arise: what does it actually mean to 'act

globally'? What new forms of citizenship and belonging are emerging as a result of these developments?

### *New communities after apartheid: local is not always lekker*

During the anti-apartheid struggle, there was a palpable sense of 'community solidarity' in the townships and in what was then the mass democratic movement.<sup>4</sup> A non-racial social imaginary of political struggle included working-class communities, trade unions, black and white middle-class professionals, university students and other sectors of South African society. The United Democratic Front (UDF) came to represent this multi-racial, multi-class political movement. During the 1980s, the term 'community' usually referred to black communities of resistance to apartheid; it was a keyword in political discourse (Boonzaaier & Sharp 1998). It was also appropriated by the state and business through community development projects and the creation of Community Councillors. Anti-apartheid activists and the liberal media represented black communities as being involved in heroic resistance to apartheid. Post-apartheid city managers, government officials, tourist entrepreneurs and big business currently represent some of these same communities as 'dysfunctional' and call for measures to re-establish governance in these 'unruly communities'. In other words, community is no longer perceived to be a space of unmitigated good. For example, youth activists, who were once lauded as courageous 'Young Lions', are now represented as the 'Lost Generation'. Similarly, working-class communities on the Cape Flats, once celebrated as spaces of resistance to apartheid, are increasingly characterised by officials as places of social pathologies such as crime, violence, illegal drug trade, gangsterism, high incidences of diseases such as TB and AIDS, teenage pregnancies and substance abuse. Gang and neighbourhood solidarities are regarded as 'negative social capital', and obstacles to establishing liberal democratic modes of governance and citizenship. In addition, township residents who cannot afford to pay for electricity and water services, and who embark upon rent boycotts, once the defining features of the anti-apartheid struggle, are nowadays hounded and evicted from their homes. Anti-evictions movements are growing as increasing numbers of urban poor people find themselves targeted for evictions. These urban activists, as well as those belonging to the Landless People's Movement, have been identified by the state as a threat to good governance. Their social capital is clearly not viewed in a positive light.

What kinds of communities and forms of social capital and citizenship are possible in Cape Town's working-class townships, given the chronic poverty and unemployment produced as a result of the shift from a traditional manufacturing to a service economy? Given these changed social and political realities, it is hardly surprising that it is becoming increasingly common practice to describe poor communities as 'dysfunctional', and to debunk heroic and romantic myths of 'community'. Similarly, direct community action is no longer always praised for being 'grassroots' and democratic. Anti-crime vigilante killings, macho, sexist and chauvinistic neighbourhood gangs and male solidarities, and the marginalisation of women through traditional land tenure, are nowadays seen as a threat to our constitutional democracy and the social fabric of our society. Local is clearly not always *lekker* and social capital is not always positive. However, is global civil society and liberal democracy the panacea? What kinds of 'local' ideas and communitarian practices do the globally connected organisations, discussed in this chapter, have to deal with, and what does this tell us about social capital and the new forms of citizenship after apartheid?

### *Social capital and social cohesion from Calcutta to Cape Town*

SAHPF was formed in 1991 and comprises over 100 000 mostly black African members, of whom more than 85 000 (85 per cent) are women. It is supported by PD, a Cape Town-based NGO, and is an affiliate of the SDI, a global network of poor people's organisations from 14 countries of the South. SDI affiliates range in size from a few hundred in Zambia to more than a 1.5 million in India. The network comprises federations of community organisations that are linked to NGOs and groupings of professionals who support SDI initiatives. Although SDI affiliates work primarily with women, it is the broad category of the urban poor that makes up the federations' membership. Federation activities include facilitating access to land, housing, infrastructure, finance, employment and income generation projects. The stated objective of the SDI federations is for members to assume 'ownership of problems and the identification of local solutions that are participatory and inclusive [and] by doing so they automatically create new nodal points of governance, in which organised communities of the urban poor assume their rightful place as development actors' (SDI 2002: 14).

The SAHPF slogan: ‘We do not collect money, we collect people’ captures the organisation’s concern with ‘social capital’. Drawing largely upon the Indian experience over the past two decades, the PD and SAHPF promote daily savings as a ‘ritual’ that produces high levels of participation and mutual interaction between federation members – these daily encounters are perceived to be the ‘social glue’ that binds communities. In addition, through investing limited funds, members have a material stake in their organisation and its decision-making. Not only do daily savings encourage regular interaction but they also create a space for the central participation of women in informal settlements that tend to be dominated by patriarchal local structures. It is also meant to shift the balance of power and expert knowledge from technocratic and hierarchical state structures to local, decentralised federations. Savings and loans also enable federations to develop capacity to manage and control finance, and to display this local competence to the outside world. Members learn housing design, construction and finance, brick making, toilet construction, crafts and a range of other competencies including bookkeeping, census enumeration and information gathering (for example, self-surveys), methods for identifying vacant land through physical mapping and visits to the deeds offices, and the development of negotiation skills in order to secure land from the state. These activities are consciously framed as public performances of local competence and innovation. This has a number of purposes including posing a challenge to existing class-based cultures and beliefs about where expertise lies. It is an expression of a politics of visibility and a public demonstration of ‘autogovernmentality’ or ‘governance from below’.<sup>5</sup> Horizontal exchange is perhaps one of the most important of these rituals because of its ability to foster direct learning experiences from peers as opposed to the usual expert-driven methods of formal training. As will become clear in the pages that follow, these visits also facilitate the creation of new transnational solidarities and networks, as well as being a catalyst for cross-cultural reflection and analysis by federation members. The discussion below focuses on the following:

- The ‘official ideology’ and discourses of the SDI.
- The various ways in which SDI ideology finds expression in the documents, strategies and practices of the PD.
- The gaps and disjunctures between the discourses of SDI and PD, and the everyday practices and political cultures of Cape Town’s federations.

- Cross-cultural reflections by federation members on the gap between SDI ideology and 'local' practices, as well as reflections on cultural, religious and political differences between South African and Indian federations, and socio-cultural environments.

### *Surfing the Slum Dwellers International homepage*

A scan of SDI publications, including its website, provides a clear indication of the 'official' ideological orientation of the SDI and its affiliates. The SDI literature reveals a deep scepticism of the state's capacity to eradicate poverty and comply with its social contract with its citizenry. It is equally sceptical of the ability of traditional trade unions, as well as left-wing political parties and rights-based social movements, to provide the kind of long-term capacity building that organisations of the poor require in order to strengthen themselves at the local level. The anonymous author of the document cited below calls for poor communities to engage in practices of 'active citizenship' rather than becoming passive recipients of state and party political patronage and largesse. Contrary to neo-liberal ideologues and free marketers, however, SDI ideology does not call for the dismantling or 'downsizing' of the development state but rather the empowerment of poor communities to enable them to pressure and lobby the state to meet their developmental needs.

[The SDI federations] see themselves as opponents of centralised state power, backed by these global agencies – the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank....

They all share a common vision: that the State on its own cannot solve problems of poverty and underdevelopment. While the State, especially in Southern countries, has a monopoly on power, its very relationship to this power, and to the local and global economy makes it a very weak instrument for the delivery of resources and services needed to eradicate poverty.... Since they question the capacity of these [State] agencies to deliver, they constantly seek situations that enable those who are affected by poverty to become organised and united in ever-expanding networks and to play a defining role in the way in which Governments and multilaterals discharge their obligations to the poor. This is in sharp contradiction to the rights-based social

movements or the micro-finance organisations, or even archaic social movements of the past, such as earlier rural and urban movements of the poor, including trade unions and left-wing political parties.... SDI is an attempt to *move away from sporadic impulses to sustained, long-term investments in local Federations of the Urban Poor*. SDI, as a network of these Federations, opens opportunities at the international level in order to strengthen its member organisations. (emphasis added) (SDI 2002: 1)

SDI publications represent the federation affiliates, and their members, as belonging to a transnational citizenry of the urban poor – hence their use of the all too familiar slogan: ‘think global, act local’ (SDI 2002: 14). This ‘cosmopolitan’ perspective seeks solidarities and alliances of the urban poor across national, ethnic and religious lines. It appears to promote a sense of ‘global citizenship’ rather than being confined to local, regional or national spaces and identities. SDI also represents the work of the federations as providing a clear alternative to mainstream development thinking and modern state development ideas and practices. Although SDI publications are critical of centralised, top-down, state-driven development interventions, they do not follow the adversarial logic of anti-globalisation social movements. Instead, these statements seem to imply that through the combination of pressure, persuasion and negotiation, the state can be convinced to comply with the ‘social contract’ of democracy, and develop more ‘poor-friendly’ policies and urban development strategies.

Although some of the language of SDI documents is reminiscent of radical underdevelopment theory and post-development thinking, SDI and its affiliates are not a militant social movement seeking to smash capitalism. Neither is it the voice of an embryonic political party waiting in the wings. Instead, SDI’s ideas and practices are concerned with enhancing the capacity of the urban poor in solving their own problems. This is to be done through various activities that promote experimentation and learning through face-to-face encounters rather than formal training methods (SDI 2000).

Various commentators on the nature of late modernity have referred to the isolation produced by conditions of poverty. SDI rituals and everyday practices aim specifically to overcome these obstacles to the realisation of community. The rituals of the savings schemes facilitate face-to-face encounters

between members on a daily basis. It is these interactions, along with the horizontal exchanges at the city, regional and international level, that are seen to create community networks and empower federations by building 'social capital' and strengthening the bargaining power in negotiations with officialdom, including the national, regional and local state.

These rituals are performed to inscribe and embody the SDI's ideology of 'building people not things'. Savings schemes are meant to contribute towards the creation of social capital rather than mere houses. SDI's approach to social capital and community building revolves around the fact that about 90 per cent of members are women. The gendered composition of the federations is perceived as an advantage given that women are generally the *de facto* managers of poor households, the household being the primary sphere of social reproduction.

### *People's Dialogue and post-apartheid visions*

PD and SAHPF define their objectives and ideological commitments in similar terms to other SDI affiliates. They are also concerned with participation of 'the urban poor', women particularly, in decision-making processes that impact upon their communities. However, not surprisingly, there are certain specifically South African, and highly localised, dimensions to SAHPF savings schemes and the leadership styles of South African federations. Before discussing these localised practices, it is worthwhile drawing attention to the ideological orientation of PD, the NGO supporting SAHPF.

The PD Manifesto, presented at the launch of the SAHPF on 21 March 1994, presents a 'radical' critique of the state and technocratic development. The highly polemical and poetic language of this document represents a critique of the inevitable rise of the post-apartheid technocratic state. Barely a month after the tumultuous celebrations of the ANC's landslide victory in the first democratic elections of April 1994, the PD message is one of profound scepticism and distrust of the intentions of the new political and bureaucratic elite. The anonymous author warns that:

Now that the Great Cause has been won, the average men and women in this land will witness the gross spectacle of politicians and other elites [using] the Cause to further their own personal

hunger for power.... The State will use an army of technocrats and planners, equipped with the Great Cause, to control the social life of its subjects.... Their primary concern will be the circulation of things, and of human beings trapped in a world of things: cars, trains, commodities, sewerage. Poor people have to try to tear these topological chains asunder.<sup>6</sup>

This anti-development language is suggestive of a radical alternative to 'development as usual'. Whereas these days PD works in close partnership with the ANC government, the PD's early manifestos represent a radical critique of state-led technocratic development reminiscent of recent post-development critiques (see Escobar 1995; Sachs 1992).

Although current PD discourse can be characterised as 'critical engagement' with government, PD nonetheless remains critical of state and private-sector driven, low-income housing delivery that fails to build poor people's capacity. Beneficiaries of state subsidy housing are provided with a physical structure but not the means to survive under conditions of extreme poverty. As PD respondents noted, in many cases, unemployed recipients of the R16 500 government housing subsidies end up selling their subsidy houses for extremely low prices and moving back into informal settlements because the houses are too small and they cannot afford to extend using formal building materials, and/or they cannot afford to pay rates and service fees. In other words, these product-driven housing delivery schemes tend to reproduce relations of dependency and passivity amongst development beneficiaries: houses become 'projects' and 'products' rather than opportunities for the long-term income-generation and community building.

In addition to being critical of the product-driven character of state and private sector low-income housing schemes, the approach of PD also questions the hierarchical and project-based nature of conventional NGO-CBO relations. This means that NGOs need to 'scale up' and consolidate their partnerships with CBOs, and that 'horizontal partnerships' need to be strong before vertical links can work effectively. According to PD's director, Joel Bolnick, NGO/CBO relationships tend to end once projects are completed and the 'development objective' or 'product' has been delivered. There are generally no real ties between the organisations beyond the lifecycle of 'the project'. Neither is there autonomy for the CBOs in terms of defining the needs and objectives of communities. Effective NGO/CBO partnerships therefore, ought to be built

upon foundations of prior grassroots mobilisation and community organisation. From the perspective of the PD professionals, the delivery of a service or a 'project' is not an end in itself. Instead, it ought to be a means towards changing values in society, and building 'social capital' and participatory, democratic and accountable systems of governance in poor communities. This philosophy has contributed towards a division of labour within the NGO whereby technical issues such as financial management, loans and state housing subsidies are taken care of by the Utshani Fund, referred to as PD's 'ministry of finance'. This allows PD to focus on more generic developmental issues such as direct, experiential learning through 'rituals' of horizontal exchange. Although the focus was originally on land and housing, there has been a growing recognition of the need to build 'social capital' by addressing a range of other issues including health, income generation, education and youth development.

The PD proposal to begin a process of collecting statistics on HIV/AIDS prevalence within the federations reveals the influence of SDI theorising on the knowledge-power nexus, especially the role of censuses, statistics and surveys in the reproduction of bureaucratic state power. Instead of resisting these forms of state power, the SDI affiliated federations have sought to appropriate and recast these bureaucratic practices and use them as leverage for accessing state resources, for instance, health care resources and AIDS treatment. Self-enumeration and information gathering are also seen as crucial for engaging the state on more equal terms and holding it accountable to its citizens. These practices reflect a sophisticated understanding of the political and bureaucratic machinations of the modern state. By appropriating these rituals of bureaucratic state power, the federations acquire leverage in their negotiations with the state to secure resources such as housing and health.

PD's current thinking on how to approach the AIDS pandemic provides an insight into why 'social capital' is such a key component of SDI affiliates' *modus operandi*. Rather than attempting to treat HIV/AIDS by bringing in medical specialists and experts, PD sees its task as that of mobilising federation communities so that they can persuade the state to comply with its contract with its citizens and provide treatment to federation members. This is to be done by collecting AIDS-related data from federation members. By drawing on state rituals of enumeration, and the power of statistics and the survey, the federation will have strategic AIDS information not at the

disposal of the state. The federation can then use this statistical data to pressure the government to come up with concrete programmes to treat its members. As Joel Bolnick puts it:

Forget all this vague vacuous stuff: 10% of the population is HIV positive because of the ante-natal tests they do. *We want to actually test every ... Federation member – and then every community member.* And when they come and have a test, we will ask them a certain set of questions, and gather information. If the Federation does it effectively, within a year we will have data around HIV/AIDS that no other institution has. And then we can go to the city [administration] and say, 'you are spending 10 million on AIDS and 300 million on building a highway. These are the realities on the ground'. And [the statistics] go to community leaders and they say [to city officials] 'you are not dealing with the situation. Look, this is the situation'.

In an anonymous PD document circulated to the South African federations, the author draws attention to the potentially emancipatory logics of practices of enumeration, censuses and surveys traditionally associated with the state. What emerges is a sophisticated re-reading of Foucaultian notions of governmentality (see Comaroff 2002: 114–115). The document entitled, 'Some notes on enumeration', questions certain Foucaultian critiques of governmentality that suggest that these state technologies inevitably buttress bureaucratic state power (Escobar 1995; Ferguson 1990), and are part of the surveillance apparatus of the modern state (Scott 1998). Whereas James Scott and Arturo Escobar portray these practices as bureaucratic forms of state domination and disciplinary power that render populations legible and susceptible to state processes of governmentality, PD 'rituals' of enumeration are precisely about rendering the federation members *more legible to the state* in order to lobby for state resources. In other words, unlike orthodox Foucaultian critiques that essentialise state-led development – which is portrayed as part of a monolithic and all-encompassing set of institutional practices – PD intellectuals, and their SDI partners, suggest that there is nothing inherent in such state practices that pre-determines the outcome of their application.

### *Mind the gap: global ideologies and local realities*

While PD and the SDI ideology stressed the importance of horizontal relations of trust and non-hierarchical, decentralised political structures and practices within and between federations, the SAHPF national leadership contributed towards the establishment of highly centralised decision-making structures. This was particularly evident in the Western Cape Province, where the leadership was unwilling to relinquish its control and authority over 'junior' federations. This resulted in the consolidation of local hierarchies, power cliques and patronage networks that allowed certain individuals to act as gatekeepers and powerbrokers. It also resulted in accusations of financial mismanagement and widespread grievances concerning the alleged undemocratic practices of the leadership. This culminated in general disillusionment with savings schemes and large-scale withdrawal of federation members from participation in these schemes. As PD's Cathy Glover put it: 'The federation has still been very successful in securing land in the city and initiating housing developments' but once people get these resources they often see no reason for continuing to belong to savings schemes and they tend to withdraw from federation activities.

The leadership style of the SAHPF, especially in Cape Town, contradicted the liberal democratic visions of SDI and PD. However, it proved to be extremely difficult to alter these hierarchical political styles and power dynamics. This was especially the case at showpiece federations that were regularly visited by dignitaries, donors and government officials. One strategy adopted by PD in order to decentralise and dismantle these concentrations of power has been to attempt to 'reinvent' and reorganise the organisational structure of the federations through a system of rotational leadership, and by resuscitating local savings schemes and devolving decision-making powers to these schemes. These initiatives, however, encountered fierce opposition from a powerful SAHPF leadership determined to hold onto power and to resist attempts to decentralise the decision-making structures. This contributed towards ongoing clashes between PD and the SAHPF.

There were numerous other divergences between the desires, agendas and objectives of the NGO and its CBO partner. For instance, PD, like SDI and its Indian affiliates, believes that long-term processes of creating and 'scaling up' of 'social capital' and community building is more important than product-

driven concerns such as housing construction. However, PD's commitment to building 'social capital' through savings was not always shared by SAHPF members who often 'disappear' once they receive the object of their desire – the house. Unlike their counterparts in India, many South African federation members did not seem to 'buy into' daily savings and other federation rituals.

Another key area of difference relates to the political culture of the federations. While these organisations are meant to be non-party political, a number of the leadership figures are seasoned ANC Women's League veterans who are deeply enmeshed in local, regional and national ANC networks. Further, whereas PD believes in 'critical engagement' with the government, many of the ANC-aligned SAHPF leadership were less inclined to criticise the ANC government and leadership. Instead, a number of SAHPF leaders were prepared to allow federation networks to be used as ANC political resources. In addition, unlike their Indian partners, South African federation members tended to view the ANC government as a powerful patronage machine that could be accessed through party political contacts and channels. This perception of a powerful state was reinforced by the reality of the R16 500 state housing subsidies. The state was not only perceived to be a powerful provider of material resources but also a repository of technical expertise and know-how. This SAHPF perception of the power of the technocratic state was very different from the anti-technocratic, anti-hierarchical, anti-project and anti-bureaucratic perspective of PD and SDI. Whereas PD and SDI produced eloquent anti-technocratic tracts that challenged the expert/client relationship, it seemed that rank-and-file federation members, as well as the leadership, were not always as committed to this anti-technocratic, post-development agenda.

PD practitioners and SAHPF members openly acknowledged the gap between SDI's 'global ideology' and the complex social realities that federation members experienced on a daily basis. They were also all too aware that the SDI development paradigm was not necessarily shared and embraced by federation members. This was particularly evident when federation members withdrew from regular participation in savings schemes upon the completion of the construction of their houses.

These competing understandings of 'development' permeated many aspects of PD's involvement with the SAHPF. The website and publications of PD and SDI promote the long-term building of horizontal relations of trust and social

capital. By contrast, the SAHPF leadership at the Victoria Mxenge settlement at Phillipi, Cape Town, seemed more concerned with housing delivery and the consolidation of vertical relations of patronage and dependency. This political practice challenged the SDI's vision of an anti-elite, anti-hierarchical, anti-technocratic and decentralised development model. PD members acknowledge that federation members, especially the leadership, seemed more interested in land acquisition and building houses than investing in less tangible outcomes such as 'trust', 'networks', 'social capital', and democratic and accountable governance systems. This situation of competing development visions and agendas is graphically illustrated in the case of the Victoria Mxenge Scheme.

### *The Victoria Mxenge Scheme*

As a result of the considerable successes of the federation savings and housing schemes developed at the Victoria Mxenge Scheme (VMx) in Phillipi, Cape Town, a leadership cluster established itself as the 'nerve centre' of all SAHPF activities in the Western Cape Province. This leadership then began to control and dominate the 450 other savings federations in the Western Cape. These centralising processes intensified with VMx's successes in attracting international media attention, donors and visiting dignitaries, including former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, and other high-level South African government and EU delegations.

Victoria Mxenge Federation tended to focus on housing delivery rather than recreational spaces, crèches and other built environments that could contribute towards building community networks and the social fabric. In addition, despite PD's attempts to 'restructure' and 'reinvent' organisational structures to counteract and subvert the centralisation and consolidation of local power around certain VMx leaders, these centralising tendencies and processes persisted. These attempts to decentralise and disperse these localised nodes of power were contested by the strong federation leadership. In addition, whereas the 'official' SDI line is non-party political, the federation leadership, many of whom are ANC Women's League stalwarts, worked closely with ANC party structures.

The federation leadership proved to be as hierarchical, centralised and intolerant of competition as the neo-traditional male leadership structures that

emerged in many urban and rural informal settlements throughout South Africa. For instance, a PD co-ordinator made the comparison between the current federation leadership and the highly centralised (male-dominated) neo-traditional leadership structures that emerged in Western Cape Province informal settlements such as Crossroads during the 1980s. Dissatisfaction with this centralised federation leadership contributed towards a massive decline in participation in the federations in the Western Cape, culminating in the collapse of many savings schemes. PD's strategy for addressing this leadership crisis has been to revive savings schemes that had collapsed as a result of disillusionment with centralising leadership styles and grievances about alleged financial mismanagement. This resuscitation of the savings collectives also sought to decentralise decision-making power and control over financial resources to local-level structures.

Divergences between SDI/PD ideology and the everyday practices of federation members seem to lie in the very different historical experiences of the South Africans and their Indian counterparts. Whereas the Indian organisations, for instance, the National Slum Dwellers Federation (NSDF), have been around since the mid-1970s, PD and the SAHPF were only established in the early 1990s. In addition, while the Indians have had five decades to come to terms with the limits of liberation and state-driven development, the South African federations are relative newcomers to democracy and have far more faith in the capacity of the modern state to promote development and eradicate poverty. This faith is not entirely misplaced as the South African state does indeed have the capacity to hand out large development resources, for example, housing subsidies. As a result, South Africans tend to buy into the politics of state patronage and visions of development rather than setting their own agendas. This dependency has meant that South African federations are generally less self-sufficient and less committed to long-term investment in building social and financial capital through everyday savings rituals than their Indian counterparts. The following section discusses the ways in which 'horizontal exchange' has become a powerful methodology for reflecting upon these differences and creating spaces for cross-cultural reflection by both PD professionals and ordinary federation members.

### *'Horizontal exchange' as cross-cultural exchange*

While it has been difficult to sustain SDI rituals such as daily savings, there has been more than a decade of exchanges between South African and Indian federation members. These exchanges were perceived to create opportunities for the sharing of experiences of federations through direct learning encounters. It also provided opportunities for cross-cultural reflection.

Publications by the Asian Coalition for Housing Rights (January 2000) and various affiliates of the SDI, as well as interviews with SAHPF members who have visited India over the past decade, draw attention to the disbelief many black South Africans experience upon encountering – fifty years after independence – extreme levels of poverty and homelessness in cities such as Mumbai and Calcutta.<sup>7</sup> These sobering encounters with the limits of the post-colonial Indian state, during visits in the early 1990s, served as a catalyst for the formation of self-help saving schemes in South Africa. As VM put it:

If you look at India, they are still struggling, even 50 years after independence.... That is why we started our work in 1992.... That is why it was necessary to prepare ourselves before to make changes come about.... If the people are not helping themselves, there is only so much the government can do.

Another SAHPF member made similar observations and personal reflections concerning 'the culture of poverty' she encountered during her visit to India:

You learnt to be humble and to appreciate what you have got, what we have got here in Cape Town. We are a little better off in the sense that the houses are bigger, and our squatters are better because people in India are just staying on the street and things like that. So we are a little bit advanced.... But we can learn about daily savings from the Indians. You can be surprised by the amazing trust that people have amongst one another in India. It is street people going around collecting from street people.... For a street person just to give money to a collector and to have no guarantee that that person will come back tomorrow. That kind of trust is amazing.... We got a lot of ideas from India – toilet festivals and enumeration – counting huts and families, walk on every path and observe all the structures in the settlement – draw

a map with houses, roads, places of worship, toilets etc. – survey produced – gather detailed information about the community.

Other comments from SAHPF interviewees referred to visits to savings collectives in Kenya where ‘we found that the people couldn’t hold [federation] meetings without first telling the tribal leader, even though the government and the country was now independent’. The idea that federation members had to defer to traditional leaders in order to hold meetings was strange and ‘backward’ from the perspective of many of these highly assertive urban African women. One of the most common reflections referred to the extraordinary levels of trust that existed amongst the urban poor they met in India. These observations were also made in relation to the high levels of distrust and crime experienced by the urban poor in South Africa.

TM, an ex-MK soldier working with the PD and the federation reflected on the many cultural and religious differences between Indians and black South Africans. Like many of the other SAHPF exchanges, these visits were a catalyst for critical self-reflection, and comparative social and cultural analysis. For instance, like many other South African exchange visitors to India, TM observed that India was much poorer than South Africa yet poor people in India seemed more determined to improve their situations and seldom resorted to crime. Whereas South Africans still expected formal employment and state patronage, the Indian poor expected neither wage income nor housing subsidies nor other forms of state assistance. According to TM, this meant that Indians were generally far more self-reliant and less dependent on state patronage. Neither were they captive to the myths of modernity and development. TM also attributed the high levels of mutual assistance, trust and self-motivation that he observed in India to the deep commitment of Indians to their Muslim and Hindu religious beliefs and practices. By contrast, he felt that black African Christianity was a relatively superficial affair, with Africans attending church because it was ‘a social gathering and a way of relieving you from your day-to-day stress’. According to TM, the serious religious commitments to Islam and Hinduism informed the everyday cultural beliefs and social practices of Indians. Such religious, cultural and social commitment, solidarity and trust did not, TM claimed, express itself amongst South Africans.

These cultural and religious differences have influenced the ways in which the global ideology of SDI gets re-interpreted and reconfigured ‘from below’ by

local federations. It also explains the disjunctures between the ideological positions of PD and SDI on citizenship and participation, and locally produced social and cultural practices and leadership styles. Yet, this cultural, religious and political diversity across federations can also be strategically deployed to draw attention to alternative organisational strategies. In an interview in July 2002, Bolnick notes that it is important to draw on cross-cultural comparison in order, for instance, to be ‘more effective in an environment where you have a hostile state’:

A million people in Jakarta [Indonesia] are facing evictions right now. There have already been about 20-30 000 evictions and the logical response from the communities is to resist and fight [rather than] collaborate with the enemy.... There is a lot of value in the international network [because we can say]: ‘Don’t send the Indians to interact with the Indonesians, because the Indians have no real experience in their living memory of dealing with that level of confrontation with the state. Send the South Africans, because the South Africans have that living memory, but they also have a history of pragmatic approaches.’ And that is how you see the value of these [international networks] and relationships. It is similar to an exchange programme where you send a group with a health issue to deal with another group with a health issue, or you link a group with a land issue with a group that has a land issue. The groups in Kenya need to develop stronger systems of savings and systems management.... Send the Indians or the Thais. If they have got to start negotiating with these corrupt bureaucrats who have been involved with evictions for the last 20 years, don’t send the Indians, because the Indians will say ‘It doesn’t matter, it is fine, you must negotiate’. Send the South Africans who will say: ‘Yes, we... have also had to deal with [evictions]. How do we handle that?’

***Conclusion: ‘globalisation from below’: transnational hype or deep democracy?***

This chapter has attempted to show how a Cape Town-based NGO and CBO have attempted to reposition and reinvent themselves within a post-apartheid,

post-Cold War scenario characterised by the developmental constraints imposed by the 'lean and mean' neo-liberal state. In this changed political landscape, class-based mobilisation is no longer the only game in town. Instead, issue-based organisations and new social movements addressing AIDS, biotechnology, the environment, indigenous, feminist and gay rights, child labour, housing and landlessness have emerged alongside traditional trade unions and anti-globalisation movements.

An interesting innovation of some of these new issue-based organisations has been their deployment of the media and cyber-technology to forge global connections with similar organisations elsewhere in the world. Global networking has become a key feature of what some refer to as the new global civil society. Arjun Appadurai's work on Mumbai-based urban activist movements draws attention to the emancipatory possibilities that globalisation presents in terms of 'deepening democracy' and facilitating 'cross-border activism' through transnational advocacy networks or TANs. According to Appadurai, these transnational advocacy networks provide '*new horizontal modes for articulating the deep democratic politics of the locality*' (Appadurai 2002: 25; emphasis added).

This chapter has attempted to understand the processes involved in building the horizontal relations of trust and social capital that underpin these innovative social forms. It has investigated what global civil society actually means in terms of the everyday practices and strategic priorities of globally connected organisations of the poor such as PD and SAHPF. It would seem that, despite numerous difficulties, the forms of social capital developed through SDI rituals of daily savings and 'horizontal exchange' can contribute towards the emergence of communities with longer shelf lives than the hyper-transient 'communities without commitments' referred to by Bauman (2000). The SAHPF example suggests, however, that despite SDI's commitments to the building of social capital, ordinary federation members in Cape Town do not necessarily share this long-term vision. For some federation members, the attainment of 'the product' (land or the house) results in a decision to 'bale out' of 'community'.

This chapter began with a discussion of the photograph on the cover of Bauman's book of seven free-falling parachutists holding hands as they plummet

towards earth. The discussion has shown that this striking image represents not only the transience of the experimental communities of late capitalism in ‘the West’ but also reflects the realities of the fragile and transitory communities found in many parts of the developing world. Despite the creative and sustained efforts by SDI federations – from Cape Town to Calcutta – to build social capital and communities with long-term commitments, the urban poor are often unable, for a variety of reasons, to make these binding commitments. Dissatisfaction with centralised and undemocratic leadership practices was a widely cited reason for decisions to exit federation savings schemes in Cape Town but this was not the case in many other parts of South Africa. Like the parachutists holding hands in a state of temporary *communitas*, many Cape Town-based federation members decided to ‘bale out’ of savings communities once they had built their houses on solid ground. Clearly social capital, like global capital under conditions of late capitalism, can be fluid and fickle; here today and gone tomorrow. However, the successes and longevity of many federations in other parts of Cape Town and South Africa, as well as the developing world, suggests that these innovative organisations can, indeed, meet many of the needs of poor people living under the harsh conditions of neo-liberalism and the global retreat of the development state.

### Notes

- 1 Trust is seen as a crucial ingredient in societies where economic transactions and institutional practices are so complex that law cannot cover all contingencies, or where there is no formal system of contracts anyway. This situation requires the creation of trust relations both in terms of generalised norms of morality and more personalised sources embedded in social networks (see Lyon 2000: 664). Considerable empirical work on social capital in Africa has focused on the role of social networks, norms and trust in facilitating co-operation and co-ordination amongst traders and producers (see Widnery & Mundt 1998).
- 2 Arjun Appadurai’s study of Mumbai-based urban housing organisations affiliated to the Slum Dwellers International (SDI) shows how, through participation in this urban activist movement, ‘the global and the local can become reciprocal instruments of the deepening of democracy’ (Appadurai 2002: 25).
- 3 See: <[http:// www.sdinet.org/face%20to%20face.htm](http://www.sdinet.org/face%20to%20face.htm)>
- 4 When intra-community conflicts erupted in places such as Crossroads, Cape Town, KwaZulu-Natal and the Vaal Triangle, it was usually instigated by a state security establishment determined to use conservative elders to purge the townships of militant youth activists, *amaqabane* or ‘comrades’.

- 5 Appadurai provides a fascinating account of SAHPF's SDI partners in Mumbai in which he analyses their rituals of 'toilet festivals' and 'the politics of shit'. He shows how a carnivalesque spirit of transgression and bawdiness prevails during toilet inspections in the presence of middle-class government and World Bank officials. This is interpreted by Appadurai as an attempt to redefine the private act of humiliation and suffering – shitting in the open – into a scene of technical innovation and self-dignification. It is seen as a remarkably innovative 'politics of recognition from below'.
- 6 See *Wat ons Wil Hê – A Message From People's Dialogue: May 1994, In The Early Hours of the New South Africa* <<http://www.dialogue.org.za/pd/index.htm>> This anti-elite, anti-nationalist and anti-technocratic polemic is worth quoting at some length in order to convey the degree to which early PD ideology challenged the new state's vision of nation building and development. The following excerpt represents a stridently militant and 'post-modern' voice railing against the grey and soulless surveillance city created by technocratic state planners – a foul modernist nightmare that would make Foucault's hair stand on end:

At last: oppression is no longer centralized because oppression is everywhere. One just has to look at the most recent examples of town-planning to see it. The reference point the planners propose is no longer the apartheid-structured city. Hooray! However, from the perspective of all communities, especially the poor, homeless communities, the reference point proposed by these revisionist town planners (soon to be endorsed by revisionist politicians) is always somewhere else, meaning always outside the daily lives of the inhabitants of these communities. What we see is a grid of roads linking vast expanses of toilets to gutless city centers, plate-glass shopping malls and dark streets surrounding industrial plants and factories. In the minds of some this may be satisfactory compensation for 350 years of slavery ... Here is the crux of development practice in the new South Africa. Who will be at the center? The people or the state?... *The State will use an army of technocrats and planners, equipped with the Great Cause, to control the social life of its subjects.* And the vision of the post apartheid city is its masterstroke. The town planners are its shock troops. In a rapidly urbanizing society the development of the urban environment is one of the most profound political acts of all. Have we moved away from apartheid? Beware if the town planners, the architects, the bureaucrats try to point the way, *for their primary concern will be the circulation of things, and of human beings trapped in a world of things: cars, trains, commodities, sewerage. Poor people have to try to tear these topological chains asunder...* He who thinks and plans for you, judges you, reduces you to his own norms, and whatever his intentions may be, he ends up making you stupid.... The formation of the SA Homeless People's Federation will go some way towards ensuring that the democratic right of

poor people to plan and manage their own developments is enforced in practice throughout the land. People's Dialogue commits itself to giving continued support to the initiatives of the Federation. (emphasis added)

- 7 Quotations in this section are drawn from the author's interviews. While identifying PD spokespersons, I have maintained the anonymity of SAHPF members.

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## *Part V: Resources*

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# 12 *Human solidarity in postcolonial, Holocaust and African-American literature*

Giles Gunn

Jose Marti, the famous Cuban revolutionary, set the terms for the discussion I would like to undertake when he wrote that, 'anything that divides men from each other, that separates them, singles them out or hems them in, is a sin against humanity'.<sup>1</sup> If we can overlook the unconscious sexism of Marti's claim, these brave words articulate an ideal that is now, alas, almost everywhere under siege. Viewed with suspicion in some quarters, with outright disbelief or contempt in others, the talk of the day is instead about the 'clash of civilisations', the depredations of 'evil empires', genocide in the Balkans or central Africa, terror in Sri Lanka, East Timor and Israel – in short, humanity's inhumanity to its own, and there is much in the century just past to back it up.

Eric Hobsbawm, the noted British historian, refers to the twentieth century in his most recent book, *Age of Extremes*, as the most vicious, barbaric century in the history of human records: 42 million people killed during World War I; 60 million during World War II, not including casualties in China, which may have gone as high as 15 million, in Japan in excess of two million, and perhaps millions of others in Burma, and East and Southeast Asia, where accurate records do not exist; upwards of 100 million victims from socialist experiments, and uncounted millions of others who were casualties of the democratic experiments often intended to resist them (1994). In the face of such appalling figures, the challenge is not merely to reduce the enmity that continues to pit Serbs against Albanians, Palestinians against Israelis, Tutsis against Hutus, Azerbaijanis against Armenians, Iraqis against Kurds, Hindus against Muslims, but to imagine how their relationship might be refashioned in ways that are less mutually destructive.

To think our way towards such a possibility, I want to undertake a kind of intellectual experiment which will require resituating the problem of identity, both

collective and individual, public as well as personal, against the background of those intercultural and cross-cultural forces and processes that have threatened to destabilise identity both in the present and in the past. This means placing the problem of identity-formation in the context of those symbolic as well as material practices that turn the opposition, or at least disparity, between various cultural mindsets, traditions or peoples into an instrument for idealising, if not reifying, one of them at the expense of deprecating the other, of differentiating the individual or collective self from those defined as 'others'. Reconfiguring the problem of global violence, in this way, will allow us to move from a contemplation of the global scope of the atrocities of the century just past, through a philosophical consideration of some of the psychological and ethical sources of global violence itself, to an examination of several narratives, stories and tales which, in their very extremity, may provide models for interrupting and even reversing these cycles of unending violence. In this last stage of our reflections, we will be looking at various kinds of cultural forms, many but not all of them literary, where the temptation to spurn or satanise human difference is resisted for the sake of turning it to ethical account.

This possibility of rendering human difference ethically available nonetheless has to contend with the fact that many of the languages through which we have long expressed our sense of shared humanity, not only with ourselves but also with others, have for various reasons, at least in the West, either become outworn during the last century or been discredited. Our whole notion of the human is linked to a sense of solidarity that has enjoyed a very long career in the history of human thought and, for the last century or two, has been one of the Western world's, if not the rest of the world's, most significant, as we might call it, 'god-terms'. Premised as it was (and, for many, still is) on the concept of a unitary humanity, the notion of human solidarity has historically offered a way of symbolising the nature of the human bond, not only within cultures but potentially across them, during a period when formulations of a more traditional kind, religious or otherwise – *imago dei*, original sin, divine spark, the sacredness of the human spirit, inalienable human rights – could no longer be employed as easily, or as widely, as they once were to define our commonality as creatures. Appeal to human solidarity has been at least one way, if not the only way, that we have expressed, enacted and critiqued our shared attributes as a species not only in the master paradigms of some of those prominent nineteenth-century social thinkers who became, in the

twentieth, our secular theologians – Alexis de Tocqueville, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Ferdinand Tönnies, Frederick Douglass and Emile Durkheim – but also in the master narratives of many of those nineteenth-century writers – Jane Austen, Honoré de Balzac, Leo Tolstoy, George Eliot, Herman Melville, Henrik Ibsen – who took upon themselves the task of supplying us with a new set of what Northrop Frye was right to call our ‘secular scriptures.’<sup>2</sup>

However, now this notion of human solidarity is viewed with considerable suspicion, if not outright disbelief and contempt. Initially problematised by social and political historians who have linked it so closely to the history of Western imperialism and the practices of European and, latterly, Asian colonialism, the notion of human solidarity has more recently been subjected to renewed attack by the very science imperialism begat, known as anthropology. Now, at least in some quarters, anthropology calls into question the very existence of anything like a common human nature that operates throughout time and across the world’s myriad cultures, and to whose collective ethical centre one can appeal. Instead, we seem to be confronted with the spectacle of a species that is given relentlessly to defining itself paradoxically, as the American political theorist, William E Connolly, has put it, in relation to a set of differences that it is constantly tempted to view not simply as ‘other’ but also all too often as inimical, hostile, offensive, iniquitous. Hence, the risk that human identity, in the contemporary world, will only be further dogmatised, and difference further stigmatised, unless we can develop ways of thinking about ourselves, as well as others, that nourish a consideration of difference.

Whether Connolly’s prognosis is accurate or not, it reminds us of a famous question first asked by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz in the early 1980s: in a world where people not only seem to prefer their own values to the values of others but also appear to be able to maintain their own values, so often only at the expense of denigrating the values of others, is it actually possible to imagine that the forms of life that we traditionally encompass within the structure of ‘self’ and ‘other’ can continue to have a mutually constructive impact on one another? (1983: 161)

To think our way through this dilemma, I believe that we may need to resituate the question of identity, and thus the possibility of a normative conception of the human, as it were, beyond solidarity. That is, we may need to look to individuals, communities, cultures, who or which have created their own

sense of the human, not out of their feelings of sameness with others, nor out of their belief that their differences with others might be overcome, but rather out of their conviction that what binds them to others – and thus what makes others crucial to their own understanding of themselves – is, indeed, what is different about others. Senses of selfhood, we have been told by cognitive psychologists from William James to the present, only develop in relation to other selves or, more exactly, in relation to what the pragmatist philosopher, George Herbert Mead, referred to as the symbolic materials and stratagems by which different selves represent themselves to each other. Does the same not hold true for cultures? Don't cultures also constitute themselves, as the Africanist, Christopher Miller, has insisted, 'by reference to each other' (cited in Guillory 1993: 53)? Yet if this is true, then how do we explain the resistance that cultures, like individuals, show towards the possibility of learning from each other, of using one another to revise their own self-understanding? Why is it so difficult for cultures, like individuals – though of course in different ways – to conceive of one another as potentially heuristic rather than as proleptically heinous?

The answer, I believe, lies in what the self, or the community or the culture fears it will lose of its own identity in this transaction with the 'other' – of how its sense of self will be diminished, compromised, corrupted, eviscerated or extinguished if it is forced to adopt the position of the other with respect to the self – and this threat of loss can only be mitigated by cultivating what the American cultural psychologist, Peter Homans, has called 'the ability to mourn' (1989). This ability presupposes that the experience of loss, as I am calling it, need not be restricted to the loss of other selves but can also pertain to the loss of any loved object, from a cherished possession to a valued ideal, indeed to the loss of anything that plays a symbolic role in the formation and maintenance of the self. To protect itself against such experience, or even the threat of it, the self is typically compelled to define itself in relation to a past, or image thereof, that presumably remains impervious to such loss through the imaginative reification of some hierarchical structure of sameness and difference, of 'us' and 'them'. Mourning, then, is simply the process by which the self can – and must – shed itself of such ultimately narcissistic attachments in order to become free, instead, to re-create its own personal sense of unity out of the interpretive activities that must be brought into play if some other form of psycho-cultural organisation is to take its place.

In this loosely psychoanalytic model, psychological health and maturity have nothing to do with giving up the cultural past altogether. They merely assume, as Judith Butler has stated, that working through the experience of such loss can produce potentially acceptable substitutes for whatever has now changed or disappeared (1997: 167–198). The object is not to abandon tradition altogether but rather to abandon those attempts to compensate for the continual disintegration of the past's previous forms of unity and coherence – be they ethnic, social, racial, religious, sexual or national – by absolutising some view of the past, of tradition, in relation to a self-reinforcing dialectic of sameness and difference.

In this sense, then, the relation between mourning and the formation of identity may also be construed (differently) as a crisis of representation and its resolution. This crisis is precipitated, one might say, by the initial movement of mourning itself which, in addition to the grief of a self that has suffered the loss of some object determinative of its own sense of presence and empowerment, records the consequent negation of that self's ability to compensate for such loss except through the creation and then valorisation of a representation of its own experience of that loss. This crisis can then be resolved only if the self can relinquish its fixation on a symbolic representation that memorialises the experience of its own loss and reconstruct a representation that memorialises, instead, the object that occasioned its experience of that loss in a form that may eventually be contemplated and enjoyed rather than simply lamented and endured. 'Working through' the experience of loss, hopefully, enables the self eventually to reconstruct a different representation of the deceased that is based not on the self's experience of its own anguish, but on what Jacques Lacan calls 'the unique value/valor of the dead's being' (cited in Breitwieser 1990: 325). Thus for the work of mourning to succeed at either the personal or the cultural level, the dead, so to speak, must be allowed, as Mitchell Breitwieser aptly observes, to die 'honourably', to be converted into something symbolised rather than simply missed (1990: 41).

Permitting the dead to die honourably would be less turbulent for groups and communities, if not also for selves, were it not for the second insight that, in this case, cultural psychology sheds on such matters. Turning the dead into something symbolised rather than something merely missed would be far easier if it were not for what Renato Rosaldo has called the 'rage in grief', the rage that leads Ilongot men in the Philippines to want to cut off human heads and

forces, or at least encourages, other mourners to take up such practices as paramilitarism, espionage, patriotism and, yes, terrorism (1989: 7). The link between loss and rage, as Freud also discerned, has to do with the inability to represent loss as anything other than an impoverishment of the ego, which inevitably turns the ego into an avenging angel. Left to themselves, such feelings threaten not only to set groups against one another but to dismember them, and the only way these feelings can be curbed, or at any rate managed, is through the intervention of symbolic forms and actions that can draw off some of the anger in grief while, at the same time, providing a structure for redescribing grief.

On the other hand, the rage that grief cannot hide and which makes up its very substance also illumines the ferocity of those ritual practices that move so quickly from the denigration of difference to the sacrifice of the different. In such practices, we not only see how quickly the appeal to blood loyalty turns into the need for blood sacrifice, but also how the need for blood sacrifice, as Michael Ignatieff has argued, is so often based on a psychology that appeals to people's better instincts rather than their worst (1995: 10ff). The sanctions for violence, as he points out, derive primarily not from what people hate or detest but from what they cherish. This helps to explain why ethnic and religious nationalists are so often, and without contradiction, sentimentalists and also why groups that have lived together on terms of the greatest intimacy and understanding for centuries become the targets of each other's most murderous rage in rites of ethnic cleansing. The more dire the imagined threat to the community's social well-being, the more important must be the victim sacrificed to preserve it. Which is why former neighbours, fast friends and even family members offer themselves as the perfect vehicles of sacrificial mediation: the community of significant selves can only be saved by exterminating those 'others' who were once so valuable to it.

Yet none of these rites of sacrifice is quite as virulent as that ancient religious practice known as scapegoating where, as the American cultural critic, Kenneth Burke, has reminded us, people cleanse themselves ritualistically by projecting onto others the burdens of their own undesired phobias, pollution and iniquity. What the scapegoat does for the community is to provide it with a sort of 'vicarious atonement', and once this process of deprecatory displacement has been initiated, the scapegoat's therapeutic properties tend to increase in direct proportion to the violence by which it is attacked (Burke 1969: 406). In this

ritualistic scenario, victimage and the violence that accompanies it are not merely instrumental to personal and social health but also absolutely indispensable to it. Self-formation and cultural renewal are inextricably linked to a sacrificial procedure that enables those who feel threatened, inadequate or guilty to find expiation and deliverance by projecting their own senses of vulnerability, deficiency or corruption onto some 'other' or 'others' who can then be vilified, shunned, humiliated, tortured or exterminated.

Unless we agree with certain global theorists, like Giovanni Arrighi and Arjun Appadurai, who argue that the most recent upsurge in international violence is mainly a result of the operations of the world economic market, which forces societies to protect themselves in response to the disruption and dismantling of more established ways of living, we may well have to ask if these recurrent spasms of ritual violence can ever be prevented from spiralling out of control. Ignatieff's answer is that the only hope resides in the reconstruction of what we mean by the human around those very differentiations of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality and so forth that mark the ways in which we are, in fact, human. 'To attack any one of these differences,' Ignatieff insists – 'to round up women because they are women, Jews because they are Jews, whites because they are whites, blacks because they are blacks, gays because they are gays – is to attack the shared element that makes us what we are as a species.' These differences are what comprise our shared inheritance as human beings and if 'crimes against humanity', as we call them, are to be prevented, we must be prepared to defend difference 'whenever any of us is attacked for manifesting it'.<sup>3</sup>

This proposal would be more convincing if it didn't recommend as a remedy for the disease it correctly diagnoses what, in truth, seems to be one of its causes. To ask people to acknowledge the differences of others in order to protect their own rights to be different is unlikely to prove altogether compelling, as long as those same people have reason to believe that what differentiates them from others is most deeply threatened precisely by what is different about them. On the contrary, people will always resort to the disparagement and denigration of whatever is at variance with, or contrary to, their own sense of distinctiveness, of uniqueness, of exceptionality, unless they can be persuaded that the differences of others are not only analogous to the difference in themselves but are also constitutive and enabling of that very difference itself.

I, therefore, propose that we take a different tack recommended by Kenneth Burke. Instead of reconstructing our notion of the human around our sense of solidarity with the different, Burke proposed, more radically, that we reconstruct it in terms of 'our sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy' (cited in Hyman 1955: 380). By 'enemy', Burke did not necessarily mean only 'adversary', 'antagonist' or 'assailant' but, in fact, anyone in opposition to whom – or constructed in opposition to whom – we find it necessary to define ourselves. This moral proposition depends less on reversing the subject positions of 'self' and 'other', however much that manoeuvre might have to recommend it, than on using each as a kind of prismatic mirror to refract back to its opposite undetected aspects of itself. Affording, if you will, a kind of 'perspective by incongruity', this recommendation is not an invitation to see elements of the 'other' within the 'self' or elements of the 'self' within the 'other'. Nor is it even – and this is much more difficult – to see elements of the 'self' as 'other' or elements of the 'other' as potentialities of the 'self'. It is, rather, to see how, even in their opposition and, possibly, antagonism, 'self' and 'other' still remain constructs that are at once implicated in one another's fabrication and necessary to each other's moral constitution. Hence, the kinship between 'self' and 'other' is predicated less on any intrinsic qualities they may possibly share than on the double pragmatic truth that just as neither can understand itself except from a position outside of and different from itself, so the potentiality for communication between them, as George Herbert Mead stated, is utterly dependent on the ability of the self to see itself, if only as their despised antagonist or nemesis, in the narratives, tales, jokes, fables, interpretations and representations of other cultures.

As it happens, such negotiations are not all that unfamiliar to us. The best known example afforded in Western literature may be found, perhaps, in Shakespeare's *The Tempest* where Prospero, the magician, says of Caliban, his slave, 'this thing of darkness I acknowledge mine'. However, this admission in no sense carries with it an assertion that Caliban now belongs to the human family. It merely registers Prospero's unsentimental realisation that, as the critic, Stephen Greenblatt, notes, Caliban is somehow part of him without, like Philoctetes' wound, entirely belonging to the being that Prospero is (1990: 26). An admission repeated *ad infinitum* in the history of colonial writing, Prospero's claim does not abolish the stigmatisation of the 'other' but merely accomplishes it by other means. To see what happens when the 'other' is trans-

formed from a foil for, or projection of, the self into a critical reflection of the self, we need to turn to situations, locations, sites where human solidarity has been reformulated in terms that are genuinely reciprocal, interactive, recreative.

One of the best known of such cultural sites is provided by the literature we have come to call 'postcolonial'. To invoke the names of several of the figures who currently dominate its criticism, such as Edward Said, Chinua Achebe, Homi Bhabha, Nadine Gordimer and Gayatri Spivak, along with several of their shrewdest critics like Aijaz Ahmad, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Benita Parry, is, of course, to be reminded that postcolonial literature is far from easily classified or summarised. However, there still seems some agreement that this is a literature committed to resisting, if not subverting and supplanting, all those formal and informal discourses that seek to naturalise colonial power and legitimate the perspectives that support it (Ahmad 1992; Bhabha 1994; Parry 1983; Said 1993; Spivak 1990). Such discourses are resisted in this literature through a process that bends back on itself in a kind of double reversal. If the colonised 'self' is to avoid the surrender of its identity to the terms dictated by the colonising 'other', it must not only forego the temptation simply to stigmatise, denigrate or demonise that 'other' but also contrive, at least at some moments, to transcend the discursive oppositions that currently define their relationship. Demonising, or simply even stereotyping the colonising 'other', merely tends to reinscribe the totalising structure of domination and subjugation, even in the process of reversing its applications. Yet transcending such discursive oppositions altogether raises questions first voiced by Albert Memmi about how stable the distinction between coloniser and colonised is in the first place (1965).

This is not to say that postcolonial theorists are prepared to rewrite the history of colonisation itself as a narrative whose purpose was something other than domination, exploitation and oppression; it is only to acknowledge that, with increasing sophistication, postcolonial critics and theorists have mounted a challenge to the notion that the postcolonial subject is, or was, simply colonisation's casualty, a victim solely rather than a resistant agent. If the master texts of colonialism, from Christopher Columbus's *Journal*, Daniel Defoe's *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Ernest Renan's *The History of the Origins of Christianity*, Gérard de Nerval's *Voyage en Orient* and Gustave Flaubert's *Salamambo* to Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* could not have been constructed, as Spivak maintains, without portraying the colonised as victims (1990), their

very fixation on the structure of victim-victimiser would reveal at the same time, as Bhabha has noted, their insecurity about its boundaries and stability (1994). Either way, colonising power is no longer seen as completely hegemonic. Just as in 'othering' the primitive, the European fetishisation of the African reflected anxiety and fear as well as mastery and suppression, so in mimicking masters, native behaviour had the effect, as VS Naipaul and, before him, Herman Melville, noted, of menacing colonials as well as amusing them.

Thus, the whole process of colonisation, as well as, of course, the opportunities for defying or undermining it, has come to be seen as extremely complex, varying from country to country and almost from decade to decade. As a result, one must be careful about asserting structural uniformities under colonialism, as the colonial subject was, even in his or her dependence, the unacknowledged source, as Spivak has pointed out, of the self-construction of colonialism's master texts; and the hybridisation colonialism produced, as Bhabha maintains, merely repeated, with a difference, certain inconsistencies, fractures and contradictions within colonial power itself that threatened that power's own legitimacy and opened up sites for possible opposition. Created at the intersection of numerous boundaries that were irregular and mobile from the beginning, the distinctions between coloniser and colonised, then, should be thought of less as totalled formations in opposition to one another than as 'constructions of a common, complexly interacting system' (Buell 1994: 232).

Such a system, whose oppositional formations resist being totalised because of their complex interactions, is brilliantly evoked in a text such as JM Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* or, even better, his *Foe*. *Foe* is, of course, a rewriting from the perspective of the colonies of one of the great fables that inaugurated and helped reinforce the colonial enterprise. Robinson Crusoe joins Christopher Columbus, John Smith and Pocahontas, along with Shakespeare's Caliban and Joseph Conrad's Mr Kurtz, as one of many 'inaugural figures', in Edward Said's phrasing, who with their initial Western texts now, not only constitute one of the most active sites of anticolonial and postcolonial reinterpretation but also furnish excellent examples of the way senses of kinship develop among strangers, rivals, opponents (Said 1993: 212). In *Foe*, the discursive terms that define the relations between colonist and colonised are converted upward without necessarily viewing the first of the terms as diabolical or inevitably demeaning the second. Friday's amputated tongue, and the

muteness it creates, enacts one version of the problem that the colonised typically confront: the problem of making meaning at all when others control the technology as well as the materials of its production.

Yet Friday's responses to his own muteness – dancing in a circle, playing a single note on his flute, writing and rewriting the letter 'O' – dramatise within the symbolics of the novel, whether or not they reflect conscious intention on his part, far more than his exclusion from the circles of interpretation that shut him out. They also constitute what, within the text at least, is a counter-representational mode designed to escape the force of the discursive polarities still operative as images of resistance to, and rebellion against, the practices that prevent Friday's participation. By, in effect, turning those practices against each other, the text succeeds in transforming the signs of Friday's silencing into symbols by which to signify it. However, it also achieves, indeed enacts, something more. In addition to reminding us of the political agency that Friday's former status as a colonised subject purportedly denied him, the text manages to illumine the ambivalence of the cultural instruments that were used to mute colonial subjects, just like Friday himself, by showing how they can be employed not only to muffle them but also to give them voice.

This double movement can also be found in the literature of the Holocaust or Shoah where a similar remaking of the self, in relation to an 'other' that seeks not only the self's suppression but also its complete extinction, requires a parallel move beyond solidarity. Such literature – for example, the fiction of Primo Levi or the poetry of Paul Celan – strives to make us believe, as Celan says, that 'there are/still songs to be sung beyond humankind', that is, beyond our conventional assumptions about the ties that bind humanity in some kind of community, even if a community of the damned. However, those same songs force the writer, as Celan phrases it, 'most uncannily out in the open' where the writer must 'go with his [or her] very being to language, stricken by and [yet] seeking reality'. Compelled to use the very language that was employed by his persecutors to torment and silence him, Celan's language 'had to pass through its own answerlessness, pass through a frightful falling mute, pass through the thousand darkneses of death-bringing speech' (cited in Felstiner 1982: 23). Yet by retrieving images fashioned out of the words of victims and his own memories – milk that is black, graves dug in air, hair of ash, dances fiddled for gravediggers – Celan's German not only manages to reappropriate the language of his expropriation but also enunciates, in the

tongue of his enemy, a relation that paradoxically symbolises their strange and terrible consanguinity.

This manoeuvre is even more vividly accomplished in Primo Levi's great novel *Survival at Auschwitz*, which was originally and more appropriately entitled *If This Be a Man*. Levi sees himself and, more importantly, feels himself and his fellow inmates, utterly removed from the moral world of their oppressors. The distance between those worlds of oppressed and oppressor is most tragically experienced just as the camp is liberated by Russian soldiers. The soldiers approach the gates of the camp as to a funeral scene, overwhelmed (as Levi imagines it) by a sense of shame that the inmates themselves knew so well and that threatened to drown them every time they had to witness or suffer some outrage:

the shame the Germans did not know, that the just man experiences at another man's crime; the feeling of guilt that such a crime should exist, that it should have been introduced irrevocably into the world of things that exist, and that this will for good should have proved too weak or null, and should not have availed in defense.

The moment of liberation is thus stained with remorse and anguish as well as joy – remorse because:

we should have liked to wash our consciences and our memories clean from the foulness that lay upon them ... anguish, because we felt that this should never have happened, that now nothing good and pure enough could ever happen to rub out our past, and that the scars of the outrage would remain within us for ever, and in the memories of those who saw it, and in the places where it occurred and in the stories that we should tell of it. (Levi 1987: 2)

Yet no matter how great and appalling the gulf between the inmates, and the Russian soldier's exhibition of humanity and the Nazi's remorseless lack of it, Levi refuses to demonise the difference as non-human. While the enormity of their evil may defy the power of language to express, the moral depravity of its authors does not. Moreover, no one more completely epitomises that depravity – and the demonically absolute indifference to others that it spreads in its wake like a contagion – than Doktor Ingenieur Pannwitz, one of the three

German physicians in charge of the Polymerisation Department in the factory to which Levi is assigned to work. This is a factory that never produced a single pound of synthetic rubber before the war was over while, at any given moment, employing more than 10,000 inmates to maintain this facility until they were either worked to death or sent off to the ovens in the weekly selections. When Pannwitz raises his head to glance at Levi for the first time during their interview, Levi is brought face to face with a gaze so pitiless it seems to come from another order of life:

Because that look was not one between two men; and if I had known how completely to explain the nature of that look, which came as if across the glass window of an aquarium between two beings who live in different worlds, I would also have explained the essence of the great insanity of the third Germany.... The brain which governed those blue eyes and those manicured hands said: 'This something in front of me belongs to a species which it is obviously opportune to suppress. In this particular case, one has to first make sure that it does not contain some utilisable element.' (1996: 105–106)

If the modern process, by which human beings are reduced to the level of things in the eyes of others, began with the industrialisation of the body, which started in the West with the Marquis de Sade and the rise of pornography, then the Nazis took the degradation of the human to lengths perhaps never before imagined, much less accomplished on such a scale, in human history. They were out not simply to crush other people, but to exterminate them entirely as a punishment for having been born. Hence, the great danger of this evil, which comes not from what the prisoners suffer in the eyes of their oppressors but from what they suffer in their own eyes. Like the victims of colonialism the world over, they are forced to view themselves through the eyes of an 'other' who not only considers them utterly expendable but who also perceives its own cruelty and indifference as both natural and inevitable. Here is no monster like that depicted in Francisco Goya's painting of *Saturn Devouring a Son*, a figure who looks out from the painting in amazement and horror at what he is doing and cannot stop doing, but a creature like the God in Comte de Lautreamont's *Les Chants de Maldoror* who feeds himself, as is his right, on his victims for all eternity. Nor is it coincidental that the behaviour of Lautreamont's God, who constantly repeats himself, resembles that of a

machine. Such mechanical responses deprive him of the possibility of being considered simply criminal. Instead, his evil, like that of the authors and administrators of the Holocaust, is truly demonic because it is predicated on the desirability of creating a world where cruelty and normality, barbarity and ordinariness, are the same thing.

One's only defence against this diabolical form of world-making, as the philosopher, Nelson Goodman, might describe it, or rather unmaking, is the capacity to see it as unwarranted, as inhuman. Levi makes no bones about the fact that he would have lost this capacity himself if it had not been for his two friends, Lorenzo and Alberto, who manage to live outside this world of abomination. What saves them from its contamination – and, together with a considerable degree of luck or the good fortune of health and illness occurring at the right moment, enables Levi to survive it as well – is not any residue of natural goodness within the human soul, goodness though there occasionally is, so much as the thing that such goodness presupposes and requires to persist: the belief,

that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror; something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good but for which it was worth striving. (1996: 121)

Even in moments of greatest extremity, then, Levi never loses the ability to see German behaviour as not only a radical deformation of the human norm but also, improbably, as something from which he and others can, and if they are to survive, must learn. The Nazis are never understood as acting so far beneath or so far beyond the human norm that Levi cannot find, within the terms of his own experience of them, ways to hold them accountable for the atrocities they commit, and to express his and others' own terrifying sense of their radically attenuated, and almost inconceivable but still problematic, kinship with them. For all their horror, the Nazis are not so alien to the human as to permit Levi to dismiss or discount them as non-human, much less as non-discussable. Such potentialities for the human soul can and must be interrogated because no human experience, no matter how much it challenges our moral faculties, can be assumed to be 'without meaning or unworthy of analysis'. Also, as Levi continues, 'fundamental values, even if they are not positive, can

be deduced from a description of the world of the camps' (1996: 87). The fundamental values are, in this case, inhuman or subhuman, rather than non-human, because their historical exemplifications, so blameless in the first instance, and so cruel and heartless in the second, elicit in response an intuition, however imprecise but still somehow inviolate, of those boundaries of the human imaginary that have in both cases been stretched to the breaking point but must in neither ever be allowed to dissolve.

The third cultural site I want to mention, where human solidarity has been radically rethought as something other than a realisation of the terms of our common humanity, is to be found in the United States and concerns the experience of African Americans both before and after slavery. The question I am interested in asking is how African Americans managed to survive the ideological, emotional and physical depredations of the slave system, and of the system of institutionalised racism that replaced it, without either demonising whites or being forced to see themselves as whites saw them. How could legal and, later, *de facto* slavery be prevented, as one historian has put it, from becoming 'spiritual slavery' (Levine 1977: 80)?

The consensus is that their survival as a people was ultimately made possible by their collective refusal either to accept, or simply to invert, the Manichean regime of racial polarities that held them in bondage. Instead, they created out of its gaps, ruptures and inconsistencies a series of imaginative spaces located between the so-called 'white' world and the 'black' world where they could live, at least spiritually, with a measure of freedom. Nowhere was this more successfully accomplished than in slave religion itself, and the various forms of verbal and performative expression to which it gave rise. The challenge was to keep themselves from being converted to the religion of white Christians while still remaining free to use that religion for their own spiritual purposes. In managing to negotiate this difficult passage, they succeeded, as the anthropologist Paul Radin was the first to remark, not so much in converting themselves to God but in converting God, as it were, to themselves (Levine 1977: 33). The chief instruments of this conversion were ritual re-enactments of the divine acts of creation and salvation. Through song, oratory, narrative, prayer and dance, they were able not only to extend the boundaries of their own world backward until it fused with the Old Testament narratives of deliverance and support amidst suffering but also to project their own world upward

until it merged with the New Testament narratives of beatitude and the fulfillment of time.

In creating out of their worship, a world that sought neither to mirror nor to adapt itself to the white world that enslaved them, so much as to reabsorb within itself all the elements from that 'other' world that they needed to satisfy their own negotiations with the divine, black Christians in the antebellum South were able to achieve spiritually what many of their white southern Christian brethren could not. Sensing 'the agony and alienation of the Cross' as the true key to the Gospel's liberating force, they understood intuitively how the power of faith could transform even the most benighted of conditions. The southern historian, Donald Mathews, writes of the slaves:

Enslaved, they sang of freedom; defeated, they awaited victory – all the while demonstrating a more mature grasp than most of their white owners and neighbors of the deliverance promised by a God whose power lies precisely in his assumption of powerlessness. Even before Gabriel's trumpet had sounded, African American Christians had experienced a miraculous transformation: 'The trumpet sounds within-a my soul', they could declare in their slave songs; 'I ain't got long to stay here'. (Mathews 1977: 186)

As WEB Du Bois was the first to see so clearly, the slave songs, or as we call them 'spirituals', were the testimonial of a people whose movement beyond solidarity through a discovery of their sense of fundamental kinship with the enemy enabled them to find 'the status, the harmony, the values, the order they needed to survive by internally creating an expanded universe, by literally willing themselves reborn' (Levine 1977: 33). However, like so much else in African American religious life, the spirituals represented much more than religious rebirth; they were also demonstrations that religious rebirth is not inconsistent with political critique, that black folk culture in general often provided African Americans 'other – and from the point of view of personality development, not necessarily less effective – means of escape and opposition' (Levine 1977: 54).

Here, then, as in much postcolonial and Holocaust literature, difference, otherness, alterity is not one element of identity among others, nor is it merely that over and against which identity supposedly constitutes itself. Alterity, otherness, difference are rather that in relation to which identity must some-

how, even at the risk of its very existence and often under the most unimaginably arduous conditions, still hold itself in tension and, to that degree, accountable. While this can require a moral discipline of almost superhuman proportions, its expressions nonetheless hold clues not easily reducible to paraphrase, much less translatable into political programmes, for how to reverse, or at least to interrupt and deflect, those symbolic processes that associate the formation of human identity with the derision and destruction of human difference.

In addition, though this may merely be a utopian dream, I believe that such negotiations beyond solidarity suggest some ways of reconceptualising, if not the substance of a common human nature, then at least the nature of a common, or in any event a sharable, human world. This would be a world where the relations between self and 'other', rather than being suffered as discursively deforming, can be experienced as dialogically, even ethically, enhancing; a world where the dream of reconciliation, consensus, unification gives way to the more modest but no less crucial need for consideration, co-operation and courtesy. This is surely the kind of world of which South Africa's great apostles of freedom and social cohesion have always dreamed; it is also the world which, even without the inspiration of their presence, we must still try to establish in their name.

### Notes

- 1 J Marti, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 21 July 2002, p. 6.
- 2 This paragraph, and a number of others that follow, is taken from various sections of my book *Beyond Solidarity: Pragmatism and Difference in a Globalized World* (2001).
- 3 M Ignatieff, 'Lemkin's Word', *The New Republic*, 26 February 2001, p. 28.

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# 13 *Globalisation, identity and national policy in South Africa*

David Chidester, Adrian Hadland and Sandra Prosalendis

There can be few more important projects than the interweaving of South Africa's diverse, fragmented and unequal population into a unified, responsible, tolerant and proud people; for it is, arguably, along such a road that any chance of a peaceful, secure future lies. Such a journey has, without a doubt, already commenced. Studies have already shown that South Africans are increasingly identifying with a broader South African identity.

National unity, of course, has been the objective of national policy. As Deputy Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology Brigitte Mabandla pointed out in 1998, 'We have embarked upon an exciting new voyage of discovery as we begin to explore and define who we are as a people' (1998: 2). Research suggests that government policy, in this regard, has made a difference. In analysing data collected between 1998 and 2000, Marlene Roefs of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) has shown that a substantial, and growing, proportion of people 'strongly identified themselves' as South Africans (2002).

Research into the question of national identity has repeatedly stressed that if people feel they belong to a nation-state, they are likely to accept the rights and duties associated with citizenship. The spin-offs of such a contract include the consolidation of democracy, the growing value of human dignity, tolerance, increased levels of political participation and the waning of all forms of discrimination.

Just how one defines the characteristics of a national identity, or how one goes about nurturing such a project, are questions that reside deep in contested terrain. Fierce critiques of the nation-building strategy have been provoked from a range of analysts, not least Van Zyl Slabbert, who has warned that 'the pre-occupation with the "Rainbow Nation" can drift into a kind of saccharine Polly-Annaism which is totally out of touch with reality. Anybody who underestimates the potential for racial and ethnic outbidding in South Africa, can

budget generously for disillusionment in the nation-building industry' (1997: 6).

Issues of culture, ethnicity, heritage, history and language evoke powerfully emotive responses from every sector of South African society. As Chirevo Kwenda observes in his chapter in this volume: it is a very small step from a 'way of life' to 'life itself'. This observation is a reminder of how frequently, in South African history, blood has been shed over exactly these issues and of the weight with which most individuals and communities assign such markers.

Any consideration of nation-building, ethnicity, culture and heritage has to acknowledge the rifts of South Africa's past, the realities of the present as well as the challenges yet to be fully appreciated or engaged with. Just prior to the 1994 election, the most pressing dimensions of the national question arguably revolved around white, right-wing and Zulu nationalism. Both threatened to scupper transformation and plunge the country into the opposite of nation-building, namely, civil war. Can we safely assume these have now been safely and finally resolved? Few would be so brave as to predict it will be so.

In addition, different clouds lurk now on the horizon of national unity. HIV-AIDS pervades every arena. How will our sense of national identity be eroded by a growing perception that only the rich will survive? How will poverty and the deepening divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' impact on our commitment to the social contract? How should South Africanism be promoted in the face of a new pan-Africanism, namely the New Partnership for African Development (Nepad)?

While important inferences can be drawn from many quarters, the South African government has not spelt out clearly its policy objectives with regard to nation-building, culture, ethnicity and the management of different cultural heritages. There are obviously some strong indications, not least from the 1996 Constitution, from GEAR (the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy) and from its predecessor, the Reconstruction and Development Programme. Various green and white papers – for instance on heritage – have also articulated the government's thinking on aspects of this broad subject. The Social Cohesion and Integration (SCI) Research Programme of the HSRC has published findings from a study aimed specifically at collating and enunciating the government's policy guidelines on managing and developing the heritage sector (Deacon, Mngqolo & Prosalendis 2003). Naturally, though,

without any clear or comprehensive exposition of these guidelines to date, the task of measuring their achievement remains to be tackled. Ongoing consideration of such issues and current research initiatives suggest the HSRC in general, and SCI in particular, constitutes an important locus of deliberation on questions surrounding national identity, culture, ethnicity and heritage.

In such short compass, we cannot possibly be comprehensive, so the remarks that follow should be read as merely indicating key problems and prospects for policy. As a broad framework, the South African Constitution affirms unity and diversity, establishing the basis for a common citizenship in a non-racial, non-sexist and unified South Africa, while at the same time, recognising and protecting ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious diversity. Within this framework, government has faced the challenge of leading South Africans from a 'deeply divided society' to a nation in which 'diverse people unite'. National unity, however, has been tested not only by internal divisions of the past but also by new globalising forces. In 1994, South Africa became a new, unified and democratic nation just when nations were supposedly going out of style, their national sovereignty and social integrity eroded by global market forces and global flows of people, technology and new media images of human possibility.

A range of cross-cutting global forces – the global economy, multinational corporations, organised labour, human-rights movements, feminist movements, transnational religions and popular culture – that are often thought to undermine local identities might also provide new terms for social cohesion and integration. Since this globalising future is now defining the strategic terrain on our immediate horizon, we need to consider the globalising obstacles and opportunities for enhancing the diversity, unity and cultural legacies of South Africa. In a globalising world, we need to think through the limits and possibilities for social cohesion in South Africa. Under difficult conditions, what holds us together?

### *Citizenship*

In the first instance, South Africans are held together by sharing a common citizenship. There has always been a tension between the political-legal and symbolic-affective sides of any definition of citizenship, perhaps even a basic contradiction between generalised rights and distinctive social, cultural and

religious identities (Soysal 1994). Nationalism, it might be argued, has been an experiment in resolving that tension by fusing the community of rights and responsibilities with the community of affective loyalty. In the classic formulation by TH Marshall, 'social citizenship' signifies the 'full membership' of an individual in 'the community' (1950; see also Marshall & Bottomore 1992). Articulating personal subjectivity and social collectivity, social citizenship, in Marshall's terms, presumes the harmonious integration of the individual within the overlapping social structures of civil society, the nation and the state.

While it is unlikely that those structures have ever actually overlapped in any society, their disjuncture in the present is particularly evident (Hall & Held 1989). Since 1989, as many analysts have observed, new forms of 'post-national citizenship' have dissolved any necessary link between the rights of citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state. Post-national citizenship has been developing on two mutually constitutive planes, global and local, resulting in new claims to global citizenship and cultural citizenship.

Global citizenship, which is formed on the basis of universal rights and transnational loyalties, has been promoted by an array of social movements, non-governmental organisations and international initiatives. Although the clearest assertion of global citizenship has emerged in the human-rights movement, with its claims to basic rights that transcend the sovereignty of individual states, global citizenship has also appeared in recent formations of transnational identities with their own rights, responsibilities, loyalties and values that cut across the territorial boundaries of states (Bauböck 1994). In feminist analysis, for example, new forms of women's citizenship have assumed global scope, asserting transnational rights and loyalties on the basis of gender (Berkovitch 1999; Lister 1997). Likewise, ecological citizenship has asserted the global rights of nature and the responsibilities of human beings towards the environment (Batty & Gray 1996; Hansen 1993; Szerszynski & Toogood 2000; Van Steenbergen 1994). Other constellations of transnational rights and identities, such as consumer citizenship (Murdock 1992; Stevenson 1997), media citizenship (Ohmae 1990), sexual citizenship (Evans 1993), mobility citizenship (Urry 1990), flexible citizenship (Ong 1999) and cosmopolitan citizenship (Held 1995; Hutchings & Dannreuther 1999), have been identified as new forms of global citizenship.

In all of these cases, the very notion of citizenship has been transformed by the increased scope and pace of the global flows of people, capital, technology, images of human possibility and ideals of human solidarity that Arjun Appadurai identified as the defining features of globalisation (1996: 27–47).

Cultural citizenship, which is formed on the basis of distinctive, often local, loyalties, has been asserting claims on group, collective or cultural rights. Like the new transnational variants of global citizenship, cultural citizenship cannot be easily assimilated into conventional models of national, political or social citizenship. The conventional Western liberal definition of citizenship, as Anaya has observed, ‘acknowledges the rights of the individual on the one hand, and the sovereignty of the total social collective on the other, but it is not alive to the rich variety of intermediate or alternative associational groupings actually found in human cultures, nor is it prepared to ascribe to such groups any rights not reducible either to the liberties of the citizen or to the prerogative of the state’ (Anaya 1995: 326). Instead of assuming universal rights and responsibilities, cultural citizenship affirms the distinctive cultural identity of citizens and asserts claims for the recognition and protection of that identity. As Renato Rosaldo has proposed, cultural citizenship is premised on the ‘right to be different and to belong in a participatory democratic sense’ (1994: 402; see also Rosaldo 1997).

Not only a matter of belonging to a particular cultural group, cultural citizenship raises questions of rights. In the subtitle to a recent collection of essays on Latino cultural citizenship in the United States, the authors identify the task of cultural citizenship as ‘reclaiming identity, space and rights’ (Flores & Benmayor 1997). Such claims for rights, even universal human rights, around cultural difference suggests that cultural citizenship has emerged, not in opposition but in counterpoint to the transnational identities of global citizenship. Frequently, claims for ‘full membership’ within the national community have been asserted on the basis of both global and cultural citizenship. For example, as Pnina Werbner has observed, British Muslims have been making claims for inclusion as citizens simultaneously on the basis of cultural difference and universal human rights (2000: 319–320). Likewise, in searching Turkish immigrants in France, Yasemin Soysal found that Muslim organisations ‘do not justify their demands by simply reaching back to religious teachings or traditions but through a language of rights, thus, citizenship’ (2000: 9). In this merger of cultural resources and global rights, the constitution of

national citizenship is being transformed by post-national citizenship, resulting in what Nira Yuval-Davis has called the 'multi-layered citizen' (1999).

Is South Africa ready for such a multi-layered, multiple citizenship? In dealing with diversity, whether cultural, linguistic or religious, the Constitution has limiting clauses. For example, a public educational institution can be based on a particular language but only if the conditions pass the limiting test of 'practicability'. What is practical? Simply, the issue of practicability seems to be determined by the economy.

### *Sustainable development*

Besides holding a common citizenship, South Africans are held together, for better or worse, by being involved in the same economy. Increasingly, international regulatory bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation, have been proposing that social cohesion and integration are essential for economic growth and development. At the same time, international cultural organisations, from Unesco to the International Network on Cultural Policy, have argued that cultural diversity is a national resource necessary for sustainable development.

'The link between social and economic development and cultural diversity is now well established,' according to a report by the HSRC's cultural diversity research team. The report acknowledges the findings of the 1995 Unesco Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, titled *Our Creative Diversity*. It was the Unesco report that helped finally to shift prevailing attitudes away from the notion that culture was an obstacle to development, to a growing understanding that cultural diversity represents a much more vital component.

Indeed, it has been argued that culture constitutes the 'ultimate goal of development': 'culture, then, is not a means to material progress; it is the end and aim of "development" seen as the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole'. In this regard, the Council of Europe adopted a Declaration on Cultural Diversity in 2000 that highlights the need for the sustenance and promotion of cultural diversity in a global environment (Joffe et al. 2002: 5).

Although these assumptions have not been empirically demonstrated, they nevertheless suggest an emerging orthodoxy about the importance of a range

of social activity between the state and the market in facilitating sustainable development.

Like the ambiguity of the notion of ‘civil society’, a term embraced across the political spectrum, but invested with very different meanings, this new orthodoxy about the importance of social trust, social capital and social cohesion is also riddled with ambiguity.

Recent research, much of which has been sponsored by the World Bank, has identified the importance of social trust and social capital in creating conditions necessary for democracy and ‘good governance’ (Braithwaite & Levi 1998). In a critical reading of this literature, trust appears to be defined as the practical competency of the socially blind, a capacity to act in a world dominated by modern bureaucratic systems so complex that no one understands how they work. ‘One trusts,’ as Seligman puts it, ‘when one cannot know’ (1997: 21). In the view of Anthony Giddens, trust is ‘a medium of interaction’ with complex, abstract systems. ‘Trust here generates that “leap into faith” which practical engagement demands’ (1991: 3).

Acting on the basis of trust, shared identity and mutual reciprocity, according to Robert Putnam’s influential analysis, people accumulate social capital by participating within the voluntary associations of civil society (1993, 2000). As critics have argued, this notion of social capital has been attractive to the neo-liberal state because it justifies ‘outsourcing’ social welfare functions to local communities. Like the notion of trust, the idea of social capital has also been criticised for its aura of mystification. Taking the state out of the equation, social capital mystifies the market, as Deborah Bryceson has observed, so social capital ends up as ‘Adam Smith’s “invisible hand”, metaphorically wearing a social rather than an economic glove’ (Bryceson 2000: 316).

In the shadow of the global economy, according to anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff, a variety of ‘occult economies’ has surfaced in which people expect sudden wealth from strange, mysterious or magical means. These ‘occult economies’ have been a feature of globalisation not only in South Africa but also elsewhere in the ‘developing’ world (1999a, 1999b and 2000). While Charismatic Christian groups, many with roots in the United States, promise an outpouring of wealth through the Holy Spirit, indigenous African explanations of capital accumulation as the work of witches, zombies or other

anti-social forces are being recast as local responses to the global economy. How has this expansion of 'occult economies' under globalising conditions affected struggles for socio-economic empowerment? How do 'occult economies' affect the material base of a national economy? Do these religious or magical understandings need to be demystified, mobilised or otherwise engaged in local struggles over economic development?

Globalisation, for better or worse, represents the possibility of new forms of citizenship, economic activity and social identity. Looking to the future, but also remembering the past, especially the recent past of the 1990s, we can chart some of the obstacles and opportunities in identity politics that will be important for framing national policy with respect to social identities, national unity and cultural legacies in South Africa.

### *Social identities: ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious*

As markers of difference, the human resources of ethnicity, language, culture and religion were obviously abused under apartheid to entrench separations within a system of racial domination. In that context, critical research on these human resources of identity stressed their social construction. They were ingredients of 'imagined communities' and 'invented traditions' (Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm & Ranger 1985). In the production of difference, as anthropologist, John Comaroff, has observed, ethnic identities 'are always caught up in equations of power at once material, political, symbolic' (Comaroff 1996). Critical analysis warning against reifying ethnic, cultural and religious identities in making government policy has appeared in post-apartheid South Africa (see for example: Alexander 1998; Dexter 1999; Sharp 1997; Singh 2001; Tayob 1999). While agreeing that these identities cannot be understood as permanent or fixed, recent developments in cultural studies have argued for recovery rather than critique, proposing to recover the 'identities that mythologies of apartheid, and resistance to it, tended to silence' (Nuttall & Michael 2000: 1). In that recovery, however, human identities are essentially mixed and mutable, creolised and changing in the flux of contacts, relations and exchanges.

If the state were charged with managing such fluid, fluctuating diversity, no state would be happy with this free play of identity. Inevitably, the state is involved in 'legitimising identity' (Castells 1997; Otayek 2000). Like most modern states, the post-apartheid South African government, with respect to

policy on diversity, has fluctuated between two managerial models: one based on the distinction between the one and the many, the other based on the distinction between the public and the private. In principle, these models might be co-ordinated so that the one national interest draws support from the many cultural, linguistic and religious communities of the country, while public institutions protect and promote the flourishing of private, distinctive and particular cultural interests in South Africa. In practice, however, this dual policy necessarily places government in a mediating role between the state, with its public institutions, and the many cultural, linguistic and religious interests.

With respect to language policy, for example, the one nation, through its Constitution, affirms eleven official languages. In addition, government policy, through the Language Plan for South Africa, the Pan South African Language Board and other initiatives, extends recognition of the many languages through commitments to language equity, multilingualism and facilitation services for all official languages in public institutions. In public institutions, however, language equity – the interests of the many – is balanced against the constitutionally prescribed limit of ‘practicability.’ As a result, as Kirsten Henrard has noted, language policy turns into ‘a balancing process which attempts to strike an appropriate balance between the accommodation of linguistic diversity on the one hand and concerns of national unity and limited resources on the other’ (Henrard 2001: sec. 5.10). Here the interests of the many are balanced against the public determination of practicability, resource allocation and national interest. Not merely a ‘balancing act’, this mediation has placed government in the impossible dilemma of having to act against its own policy in public.

With respect to religion, government policy, again following the Constitution, has adopted a ‘co-operative model’ for relations between the many religions and the state instead of arrangements based on theocratic establishment, anti-religious antagonism or strict separation. By marking major public occasions with prayers from different religious traditions, the government has acknowledged the potential for the many religions of the country to co-operate in building one, unified South African nation. In public education, however, the Department of Education has made a principled distinction between the many religious interests which are best served by the home, family and religious community, and the national public interest in education about religion, religions and religious diversity in South Africa. Adopting a policy of

religion education, rather than continuing earlier policies of religious instruction, the Department of Education has emphasised educational outcomes, as well as social benefits, in teaching and learning about religion, religions and religious diversity. Instead of performing a 'balancing act', the department developed a principled position on educational grounds but also consulted widely with religious leaders and formed a reference group of stakeholders from different religious backgrounds for ongoing consultations (DoE 2001; see also Amor 2001; Chidester 2002).

Nevertheless, even if the Constitution is based on a 'co-operative model' between religion and the state, religious identities have still had to undergo balancing acts. During 2001, two court cases suggested this dilemma of balancing religious and public interests. In the case of Rastafari, Gareth Prince, his religious use of a holy herb was balanced against the state's interest in controlling that substance as a perceived hazard to public health.<sup>1</sup> In the case of Ms Nkosi, her religious interest in burying her son at the site of her family's ancestral graves, which she regarded as a sacred obligation, was balanced against the property rights of the current owner of the land (Stites 2000).<sup>2</sup> In these cases, certain public interests – public health, property rights – have been adjudged to carry more weight than religious interests. In the near future, a range of other religious interests, including the viability of African, Muslim, Hindu and other religious systems of family law, will come up for similar adjudication through 'balancing acts' unless they are addressed through public processes of negotiation.

In several forums, those negotiations are currently underway. As stipulated by the Constitution, however, a national statutory body should be mandated with that responsibility. In the interest of achieving national unity in diversity, the South African Constitution established the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (Khosa et al. 1998). Along with other statutory commissions, such as the Human Rights Commission, the Gender Commission and the Land Claims Commission, this body was delegated with the responsibility of implementing a human-rights culture in South Africa. However, the formation of this commission has been long delayed. The question of forming the commission was not brought into debate by government, in Parliament, until August 1998; a committee to formulate proposals for its mandate was not formed until April 2000, and the draft legislation for establishing the

commission was only submitted for consideration by Parliament in August 2001. Despite being required by the Constitution, this commission for cultural, religious and linguistic rights has clearly not been a priority of the South African government. Perhaps it should not be a priority. Certainly, the commission has set daunting goals not only protecting collective rights but also promoting 'peace, friendship, humanity, tolerance and national unity among and within cultural, religious and linguistic communities, on the basis of equality, non-discrimination and free association'.<sup>3</sup> But the national problem with this commission has also been its implication in advancing group rights.

In theory, practice and historical experience, as we recall painfully, South Africa has had problems with the very notion of group rights. During the constitutional negotiations of the early 1990s, we found ourselves in the peculiar situation in which defenders of white Afrikaner nationalism asserted the kinds of group, collective or communal rights usually ascribed internationally to indigenous people while political leadership within the African National Congress insisted on embedding individual rights in the Constitution. As one component of the negotiated settlement, the Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities deferred to white Afrikaner demands for recognising group rights. Asserting cultural, religious and linguistic rights, rather than racial privilege, some right-wing Afrikaner nationalists argued for self-determination in a separate *Volkstaat*, introducing the historical irony of white Afrikaners trying to create for themselves an ethnic enclave like the 'homelands' created for black Africans under apartheid.

Although this demand for group rights, ethnic self-determination and even an Afrikaner *Volkstaat* seemed urgent during the process of negotiations, it has subsequently receded from public debate and is kept alive only by small political initiatives within South Africa, even if they have expanded under globalising conditions. For example, the Cyber Republic of the Boer Nation works to promote the preservation and self-determination of a white, Afrikaner nationalism on the Internet.

Significantly, the Cyber Republic of the Boer Nation asserts its claim to national identity not on the basis of ethnicity, culture, language or religion but on the basis of indigeneity, insisting that 'The Boer Nation is the only white indigenous tribe in Southern Africa'.<sup>4</sup> In making this claim, the Boer Nation is

looking beyond the national borders of South Africa in order to link up with international efforts, especially those directed by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations, to protect the cultural, religious and linguistic rights of people all over the world.

Although white Afrikaner nationalists have not yet been accorded first nation status by that UN body, descendants of the indigenous Khoisan of the Western Cape, the Griqua, have been granted that status by the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations. With that international warrant, Khoisan groups have been demanding national recognition within South Africa, but not in a separate homeland. Instead, the Khoisan discourse of cultural nationalism has been related directly to South African nationalism. At the National Khoisan Consultative Conference in 2001, Khoisan leaders consistently asserted their collective rights in the context of the South African Constitution (Besten & Bredekamp 2001). In this respect, Khoisan assertions of cultural rights have been consistent with a broader global trend of groups claiming the rights of cultural citizenship not in opposition to national citizenship but in order to participate fully in the public life of the nation. At the intersection of global and local cultural formations, as anthropologist, James Clifford, has observed, these initiatives have produced 'forms of community consciousness and solidarity that maintain identifications outside of the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference' (1994: 308).

In evaluating recent controversies over indigenous cultural rights in Africa, Abdulahi An-Na'im has argued that group rights can only be viable if they are established not in opposition but in counterpoint to individual human rights (1998, 1999). In other words, given the security of individual rights under international human-rights instruments and covenants, as well as most national constitutions, acknowledgement of collective rights will not abolish individual rights. Addressed on a case-by-case basis, assertions of cultural, linguistic and religious rights of a group can provide the occasion for processes of intercultural mediation within any society. According to An-Na'im, the successful outcome of any group asserting a collective right will be realised not by a judicial ruling but by social negotiation, a process of engagement that expands intercultural, interreligious and interlinguistic understanding.

In such a social dialogue, the media of identity – cultural, religious and linguistic – can be formally recognised but they can also change, adapt and shift

in the process of negotiation. In advancing collective rights, South Africa's Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities might be charged with facilitating and mediating such intercultural negotiations.

### *National unity: building a nation*

Given the diversity of language, culture and religion in South Africa, the post-apartheid government of South Africa has sought ways to turn diversity from a potential obstacle to nationalism, into a national resource, seeking not uniformity but unity. As the new coat of arms urges: 'Diverse people unite.' In media, advertising, government departments and national policy, such slogans proliferate. Are they nothing more than slogans?

In the midst of the euphoria of the 'new South Africa' of 1994, as the editors note in the Preface, building a new nation seemed as easy as one, two, three: South Africa had one new national flag, two national anthems and three national sporting teams. National flag, national anthem, national sports – such were the basic ingredients of national cohesion in a new South Africa. Whether interpreted as the 'anatomy of a miracle' (Waldmeir 1997) or a 'miracle misunderstood' (Guelke 1999), a nation was nevertheless created in South Africa bearing these sacred signs (Bond 2000; Howarth & Norval 1998; Lodge 1999; Marais 2000).

However, as South African history has demonstrated, such symbols of nationalism do not actually make a nation. During the second half of the twentieth century, ideologues of apartheid sponsored the creation of new nations, unrecognised by any other nation in the world, each with their flags, anthems, sporting teams, parliaments and artifices of autonomy. In the process, South Africa became a kind of laboratory for the study of failed nationalisms. For example, take the nationalism of the Republic of the Ciskei. Impressed by the monument to Israeli heroism at Masada, President Lennox Sebe established his own holy mountain, *Ntaba kaNdoda*, where all citizens of the Ciskei were supposed to 'swear their oaths and allegiance to the nation before this National Shrine' (Hodgson 1987: 30). When Sebe was deposed, people danced in the streets. Another example would be the traditional village constructed in the Republic of Bophuthatswana by President Lucas Mangope, designed as a memorial to the history and culture of South Africa's 'tribal' nations. An

advisor on the project, the Zulu sangoma Credo Mutwa, praised Mangope by declaring, 'Anyone who gives me the opportunity to rebuild the African past knows what he is doing' (RoB 1987: 19). A decade later, as anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff observed, this 'tribal' village had fallen into disrepair. No longer a national monument, it had become an informal settlement (1997: 1–5). These examples of failed national monuments could certainly be multiplied. At the very least, they demonstrate that national mottoes, anthems, flags and monuments cannot actually make a nation.

Still, nations need narratives. Since 1994, as many analysts have observed, national policy has been supported by a series of narratives—the Rainbow Nation, the African Renaissance and the New Patriotism. Are these powerful images of national identity, linking past and future, actually related to each other? Taken together, or even taken separately, do they make any sense? Critical analysts of these nation-building narratives have tried to identify the dominant story. For example, in response to the discussion document, *Nation-Formation and Nation Building* (1997), Irina Filatova argued that government intended to 'assert African hegemony in the context of a multi-cultural and non-racial society'. According to her, 'Africanism is a much more powerful card to play than "rainbowism"', offering 'a better political potential to the ANC than non-racialism, whether based on class solidarity or on "rainbow" all-inclusive nationhood' (1997: 54).

Political philosopher Achille Mbembe has highlighted the need for new narratives in Africa. 'At the intersection of religious practices and the interrogation of human tragedy,' as Mbembe has observed, 'a distinctively African philosophy has emerged' (2002: 239). However, that African philosophy of tragedy, with its roots in slavery, colonisation and apartheid, and its religious undertones, has produced different stories. On the one hand, we have stories of primordial nativism, with their 'reenchantment of tradition', which have sought to recover the authentic precolonial resources of Africa as a foundation for the future. On the other hand, we have stories of radical nationalism, reverberating with an apocalyptic hope of African redemption, which have promised national liberation in the future. As Achille Mbembe has argued, both of these prevailing narratives, the nativist and the nationalist, have failed to provide convincing stories about the African future for Africans.

Nationalism is narrated, but South Africa's history has demonstrated that nationalism can also be negotiated. As Kader Asmal has observed, the capacity for negotiation emerged during the transition to democracy as a distinctive South African value:

The democratic movement of liberation has always understood that wherever we come from originally – Africa, Asia, Europe – we *all* have values and the good of our society rests on our ability to integrate *all* of these values into our definition of 'South Africanness'. What [Albert] Luthuli ... tells us is that values cannot simply be asserted. They must be placed on the table, debated, negotiated, synthesised, modified and earned. And this process, this dialogue, is, in and of itself, a value – a South African value – to be cherished. (Asmal 2002: 4)

As an example of negotiated nationalism, recall the negotiation of South Africa's national calendar of public holidays. Under the national calendar of the apartheid regime, holidays celebrated Christianity – Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension Day – in the service of a nation that had been declared by the neo-apartheid constitution of 1983 to be a 'Christian country'. At the same time, public holidays celebrated a patriotism of power, a triumphalist, conquering nationalism that commemorated its primordial origin (Founder's Day or Van Riebeeck's Day), its settlement in Africa (Settler's Day), its conquest of Africa (Day of the Covenant or Day of the Vow), its heroic defiance of European competitors over Africa (Kruger's Day), and its national independence in the face of foreign opposition to its institutionalised racism, apartheid and separate development (Republic Day).

In dramatic contrast to this patriotism of power, the calendar of the African National Congress commemorated a patriotism of pain, a national memory marked by days of death, suffering and loss, such as Sharpeville Day (21 March) or Soweto Day (16 June). Even the holiest day in Afrikaner nationalism, 16 December, when Afrikaners celebrated their ancestral victory over African forces, was translated by the ANC in exile into a patriotism of pain as Heroes Day, recalling all of the martyrs who had died in the struggle against apartheid.

More than the interests of business and labour, therefore, were at stake in the negotiations over a new national calendar of public holidays. Some way had to be found to mediate between these patriotisms of power and pain,

transforming pain into power, but remembering the pain as a limit on committing the kinds of violations of humanity of the past.

As the negotiations over public holidays suggest, it is possible to have national unity but multiple public interests. If citizenship is actualised in and through public participation, how do we actually participate as citizens in public? Following Jürgen Habermas, we might imagine a 'public sphere' that is constituted by a certain kind of consensual communication (1989). However, as the advocates of both global and cultural citizenship demonstrate, public spheres are multiple. In many regions of South Africa, a citizen might participate in the different public spheres of the national government, the regional branch of comrades of the ruling party, a local civic association, a traditional religiopolitical authority and a local traditional administrative authority. Documenting these multiple spheres of citizen participation, Isak Niehaus has observed that a 'woman can, for instance appeal to ANC leaders for information about national politics, ask Comrades to apprehend stock thieves, inform the Civic that a tap is without water, divorce her husband at the chief's *kgoro* and ask the local headman to allocate her a new residential site' (2001: 156). Manoeuvring within, and among, these different public spheres, any citizen can actualise his or her citizenship by asserting rights, obeying responsibilities, serving obligations and affirming shared values within multiple contexts. As Niehaus concludes, a citizen operating in these diverse public spheres 'would not perceive these actions as contradictory' (2001: 156).

It may be that each citizen functions with a number of identities each assumed naturally and each acting concurrently. Research conducted at the District Six Museum found identities which captured an individual's creative self frequently were the ones which carried the most significance. Thus, a street trader's most vivid and fond recollections of District Six centred on his after-hours life as an acrobat. Identity, in other words, may be based on what matters most to people, founded on the matrix of cultural and creative occasions, and performances that give meaning to individuals' lives. Political, ethnic or national identities may not carry the same weight for many as their religious, sporting, cultural or even historical lives: 'In District Six, where the tenancy rate was high, many people's bonds were not to houses and to possessions but to their histories. Identity lay in each person's position within the community, within the street, within themselves and their interaction with others' (Rassool & Prosalendis 2001: 76).

All of this indicates that public participation, whether understood as national, global or cultural citizenship, is only realised in the daily negotiations and navigations of people in South Africa. In trying to identify the underlying terms and conditions of national unity, we might begin with the practices of everyday life. ‘The answers might lie in the cycles of daily life in our communities’, as Njabulo Ndebele has observed. ‘We need to observe closely what patterns of life yield predictability, offer stability and provide a sense of purposeful permanence’ (Ndebele 2002: 13). Not national monuments but daily life, as Ndebele suggests, provides the basis for thinking about any policy for national unity.

### *Cultural legacies: linking past, present and future*

National monuments still represent an important part of the cultural legacy of South Africa. No monument, however, stands without interpretation. While European colonists throughout Africa were celebrating their conquests through monuments, memorials and heroic statues, Frantz Fanon understood that colonialism had produced a world of separations, dividing settlers and natives; but it had also constructed a ‘world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge; a world which is sure of itself, which crushes with its stones the backs flayed by whips: this is the colonial world’ (1990: 40). Is South Africa still a ‘world of statues’? In Cape Town, at the bottom of Adderley Street, we have the statue of Jan van Riebeeck, a colonial defensive formation – like the hedge which surrounds him – keeping Africa at bay. While at the top of Adderley Street, we have Cecil Rhodes with the inscription ‘Your hinterland is yonder’, inviting British imperialists to join the adventure of colonial expansion (Chidester 2000). What do we make of this legacy in stone?

A crucial dimension of our cultural legacy is our cultural history of interpretation. Even in the world of statues, South Africa has a rich, complex legacy of developing alternative, innovative ways of interpreting the significance of signs in stone. Taking the statue of Jan van Riebeeck in Cape Town, for example, this memorial to the Dutch leader of the first European settlement at the southern tip of Africa in 1652 remains as a monumental site of memory for multiple pasts. Donated by the British imperialist Cecil Rhodes in 1899, the statue established Van Riebeeck as the founder of a white nation in Africa.

During the tri-centenary celebrations in 1952, following the electoral victory of the National Party under the banner of apartheid, Van Riebeeck stood as the founder of a white, Afrikaner nation. Among resistance movements in exile during the 1970s and 1980s, revisionist historians identified Van Riebeeck as the founder of colonial oppression. After the 1994 elections, with the transition from resistance to reconstruction, Van Riebeeck began to appear in 'progressive' history textbooks as initiating a new, vibrant, multicultural society, the founder of 'rainbow nationalism' in South Africa (Witz 2000). In the public controversies during 2002 over how to remember him on the occasion of the 350-year anniversary of his landing, which seemed to be met with widespread public indifference, many people seemed to want to make peace with Van Riebeeck as neither a criminal nor a creator of South Africa.

Clearly, this history of interpreting, remembering and valuing Jan van Riebeeck reinforces the truth of an observation made during the political transition of the mid-1990s by Evita Bezuidenhout to the effect that our present and future are secure; only the past is uncertain.

In recovering South Africa's cultural legacies of the past, the past has emerged as undiscovered territory. As one of the world's cradles of humanity, established in the heritage sites of human evolution, South Africa is home to people in the present who are innovating in the creative and performing arts, sports, technology and even space travel. Still, in the present, government policy needs to enable the preservation and promotion of the country's diverse, enduring cultural legacies.

Under globalising conditions, the predominant 'communities of interpretation' are not colonial conquerors, oppressed people or political exiles. They are tourists. Arguably, Robben Island, the university of South Africa's political struggle, recognised globally as a cultural 'site of conscience', has been packaged for a global tourist market. In perpetuating cultural legacies, are we consigned to packaging our past for such a global future?

According to the research conducted by the International Network on Cultural Policy, South African policy makers are worried less about preserving the past than about competing in the global cultural market. At the core of government policy, according to this research, South Africa is threatened by the predominance of foreign culture, with the influx after 1994 of cultural

productions from the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, which has made it difficult for local cultural products to compete in the global cultural exchange. Although South African responses showed considerable reflection on the challenges of social diversity, national unity and cultural legacies, they kept returning to the dilemma of a new 'balancing act', balancing the homogenising threats to the local integrity of South African culture with the enabling potential of establishing South Africa's cultural products as competitive commodities in global markets (Baeker 2000).

Under these conditions, cultural diversity is at risk of being reduced to the 'indigenous' – not only for the global tourist market but also for nation-building by the postcolonial state. As Premesh Lalu has argued, 'In many postcolonial countries, the question of cultural diversity has been taken to mean the amalgamation of discrete cultural entities. This has promoted ethnicist outlooks that have invariably resulted in distinguishing between indigenous and non-indigenous cultures' (2002: 2). In the process, the promotion and protection of culture has itself been encouraged at the expense of cultural diversity. As Lalu has found, 'The creation of post-colonial states with a strong national cultural identity has often thwarted cultural diversity' (2002: 4). While dealing with these dilemmas, government policy can draw strength from initiatives at home in preserving and promoting cultural legacies as resources for South Africa. Clearly, such initiatives are in the public interest. In fact, they create publics. As Paul Gilroy has observed, alternative public spheres are constantly being opened not only through the rational deliberations of 'public reason' but also through the cultural performances of 'story-telling and music-making' (1993: 200). Here, the global is not necessarily in conflict with the local. In a world of globalised mass media, with its proliferating images, stories and music, the 'public' character of the public sphere has mutated in ways that validate both global and local cultural constructions of human identity.

### *Recommendations*

Based on this very brief, suggestive and impressionistic review of government policy and South African identity, we can only highlight some of the obvious areas for future research and strategic planning if we are to find critical and creative ways of dealing with identity in South Africa.

First, globalisation is an obvious area of concern but globalisation needs to be engaged from below, from the South and from South Africa. For too long, we have been subject to theorising from the North in which we are either data, absorbed into someone else's theory, or consumers of theory, absorbing theory, even junk theory, from the North in thinking through our situation. How do we theorise, strategise and act in a globalising world about globalisation?

Second, citizenship, not only national citizenship but also global and cultural citizenship, needs to be addressed in South African research and deliberations about national policy. How do we understand, affirm, enable and empower South African citizenship as a crucial identity with national, cultural and global significance for the deeply felt, even if multiple, identity of citizens?

Third, sustainable development, if it is going to be sustainable, must engage the most profound human formations of identity, including cultural, linguistic and religious commitments. It must also deal with a range of 'occult economies' – Christian gospels of prosperity, indigenous understandings of zombies and global myths of 'hidden hands' – that form part of the 'social capital' at stake in negotiations over basic trust in developing economies. How do we achieve sustainable development without engaging the identities of people who have managed to sustain themselves, their families and their communities under 'undeveloped' conditions?

Fourth, South Africa's human diversity, like its biodiversity, has been proclaimed as a national resource. Indeed, few other places on the globe can boast the rich, deep, genetic pool which can be found here. It is a resource that researchers are confident will unlock ancient knowledge and the narratives of pre-history. Already, exciting work is being done on the human genome that holds within it the possibility of a new understanding of race, migration, disease, evolution and diversity.

Diversity, in and of itself, can create violent division more easily than it can enable mutual recognition, understanding and tolerance (Chrisman 1996). In multicultural societies, as Will Kymlicka has proposed, religious and cultural diversity can be productive of national unity only if new forms of public participation are developed in which people can move in, through and across these human boundaries in order 'to see how issues look from the point of view of those with differing religious commitments and cultural back-

grounds' (1998: 188). How do we really engage diversity, in public or in private, in the daily practices of South African life?

Fifth, in protecting and promoting diversity, South Africa needs to establish the protection but not the promotion of cultural, linguistic and religious interests. If we focus on a policy of protection, we will find broad agreement among stakeholders and interested parties that everyone needs to be protected from denigration or exclusion on the basis of difference, whether that difference is grounded in culture, language or religion; or whether that difference is determined by gender, sexuality, disability, health-status or any other mark of distinction. Under protection, these interests, we can assume, will be able to promote themselves. How do we create a free space for human flourishing, protecting all but not selectively promoting any specific ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious interests?

Sixth, xenophobia, a by-product of nation building, needs to be addressed as a national priority. Paraphrasing Ernest Renan's nineteenth-century formulation, a nation is a human collectivity that misunderstands its own history and hates its neighbours (1990 [1882]). In establishing such an imagined, invented or arbitrary construction of national continuity with the past and national uniformity in the present, any nation can build its nationalism on profound ignorance about itself and the world in which it operates. Given the horrible history of nationalism, we need to ask: how can we build South Africa as a nation without demons, whether those demons are located in the past or imagined to be crossing the borders? We also need to consider the importance of integrating new citizens into our nation. How are new South Africans persuaded to buy into our new democracy and to commit to the values that underpin our new constitutional dispensation?

Seventh, South Africa's cultural legacies, in their multiplicity, ambiguity and ongoing conflicts of interpretation, provide an invaluable entry into all of these problems of identity. As human resources of imagination, creativity and critical reflection on the contentious issues of identity we have raised, the cultural media of museums, libraries and other institutions of arts and culture in South Africa are faced with the urgent challenge of representing South Africa not only for the tourist market but also for a nation in the making. How do we support these efforts in cultural representation in ways that will compete on global markets but also enhance human flourishing in South Africa?

Finally, we must ponder the imperative of rooting our development in the vital forces of our society, namely those of heritage, identity and creativity. Until we understand producing culture and forging identity as a creative process and until we establish an environment in which creative individuals flourish, we are going to have only a superficial, perhaps even meaningless, national identity.

### Notes

- 1 *Prince v President, Cape Law Society and others*, 2001 2 BCLR 133 (CC).
- 2 *Nkosi and another v Bührmann*, 2001 1 SA 1145 (T).
- 3 Republic of South Africa, *Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities Bill* (Pretoria, 2001).
- 4 Boernation, 'The Cyber Republic of the Boer Nation' <<http://www.boer.co.za>>.

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## *Conclusion: social cohesion in South Africa*

David Chidester, Phillip Dexter and Wilmot James

According to the World Bank, social cohesion and integration are crucial for economic development. As many critics have argued, including critics emerging from the World Bank, global economic prescriptions have not worked to advance the social cohesion and integration that are supposedly necessary for those prescriptions to actually work. In fact, by undermining local social integrity, agencies like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the 'Washington Consensus' have contradicted their own assertions about the importance of social cohesion and integration. So we find ourselves, in South Africa as elsewhere, in a vicious cycle, turning within the spiralling loop of the global and the local.

Locally, as we have seen, South Africa has embraced the ideal of social cohesion. We have enacted a constitutional framework, with its constitutional patriotism, for imagining, 'We, the people, of South Africa.' We have come up with new slogans for building, working or pulling together. We have mined our indigenous heritage for cultural resources, such as the principle of *ubuntu*, signifying mutual, reciprocal recognition of humanity, which might provide a basis for social cohesion, even when we seek to exploit such a resource for its potential business applications (see Mbigi 2000).

From the global to the local, from the World Bank to community-based organisations in South Africa, 'social capital' has emerged as a new language of value. In conclusion, we gather together insights from the chapters of this book that might be useful in identifying, locating and measuring social capital as an indicator of social cohesion in South Africa

In simple terms, social capital can be defined as social networks, informed by trust, that enable people to participate in reciprocal exchanges, mutual support and collective action to achieve shared goals. As an increasingly popular indicator of social cohesion, social capital has featured in a burgeoning social-science literature as the key to democracy and development.

Uses of the term, 'social capital', range from identifying civic trust in democratic politics to intimate trust in family relations. In a democratic polity, following the influential formulation of Robert Putnam, social capital registers in 'features of social organisations, such as trust, norms and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating co-ordinated actions' (1993: 167; see also Putnam 2000). In a family, neighbourhood or local community, social capital can be located in 'a person's or group's sympathy or sense of obligation toward another person or group that may produce a potential benefit, advantage and preferential treatment to that other person or group of persons beyond that which might be expected in a selfish exchange relationship' (SCIG 2000: 580; see Baron, Field & Schuller 2001).

In the analysis of social capital, confusion has arisen from a lack of precision in identifying its contexts, benefits and value. With respect to context, it might be helpful to distinguish among the different arenas of exchange in which social capital operates. For clarity, we need to specify the different ways in which social capital can be defined in the spheres of government, labour, business and community. Simplifying matters, but also trying to identify the different contexts in which any analysis of social capital must be relevant, we propose that social capital registers differently in government (as social trust), in labour (as social livelihood), in business (as social responsibility) and in community (as social kinship). In conclusion, referring back to the chapters in this book, we will take each of these valences of social capital in turn.

### *Government*

In the sphere of government, social capital is first and foremost a resource of public trust. Social capital is an index of popular participation, commitment and trust in the institutions of governance. The lack or absence of social capital, in this regard, is a measure of people's mistrust in government (Mishler 1997). Social capital is built up when people trust government and government trusts people. Although empirical research on social capital has often produced sweeping generalisations, suitable for newspaper headlines, such as, 'People do not trust the government', relations of trust are much more complex and diffused throughout the society. Political trust, as a potent form of social capital, is crucial for enabling citizens to participate in public institutions, in the public interest and for the public good. Without social capital, from the

perspective of democratic governance, there can be no productive relations of exchange between the governed and their government (Tapscott 2001).

In this book, we have tested conventional assumptions about public trust in government. In the first section, dedicated to exploring political order, we have seen different ways in which social capital is at stake in contests over state sovereignty, democratic tolerance and cultural justice. If we seek to measure these contests in terms of social capital, we can see that they all focus our attention on the social trust necessary for good governance.

Reviewing Peter Vale's genealogy of the 'state system' in southern Africa, we recall that the obsession with national sovereignty, as the alien, but normative model for establishing the internal security and secure borders of states in the region, has resulted in a situation of high anxiety, instability and insecurity. Social trust, although it might be regarded as the basic currency of social capital for national security, has not necessarily been invested in the state system in southern Africa. Instead, given the inherent insecurity of that system, people have invested their social capital, social trust and social allegiances elsewhere, in transnational religious networks, for example, which promise greater returns on their social trust than the state can deliver. This crisis of social trust, if we accept that trust is a measure of social capital, is a crisis in the social capitalisation of the state in southern Africa.

Assuming that a democratic state has been established in South Africa, Amanda Gouws' chapter explored the prospects of cultivating political tolerance as a basis for social trust. Although tolerance might be an essential ingredient of social trust in the sphere of government, Gouws indicated how difficult it is to transform mistrust into trust. It is much easier, as her experiments suggested, to convert tolerant people to attitudes of intolerance, apprehension and mistrust. Within a functioning democracy, we can suppose, social capital is built up through relations of trust in which citizens are able to tolerate political ideas and groupings that are perceived not only as objectionable but also as a threat. A sense of danger, however, as the research of Amanda Gouws has suggested, permeates public perceptions and attitudes towards the political process in South Africa. Social risk, rather than social trust, seems to be the dominant feature of people's sense of the political arena.

Given this diagnosis, we might welcome a dose of therapy, such as the 'praise therapy' proposed by Chirevo Kwenda in his chapter. Following Kwenda's

analysis, social trust must integrate cultural justice with social capital entering into reciprocal exchange with cultural capital. As Kwenda argues, however, the social trust of governance has been substantially, even if subtly, almost invisibly, undermined by the cultural burden, which is unequally shared in the society, of having to suspend the 'taken for granted' in the human dynamics of language, culture and religion. Such cultural injustice, as Kwenda suggests, cannot be the basis for building any kind of social capital based on trust.

In the sphere of government, social capital is built through social trust in the nation, the state and public institutions but it is also built in and through public participation in the political culture. If we want to measure social capital in the sphere of democratic governance in South Africa, we will need to consider not only the liberal political values, such as tolerance, but also the indigenous cultural values, practices and performances that can be integrated into democratic political activity.

Although the term, civil society, has come to mean all things to all people, everyone using the term agrees that it depends upon public participation. The classic model of 'civic' participation, however, is only one way in which people participate in public.

One measure of the 'health' of any civil society is the participation of the poor and the marginalised. In research on civil society organisations in Tanzania, Halfani and Nzomo proposed indicators of a strong civil society, such as a culture of tolerance and a political environment allowing equitable access, but the most important indicator of a healthy civil society was the capacity of the poor and the marginalised to organise within voluntary associations that are independent of the state but politically influential (Halfani & Nzomo 1995: 111).

Participation relies on different modes of organisation. In his analysis of community-based organisations in Tanzania, Hyden found that 'civic' participation was only one way in which people mobilised. Other modes of organisation are based on class solidarity growing out of a common sense of being exploited; or based on the 'moral economy' of people, whose traditional values are being threatened by modernisation, getting together to defend those values; or based on strong communal ties, which might foster development, but are in conflict with norms underpinning the civic public realm. As Hyden concluded, community-based organisations are mobilised around 'competing currencies of social capital' that underwrite collective action (2001: 161–163).

Although ‘civic’ social capital might follow the rules of rational choice theory, or game theory, other forms of social capital are embedded in the thick fabric of traditional, communal, cultural, religious, and moral sympathies and obligations. Paying attention to these different currencies, if we are going to use social capital as a measure of the effectiveness of public participation by people in South Africa, we will need to account for the different cultural registers of trust that underwrite social capital in matters of governance.

### *Labour*

For labour, social capital is a matter of livelihood strategies, which are pursued not only through employment but also through social networks that facilitate access to goods and services, to water, electricity, housing support, education, employment opportunities and welfare benefits. Social capital, from this perspective, signifies resources for social livelihood (Bebbington 1999).

In the second section of this book, we explored aspects of labour in South Africa that can be recast in terms of social capital. Workers in South Africa, as Tony Ehrenreich observed, are protected by progressive legislation. Without jobs, such labour laws might mean very little to the unemployed. For workers as well, however, livelihood depends upon more than employment. On the one hand, Ehrenreich focused not merely on workers but on working families, suggesting that households, with their intimate networks of kinship and reciprocity, should be regarded as the basic unit of livelihood. In this respect, although Ehrenreich did not employ the term, he opened questions about the crucial role of social capital built up in families and kinship networks for the livelihood strategies of workers. On the other hand, emphasising the broader social context, Ehrenreich stressed the importance of social solidarity, underwritten by basic values, in ways that could easily be translated into the social networks, trust and norms that define social capital.

Embedded in family, workplace and labour unions, the social capital of workers has been profoundly affected by globalising forces. As Stephanie Barrientos and Andrietta Kritzingler demonstrated in tracking the impact of the global value chain on workers in the South African fruit industry, these effects have been differentially experienced by workers who find themselves in a new ‘hierarchy of employment’. Drawing upon the potent symbolism of the ‘traditional’ farm, the notion of ‘farm as family’ seems to transfer the social capital of

the household to the workplace as if the farm were an extended network of kinship. Under globalising conditions, however, that 'farm as family' is being reconstituted by new forms of marginal, migrant labour, which have realigned the social networks of the farm. Here also, although Barrientos and Kritzingler did not use the terminology, social capital appears to be gained and lost through livelihood strategies that adapt to the changing local and global terrain of commercial farming.

More dramatically, perhaps, African migrants, refugees and exiles, as Owen Sichone observed, are displaced from the supportive kinship and community networks of their homes. Yet they manage to maintain transnational links and establish new networks within the cities of South Africa. 'They steal our jobs,' Sichone noted, is a common complaint about these 'foreign natives'. Yet, as his brief illustrations of car guards, hair cutters and street vendors suggest, these migrants often find their livelihoods in distinctive niche occupations. Although situated in the 'informal sector', these occupations assume their substantial form through social capital that operates in a kind of social currency exchange between the country of origin and local relationships, including intimate relationships, which are crucial to the strategies for achieving a social livelihood in a strange land.

With respect to the world of work, therefore, social capital is accumulated not merely through employment, whether formal or informal, but through participating in social networks that sustain social livelihoods. Researchers are exploring the ways in which social capital enables people to find jobs, keep jobs and advance in formal employment. They are highlighting the importance of social capital in sustaining self-employment (Sanders & Nee 1996). In South Africa, under globalising conditions, we need to understand the strategies people employ for achieving, sustaining and advancing social livelihoods.

As a resource for survival, social networks can register as what Woolcock and Narayan call 'bonding social capital' that enables people to 'get by'. They contrast this basic survival resource with 'bridging social capital', which enables people not merely to survive but to 'get ahead' (2000). Although many people, perhaps most people, rely upon social networks for survival, the business of business is getting ahead, using resources for financial advancement. Can this economic activity, with its rapidly globalising expansion through multinational corporations and financial speculation, build social capital?

## *Business*

For business, social capital appears as another term for social responsibility. Functioning networks, informed by trust, can certainly be good for business, enhancing the frequency and preferential terms of trade, affecting the cost of contracts and adding value. However, social capital has also registered as an asset that can be accumulated by business commitments to social responsibility or corporate citizenship.

In their research on multinational corporations and social capital in South Africa, Jones, Nyland & Pollitt, have reviewed company annual reports and websites for evidence of projects that build social capital. Defining social capital as the 'networks and reciprocal behaviours of a social group', they suggest that multinational corporations are engaged in a variety of initiatives in building social capital through transnational networks, national initiatives and social projects within local communities in South Africa (2001).

For example, a major multinational mining corporation, with operations in Australia, Latin America and southern Africa, is involved in a range of transnational, national and local initiatives that could be regarded as projects in building social capital in South Africa.

Transnationally, the company is a member of the Global Mining Initiative, which forms the Mining and Minerals Working Group of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. Membership in such an initiative, according to Jones et al., brings this multinational corporation into a transnational network of similar firms, expanding its global social capital, in ways that can be transferred to building social capital at the local level.

At the national level, the company is involved in various projects focusing on education, youth, crime and the arts. The company's participation in the national initiative, 'Business Against Crime', for example, is interpreted by Jones et al. as a significant way of building social capital by increasing the strength of inter-firm networks, expanding the scope of interaction among firms, government and local communities, and addressing the social problem of crime which threatens to erode social capital.

In local communities, the company runs a range of social projects. It has established community centres for management training, for teaching life skills, for encouraging entrepreneurship, for providing health services and for

supporting a community-based environmental campaign to remove waste from mines. Besides allocating resources, these social projects, as Jones et al. argue, demonstrate that company's direct, active participation within communities in efforts to build social capital (2001).

Against Tony Ehrenreich's assertion that multinational corporations are only interested in maximising profits, such social-responsibility projects, whether or not they are rendered in terms of social capital, suggest that companies are also in the business of social cohesion. In contrast to what Thomas Koelble described in Chapter 7 as the abstract violence of speculative global capitalism, which undermines any nation's control over the economy and threatens any sense of local community, these projects seem to demonstrate an active social commitment to the global, national and local well-being of people. As an extension of what Jan Hofmeyr identified in his chapter as the essential value of 'business care', these initiatives in social responsibility seem to exemplify the positive, life-affirming interactions of successful transnational business by creating social networks, informed by trust, for the mutual recognition of our common, shared humanity. By putting that recognition of humanity into practice, as Jones et al. suggest, multinational corporations have been crucial agents in building social capital in South Africa.

Of course, no one would assume that the role of business in building social capital could be determined from simply reading the public relations of multinational corporations. To test this claim that business is actively engaged in building social capital in South Africa through social-responsibility projects, we must focus on local communities, and give special attention to how social networks are formed, not only in projects 'for the people' but also in projects created 'of the people, by the people and for the people'. Accordingly, social capital has to be situated in a political economy of community.

### *Community*

For a community, social capital is a kind of social kinship. In ethnographic literature, the term, 'fictive kinship', has been used for relations outside of the family that work just like family relations. In a local community, social capital, as a kind of 'fictive kinship', is accumulated in and through social networks, informed by trust, sympathy and mutual obligation, which enable people to act together in advancing common interests. Adopting the 'kinship'

model of a family, as opposed to the contractual model of human relations that dominates both the liberal state and the capitalist market, these local networks of social capital emerge in a wide range of voluntary associations, community-based organisations and new social movements.

In the chapters by Sandra Klopper and Steven Robins, we saw local networks developing a kind of social kinship – the family of street artists, the family of the homeless – that might be regarded as forming community-based social capital. In the case of the South African Homeless Peoples Federation, as Robins demonstrated, the organisers of this social network explicitly understood their work as building social capital.

As local forms of community in South Africa have undergone dramatic, even violent transitions, the global appears to stand in opposition to the social kinship of the local. Certainly, as Chirevo Kwenda suggested, Africans throughout southern Africa have borne a heavy cultural burden in these transitions that has affected the social capital of local communities. Still, in the analysis of both Klopper and Robins, we find local community formations actively, intentionally linking up with transnational movements in cultural and social activism. Like multinational corporations, as these chapters suggest, South African communities are also building social capital at the intersection of local interests, national policies and global forces.

In these transactions, are there distinctive local and indigenous resources in South Africa for building social capital? Without idealising or romanticising indigenous African culture – a risk that arises, for example, whenever *ubuntu* is invoked as the solution for social cohesion, business management or political order – we still need to find ways of ‘capitalising’ on the actually existing forms of social kinship in which people live.

For example, in weaving the fabric of social kinship, a traditional African family is constituted through religious, cultural and social rituals that include an exchange of cattle. In what has been called the southern African ‘cattle complex’, the ‘bovine mystique’ of social relations of value, cattle are a storehouse of wealth, as Jane Schneider has observed, which ‘continue to reckon transactions that concern enduring social relationships – payment for bridewealth, healing, court-imposed fines, and loans between patrons and clients – in terms of nominal cattle known as “cows without legs”, cattle whose value does not fluctuate with the price of an ox in the marketplace but instead reflects the

quality of the ties between the exchanging parties' (2002: 70-71; see also Comaroff & Comaroff 1990; Ferguson 1994). As a store of value, medium of exchange, unit of accounting, and even as 'gods with wet noses', how do cattle operate in building social capital? How does the social kinship signified by the ritual exchange of cattle extend to other spheres, such as loans in business, cooperation in labour or accountability in government, which are often regarded as evidence of social capital?

By contrast to the social cohesion suggested by the 'cattle complex', social crisis has often been configured in traditional African terms as the disruptive influence of anti-social agents, rendered in English as 'witches', who draw upon anti-human forces to threaten the harmony of a family, household or community. Motivated by anti-social impulses of anger, envy or greed, witches undermine social cohesion. How do these beliefs in witches, witchcraft and occult causes for misfortune affect social capital? As Dirk Kohnert has argued, the widespread conviction that social cohesion has to be defended against these evil forces is a fact of South African life that any government policy, development project or social initiative has to take seriously. Belief in witchcraft cannot be dismissed as a pre-modern residue; it appears in the modern politics and the modern economy of Africa (2003; see also Geschiere 1997). How do the beliefs, practices and mobilisation of collective action in relation to these occult forces affect the process of building social capital in South African communities?

Traditional leaders, at first glance, seem to violate the basic principles of 'civic' participation, within voluntary associations, which many theorists of social capital have regarded as the basis for democracy. Again, without romanticising any ideal of indigenous African democracy, we need further research and reflection on how social trust might be built in relation to traditional leadership. On the one hand, traditional leaders reinforce relations of social hierarchy, patriarchy and patronage that block the free flow of social capital. For many analysts, the implicit coercion of such a system, even if it developed networks, norms and reciprocal trust, would make traditional leadership, like criminal gangs and fascist organisations, a social exchange system for the production of 'bad social capital'. On the other hand, the social capital associated with traditional leadership might be perceived within local communities in a range of different ways. For example, recent research on public perceptions of traditional leadership in the Sekhukhune region of South Africa has

suggested that people use different criteria for trusting traditional leaders that range from social ties of ‘fictive kinship’ to social norms of democratic accountability (Oomen 2002). How do these different criteria of social trust affect the process of building social capital in local communities?

At the level of the local community, research on social capital in South Africa is only just beginning. Early results suggest that we might learn some things that we do not already know. Households, as we might expect, are essential for building social capital, but, in KwaZulu-Natal, research on linkages between households and other social networks is revealing new ways in which social capital might contribute to social welfare (Maluccio, Haddad & May 1999, 2000). In other research, a recent survey of families and social networks found that black Africans reported fewer and less frequent contacts with extended family members than Indians or coloureds in South Africa (Higson-Smith 2002). A survey of social networks and HIV/AIDS in mining communities found that members of sports and religious associations were less likely to be infected with HIV than members of financial associations such as mutual aid societies or burial societies (Campbell & Williams 1998a, 1998b and 1999). A survey of one of the poorest communities in the Western Cape, Site B in Khayelitsha, found that residents were rich in the social capital built up by participating in burial societies, mutual aid societies, street committees and other social networks (Goldin & Hatia 2003: 35–39). The crucial question, of course, is always: what do we do with such data?

At the national level, South Africa negotiated a peaceful transition that came very close to realising the pragmatic, but profound, human insight that Giles Gunn described as ‘kinship with the enemy’. The mutual recognition, reconciliation and commitment to ‘building together’, which lie at the heart of building social capital in the sphere of governance, have been thoroughly established as national policy. However, how has this national policy intersected with the different, yet inter-dependent, spheres of labour, business and community in South Africa? As we have seen in this book, social coherence and cohesion, whether or not we adopt the term, ‘social capital’, involves languages of value.

### *The value of social capital*

Extraordinary claims have been made about the benefits of social capital. As Wendy Stone has observed, social capital promises ‘benefits – both social and

economic – said to come from those interactions among neighbours, citizens and governments which are characterised by strong norms of trust and mutuality’ (2001: 1). Listening to these claims, we are assured that social capital will enable government to cultivate the trust of citizens, to implement effective development programmes and even to solve a wide range of social problems from crime prevention to health provision. Social capital will enable workers to find jobs, keep jobs and improve working conditions while also enabling people to survive without formal employment through supportive networks of mutual aid. By demonstrating good corporate citizenship, business, including multi-national corporations, will build social capital while growing their enterprises. Communities, especially the impoverished and marginalised, will find in social capital the crucial resource not only for their survival but also for their sustainable economic development.

These benefits cannot simply be assumed. One of the challenges facing the analysis of social capital is to distinguish between social networks, on the one hand, and actual benefits, on the other. If social capital works like capital, we might be able to adapt Marx’s classic analysis of capital (M-C-M’) to analyse the ways in which the human resources of social capital (shared norms, mutual trust and social networks) are translated into material benefits that, in turn, enhance the implicit value of the human resources of social capital. In these terms, a social capital cycle (R-C-R’) might usefully be employed to assess the actual benefits of social networks, informed by trust, which enable collective action (Hean, Cowley, Forbes, Griffiths & Maben 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Most analysis has treated social capital as an asset, like physical capital, financial capital, human capital, intellectual capital and cultural capital, which can be owned, accumulated, exchanged and distributed. Research on social capital has been premised on a certain language of value based on capitalist calculations of assets, equity and liability.

Any benefits that might be derived from shared norms, mutual trust and social networks, however, depend not only upon social assets and obligations but also upon social agency.

For example, in a study of social capital and development in 60 villages in Rajasthan, India, Anirudh Krishna found that ‘capable agency’ was the key to realising any benefits from the social capital inherent in shared norms, mutual trust and social networks. Successful development programmes, he found,

depended not merely on the existence of stocks of social capital but upon the agency of community leaders, workers and activists in drawing upon those resources to realise development goals (2001).

What does social capital look like from the perspective of a 'labour theory of value'? We need to develop a model for analysing social capital as social labour in which benefits are derived from the time, effort and energy of participation in social networks.

In the languages of values, we might suppose, something like religion should generate the ultimate terms. After all, religion is supposed to be about ultimate concerns, about transcendence and about the sacred, which, following the foundational work of the sociologist, Emile Durkheim, provides the social glue, the social cement, the overarching sacred canopy or the underlying sacred foundation for any society. These days, however, it is social capital, not the sacred, that seems to be playing that role.

If social capital has assumed the role of the sacred, we might need to pay attention to the political economy of the sacred in which capital has become the ultimate language of value. Not simply given, as if it fell out of the sky, in the history of religions, the sacred is produced through religious practices of consecration, through the religious work of setting apart, ritualising and interpreting something as sacred (Chidester & Linenthal 1996). In producing the sacred, as in producing social capital, 'capable agency' is required.

In this book, we have outlined possibilities for 'capable agency' in the spheres of government, labour, business and community in a changing, globalising South Africa. In conclusion, it should be clear that we are not at the end but only at the beginning of charting this terrain and tracking these possibilities for coherent, cohesive action. As we understand this book, the authors have formed a reference group, a kind of enabling, reciprocal network, for our empirical and analytical research on the question of social cohesion in a changing, globalising South Africa. What holds us together, we asked, when everything – community conflicts, business failures, labour disputes, governmental delays in delivering services and global forces beyond our control – seems to be pulling us apart? Reflecting on the responses from our authors, we are convinced that the very question, 'What holds us together?', is worth asking, not because it can be answered but because it gives rise to serious reflection on what we are about even when we are not clear about who we are or

why we are a collectivity. In this problematic, yet productive dilemma, we find ourselves, in South Africa as well as elsewhere in this globalising world, on the same planet if not on the same page. Thanking the authors of this book for being on these pages, we hope to continue, broaden and deepen these conversations about what holds us together, under globalising conditions, in a changing South Africa.

### Note

- 1 On the benefit of social capital more generally, see Knack & Keefer (1997).

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# Index

- Achebe, Chinua, 285  
advertising, 181–183  
African Americans, 17, 291–292  
African-initiated churches, 5, 39  
African National Congress, 17, 45, 53,  
151–152, 162, 165, 257–258,  
262–264, 305, 309  
African Renaissance, 308  
African traditional religion: and ancestors,  
77; and animals, 76–79; and cattle,  
331–332; and occult economies,  
301–302, 314; and praise singing, 6,  
73–76; and witchcraft, 332  
Africanisation, 9, 78–79, 308  
Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging, 45  
Afrikaners: and clergy, 29; and national-  
ism, 305–306, 309; and right-wing,  
296; and state, 29–30  
Ahmad, Aijaz, 285  
AIDS, 217, 244, 247, 250, 252, 259, 260,  
333  
*Aliens Control Act*, 131  
American National Science Foundation,  
44  
ancestors, 77  
Anglo-Boer War, 30  
Angola, 151  
animals, 76–79, 331–332  
An-Na'im, Abdulahi, 306  
apartheid: and culture, 68; and education,  
60; global, 12; and identity, 302; and  
labour, 161; and resistance, 252; and  
state, 4, 23  
Appadurai, Arjun, 3, 268–270, 283, 299  
Arendt, Hannah, 35, 167–168  
Argentina, 150  
Arias, Oscar, 35  
Arrighi, Giovanni, 283  
Asian Coalition for Housing Rights, 265  
Asmal, Kader, 309  
Austen, Jane, 279  
Australia, 179  
Austria, 130  
Balzac, Honoré de, 279  
Barenblatt, Henry, 175  
Baudrillard, Jean, 35  
Bauman, Zygmunt, 37, 242–243, 268–269  
Beauvoir, Simone de, 204–205  
Bezuidenhout, Evita, 312  
Bhabha, Homi, 285, 286  
*Big Issue*, 232–235  
Biko, Steve, 162  
Bin Laden, Osama, 127–128  
Black Consciousness Movement, 162  
Black Panthers, 44  
Bogota, 244  
*Bold and the Beautiful*, 181  
Bolnick, Joel, 242, 258, 260, 267  
*Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive  
Systems*, 230  
Bowman, Larry, 25, 33  
Breytenbach, Breyten, 164–165  
Brighouse, Harry, 56–57  
Bryceson, Deborah, 301  
Buddhism, 184

- Burke, Kenneth, 16, 282–284  
 business: and care, 176–177; and entrepreneurs, 174–176; and globalisation, 12, 89, 173–191; and manners, 180; and multiculturalism, 177–179, 189; and social capital, 329–330  
 Butler, Judith, 281
- Calcutta, 244, 265, 269  
 Calhoun, Craig, 148, 166, 168  
 Calvinism, and state, 28–29  
 Canada, 152, 179  
 Canclini, Garcia, 226–227  
 Cape Town: and community based organizations, 242–271; and marginalized communities, 224–239; and tourism, 14, 235–237; and Zion Christian Church, 39  
 Cape Town City Council, 225–226  
 Cape Town Partnership, 228  
 Capespan, 97  
 capital: circulatory, 11–12, 143–146, 149–151, 168; cultural, 224–225; global, 84, 269; mining, 29; social, 9–11, 15, 18, 146, 212, 242, 245–247, 249, 252–254, 257, 259, 261–263, 268–269, 301, 323–335; speculative, 122–123; virtual, 135–136  
 Castells, Manuel, 148  
 Castro, Fidel, 10  
 Celan, Paul, 287–288  
 Ceres, 98–115  
 Chidester, David, 25  
 childhood, 196–197  
 Chodorow, Nancy, 207  
 Christianity: and African-initiated churches, 5, 39; African-American, 291–292; and animals, 76; Calvinist, 28–29; Charismatic, 301, 314; and Indians, 173–174; and state, 4  
 citizenship: cultural, 17, 299–300, 314; digital, 250; and education, 53; global, 17, 249–252, 298–299, 314; and national identity, 295; and nation-state, 115, 243; post-apartheid, 244; post-national, 298–300; social, 298  
 civic education, 5, 52–63  
 civil liberties, 44, 47  
 civil society: 147, 151, 153–156, 169, 244–251, 301, 326  
 class, 85  
 Clifford, James, 225, 306  
 Clinton, Bill, 10, 263  
 Clinton, Hillary, 263  
 Coca-Cola, 122, 182–183  
 Cocacolonisation, 122  
 Coetzee, JM, 180, 286–287  
 Cohen, Ariel, 229–231  
 Cold War, 4, 24, 31–33, 35–36  
 colonialism: and culture, 68, 71; and ‘others’, 16; and religion, 25; and state, 23–31, 157–158  
 Comaroff, Jean, 161, 301, 308  
 Comaroff, John, 157–158, 161, 301, 308  
 Commission for the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities, 304–305, 307  
 community: as keyword, 252; and marginalisation, 248; and social capital, 330–333; and tourism, 236–237; as transient, 243; as transnational, 39  
 community-based organisations, 242–271, 326  
 Congress of South African Trade Unions, 7–8, 85  
 Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, 165  
 Connolly, William E, 279  
 Conrad, Joseph, 286  
 Constitution: and group rights, 305; and judicial review, 152; and national unity, 162, 297, 323; and patriotism, 148, 166–169

- Conversion Model, 174–175, 179
- Cooper, David Graham, 202–204
- Council of Europe, 300
- creolisation, 16, 18
- crime, 248
- Cuba, 277
- culture: and apartheid, 68; and capitalism, 224–225; and change, 158, 168; and choice, 183; and citizenship, 299–300, 314; and colonialism, 68, 71; and diversity, 300; and ethnic identity, 185; and fragmentation, 226–227; and heritage, 296–297; and identity, 14; and indigenous, 6, 313; and justice, 6, 67–79; and multiculturalism, 156–161; and policy, 17–18, 311–316; and reconciliation, 67; and resources, 6; and street art, 224–227; and taken for granted, 6, 69–70
- Cyber Republic of the Boer Nation, 305–306
- De Klerk, FW, 32
- Defoe, Daniel, 285
- democracy: African, 332–333; and circulatory capitalism, 143–151, 168; and constitutional patriotism, 166–169; deep, 247, 267–269; and global economy, 150–151; liberal, 5, 42–43, 247; and market economy, 35; and multiculturalism, 156–161; and social capital, 212, 244, 246, 247; and tradition, 127–128
- Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology, 235–236, 295
- Department of Education, 303
- deregulation, 96–97, 115
- development, 90–91, 300–302; and culture, 300; and state, 245, 255–256
- Dikeni, Sandile, 163–164
- Disneyisation, 14
- District Six, 310
- Dominican Republic, 58
- Douglas, Mary, 14
- Douglass, Frederick, 279
- Du Bois, WEB, 292
- Durkheim, Emile, 128, 216, 243, 279, 335
- Dutch East India Company, 26–27
- Easternisation, 9, 121
- Ebrahim, Hassen, 152
- economy: as casino, 10; and development, 186–187; global, 10, 158; market, 35; national, 144; neo-liberal, 36; occult, 301–302, 314; as partnership, 10
- education: civic, 5, 52–63; political, 62; and religion, 303–304; and social-learning theory, 52
- Ekman, Paul, 180
- employment hierarchy, 8, 93, 102–107, 117
- entrepreneurs, 174–176
- Ethical Trading Initiative Baseline Code, 97–98, 113–114
- Ethiopian Church, 39
- ethnicity, 53, 185, 302
- European Union, 149–150, 263
- exports, 92–118
- Extension of Security of Tenure Act (1997)*, 100
- family: in crisis, 196–197, 211–217; and diversity, 208–211; and farm, 8, 110–111; and feminism, 204–208, 221; and globalisation, 135–136; and immigrants, 9, 136–138; indigenous African, 13; Muslim, 13; nuclear, 218; and praise singing, 74–75; and radical psychiatry, 201–204, 221; and socialization, 197–201; South African, 13, 217–222; and tradition, 127; working, 7, 13, 83

- Fanon, Frantz, 311  
 Firestone, Shulamith, 206  
 Fischer, Marion, 232–233  
 Forbes, Delysia, 236  
 Fordism, 157  
 Foucault, Michel, 260, 270  
 France, 54, 128, 130, 131, 299  
 Freud, Sigmund, 282  
 Friedan, Betty, 207  
 Friedman, Milton, 128  
 fruit industry, 92–118  
 Frye, Northrop, 279  
 Fukuyama, Francis, 211–217, 222  
 fundamentalism, 127–128
- gangs, 225, 252  
 Geertz, Clifford, 279  
*Gemeinschaft*, 12  
 gender: and citizenship, 298; and family, 204–208  
 Gender Commission, 304  
 General Electric, 181–182  
 genocide, 16, 246, 277, 287–291  
 Germany, 34, 130, 152, 166–167, 250, 287–291  
*Gesellschaft*, 12  
 Giddens, Anthony, 121–122, 124–126, 128, 301  
 Giliomee, Hermann, 27  
 Gilroy, Paul, 313  
 global apartheid, 12  
 globalisation: and anti-globalisation, 247; from below, 15, 250–251; and business, 11–12, 89, 173–191; and circulatory capitalism, 149–151; and citizenship, 249–252, 298–299, 314; and civil society, 248, 249–251; and community, 12–15; and cultural fragmentation, 226–227; and cultural homogenization, 230, 238; and democracy, 150–151; and development, 89; and economy, 9–12, 143–191; and exports, 92–118; and fruit growers, 98–101; and government, 3–6, 17–18; and information, 122, 148; and integration, 122; and labour, 7–9, 83–91; and local, 129; and occult economies, 301–302, 314; and state, 250; and tourism, 14, 224–239, 312; and transnational advocacy networks, 244–245; and value chain, 94–98
- globalism, 129  
 Glover, Cathy, 261  
 Goodman, Nelson, 290  
 Gordimer, Nadine, 285  
 Gore, Al, 34  
 government: and critical engagement, 258; and cultural justice, 6; and political tolerance, 5–6; and social capital, 244, 247, 324–327. See also policy.  
 Grabouw, 98–115  
 graffiti, 224–227  
 Gramsci, Antonio, 31  
 Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), 7, 85, 90, 296  
 Gutmann, Amy, 56, 62–63
- Habermas, Jürgen, 148, 167–168, 310  
 Hanekom, Francois, 236  
 Hannerz, Ulf, 225  
 happiness, 187–190  
 Harries, Patrick, 25  
 Hart, Keith, 122, 135  
 heritage, 296–297, 312–313  
 hierarchy of employment, 8, 93, 102–107, 117  
 Hinduism, 266  
 Hip-Hop, 224–227  
 Hobbes, Thomas, 26, 156  
 Hobsbawm, Eric, 277  
 Holiday, Anthony, 26  
 holidays, 309  
 Holocaust, 16–17, 287–291

- Homans, Peter, 280
- homeless: and Cape Town, 14–15, 227–239; and New York, 230–232; and recycling, 227–228. See also South African Homeless Peoples Federation
- Homeless Vehicle*, 232
- Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, 182
- horizontal exchange, 245, 249, 254, 257, 265–268
- housing, 107–110
- Human Genome Project, 76, 314
- human rights, 14–15, 86, 130, 158, 298–299, 306–307
- Human Rights Commission, 304
- Human Sciences Research Council, 295–296
- humanity: common, 180, 278–279; cradles of, 312; key ingredients of, 183–186; sin against, 277
- Huntington, Samuel P, 33
- Hussein, Saddam, 124
- hybridisation, 16
- Ibn Khaldun, 127
- Ibsen, Henrik, 23, 279
- identity: African, 78–79; and choice, 243; and creolisation, 16; and difference, 283; and mourning, 280–282; national, 61; and ‘others’, 277–285, 292–293; social, 302–307; South African, 295
- Ignatieff, Michael, 16, 282–283
- Ilongot, 281–282
- immigration, 9, 25, 38, 129–138, 250
- Immigration Act*, 131
- imperialism: and culture, 6; and state, 4, 29–30
- India, 152, 242, 244, 249, 253, 254, 261, 265–267, 334–335
- Inkatha Freedom Party, 45, 53
- Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 163
- Institute for Strategic Studies, 34
- International Monetary Fund, 7, 148, 245, 255, 300, 323
- International Network on Cultural Policy, 300, 312–313
- investment, 90–91
- Islam, 13, 266, 299
- Italy, 147, 153, 181–182, 212
- izilo*, 77
- James, William, 280
- Jansen, Emile, 225
- Japan, 179–180
- judicial review, 152
- justice: cultural, 6, 67–79; restorative, 73; and revenge, 71–73; and tolerance, 56
- Karanga, 74
- Kenya, 55, 266–267
- Khayelitsha, 333
- Khoisan, 306
- Klug, Heinz, 152
- Koelble, Thomas, 246
- Kruger, Paul, 29
- Ku Klux Klan, 44
- Kushner, Harold, 72
- Kuyper, Abraham, 29
- KwaZulu-Natal, 333
- Kymlicka, Will, 314–315
- labour: and apartheid, 161; and codes of conduct, 113–115; and colonial state, 157; and farm, 8–9, 92–118; flexible, 92–93, 98–115; foreign, 132–136; and gender, 205–206; and globalisation, 83–91; informal, 9, 132–136; organized, 7–8, 83–91; and social capital, 327–328
- Labour Relations Act*, 86

- Lacan, Jacques, 281  
 Laing, RD, 202, 204  
 Lalu, Premesh, 313  
 Land Claims Commission, 304  
 Landless People's Movement, 252  
 language: and culture, 69–70, 75; and  
     domination, 73; policy, 6, 303  
 Latinos, 299  
 Lautreamont, Comte de, 289–290  
 Leach, Edmund, 204  
 Legassick, Martin, 27–28  
 Levi, Primo, 16, 287–291  
 liberalism, 42, 55–57, 162  
 literature: African-American, 291–292;  
     Holocaust, 287–291; postcolonial,  
     285–287  
 Little, David, 5  
 Los Angeles, 225, 248  
 Luthuli, Albert, 309  
 Lyman, Princeton, 31–32
- Mabandla, Brigitte, 295  
 Malawi, 39  
 Mamdani, Mahmood, 27, 158  
 Mandela, Nelson, 32, 162  
 Mangope, Lucas, 307–308  
 manners, 180  
 market research, 174–176  
 Marti, Jose, 277  
 Marx, Karl, 279, 334  
 Masuzawa, Tomoko, 67  
 Mbeki, Thabo, 250  
 Mbembe, Achille, 308  
*mbongi*, 76  
 McCuen, JJ, 33  
 Mead, George Herbert, 280, 284  
 Melville, Herman, 279, 286  
 Memi, Albert, 285  
 Mfengu, 71  
 migrants, 9, 25, 38, 129–138, 250  
 Miller, Christopher, 280  
 Millett, Kate, 204
- Mitchell, Juliet, 204  
 mourning, 280–282  
 Mozambique, 130  
 multiculturalism: and business, 177–179,  
     189; and communication, 177–179;  
     and democracy, 156–161  
 Mumbai (Bombay), 244, 249, 265,  
     268–270  
 Mutwa, Credo, 308  
 Mveng, Engelbert, 72
- Naipaul, VS, 286  
 Namibia, 152  
 Nandy, Ashis, 16  
 National Coalition for the Homeless, 234  
 National Khoisan Consultative  
     Conference, 306  
 National Socialism, 30  
 nationalism: Afrikaner, 29–30, 296,  
     305–306, 309; and heritage, 313;  
     and holidays, 309; Khoisan, 306;  
     and liberalism, 42; and monuments,  
     311–312; and narratives, 308; and  
     nation building, 307–311; and 'rain-  
     bow nation', 33, 128, 295, 308, 312;  
     and romantic, 30; Zulu, 296
- Nazis, 288–291  
 Ndebele, 156  
 Ndebele, Njabulo, 311  
 negotiation, 309  
 neo-liberalism, 4, 7, 36, 89, 131, 245, 247,  
     268  
 New Partnership for African Development  
     (NEPAD), 7, 90, 296  
 New Zealand, 96, 179  
 Non-Governmental Organisations, 15,  
     242, 244, 249, 251, 253, 257–264,  
     267–268  
 Niehaus, Isak, 310  
 Norval, Aletta, 29–30  
*Ntaba kaNdoda*, 307

- Oakley, Ann, 205  
 occult economies, 301–302, 314
- Pan South African Language Board, 303  
 Parliament for the World's Religions, 177–178
- Parry, Benita, 285  
 Parsons, Talcott, 197–201, 208, 216, 221  
 Patel, Sheila, 249  
 patriotism: constitutional, 166–169, 323; defensive, 251  
 peacekeeping, 34  
 People's Dialogue, 15, 242, 244, 249, 253, 257–264, 267–268, 270  
 Philippines, 281–282  
 Pinker, Stephen, 183–184  
 policy: and culture, 17–18, 311–316; and farm labour, 115–117; and heritage, 296–297, 312–313; industrial, 89; and language, 303; and national unity, 307–311; and prescribed assets, 90–91; and religion, 303–304; and social identities, 302–307; socio-economic, 152; and southern Africa, 35–37  
 postcolonial, 16–17, 285–287  
 poverty, 87, 186, 248, 265; anthropological, 72–73; and fruit industry, 92–118; and hierarchy of employment, 102–107, 117; and networks, 245; and state, 255–256  
 prescribed assets, 90–91  
 Prince, Gareth, 304  
 Procter and Gamble, 181  
 Proudly South African, 17, 232  
 public spheres, 310  
 Putnam, Robert, 11, 146–147, 153–156, 243, 244, 246–247, 301, 324
- racism, 153  
 Radin, Paul, 291  
 Rainbow Nation, 33, 128, 295, 308, 312  
 Rastafari, 304  
 rational choice theory, 245–246  
 reconciliation: and cultural justice, 67, 71; and praise therapy, 73–76  
 Reconstruction and Development Programme, 296  
 recycling, 227–228  
 refugees, 129–138  
 religion: and colonialism, 25; and conversion, 173–174; and education, 56, 303–304; and intolerance, 52; and policy, 303–304; and social cohesion, 178  
 Renan, Ernest, 285, 315  
 Republic of Bophuthatswana, 307–308  
 Republic of the Ciskei, 307  
 Research Surveys, 174–176  
 revenge, 71–73  
*Revised National Curriculum Statement* (2002), 61  
 Rhodes, Cecil, 311  
 Rice, Butch, 175  
 rights: group, 304–307; individual, 42, 158; labour, 7, 86. See also human rights  
 risk, 122–125  
 Robben Island, 148, 162–163, 169, 227, 312  
 Roefs, Marlene, 295  
*rombe*, 76  
 Rosaldo, Renato, 281, 299  
 Rosler, Martha, 230–231  
 Ruggie, John, 39  
 Rwanda, 34, 246
- sacrifice, 282–283  
 Sahllins, Marshall, 126–127  
 Said, Edward, 285, 286  
*sangoma*, 308  
 scapegoat, 16, 282–283  
 schizophrenia, 202  
 Sebe, Lennox, 307

- Seidel, Hans, 34  
 Sen, Amartya, 124  
 Shakespeare, William, 284  
 Shona, 74, 76, 78  
 slavery, 16, 291–292  
 Slum Dwellers International, 15, 244–245, 248, 253–257, 261–262, 264–267  
 Smith, Adam, 301  
 social capital: and agency, 334–335; and business, 329–330; and community, 15, 242, 244, 249, 252–254, 257, 259, 261–263, 268–269, 330–333; and democracy, 153–156, 244–247; and family, 212; and government, 244, 301, 324–327; and Italy, 153–156; and labour, 327–328; ‘negative’, 252; and participation, 326–327; as sacred, 335; and social cohesion, 9–11, 18, 146; and value, 323, 333–334  
 social wage, 87  
 social contract, 12  
 solidarity: and constitutional patriotism, 166–168; and kinship with enemy, 284; mechanical, 12; national, 143, 146–147, 160; organic, 12; as relational, 16; transnational, 245; and unitary humanity, 278  
 Sophiatown, 225  
 South African Communist Party, 161  
 South African Homeless Peoples Federation, 15, 242, 244–246, 249, 253–255, 261–268  
 South African Institute for International Affairs, 34  
 South West Africa, 30  
 sovereignty, 23–29, 84  
 Soviet Union, 44  
 Soweto uprising, 1976, 69  
 Soysal, Yasemin, 299  
 Spivak, Gayatri, 285, 286  
 sports, 185–186, 307  
 state: and apartheid, 23; and Calvinism, 28–29; and circulatory capitalism, 144–146; and Cold War, 31–33; and colonialism, 23–31; and communities, 88; definition, 4; and deregulation, 96–97, 115; and development, 245, 255–256; and enumeration, 259–260; and globalisation, 120, 158, 250; and health care, 259; and identity, 302–303; and immigration, 131; and labour, 157; neo-liberal, 268; post-apartheid, 33–39; and poverty, 255–256; and religious legitimisation, 4; and social capital, 301, 325; and sovereignty, 23–39, 84  
 Statistics South Africa, 220  
 Stiglitz, Joseph, 89  
*Style Wars*, 225  
 Table Mountain, 87  
 Tambo, OR, 17  
 Tanzania, 30, 326  
 Taylor, Charles, 158  
 terrorism, 123–124  
 Thatcher, Margaret, 128  
 Thiongo, Ngugi wa, 285  
 Thompson, Leonard, 29  
 Thoreau, Henry David, 180  
 threat, 5, 46, 48–50  
 Tocqueville, Alexis de, 279  
 tolerance, 5–6; and belief systems, 50–52; and civic education, 52–63; and liberal democracy, 42–45; and South Africa, 45–52  
 Tolstoy, Leo, 279  
 Tomlinson, John, 224–225  
 Tönnies, Ferdinand, 279  
 Touraine, Alain, 11, 146–147, 157, 168  
 tourism: and Cape Town, 235–237; and globalisation, 14, 224–239, 312; and urban cleansing, 228–229

- tradition: and leadership, 165, 332–333;  
and modern life, 183; and reinvention, 126–127, 156
- Transnational Advocacy Networks, 244–245, 268
- Treaty of Westphalia, 26–27, 39
- Trekboers, 28–29
- trust, 9, 146, 154, 161, 244, 246, 262–263, 301, 324–326
- Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 6, 17, 37, 42, 72–73, 162–163
- Turkey, 130, 150
- Turner, Frederick Jackson, 27
- ubuntu*, 323, 331
- Unesco, 300
- Unifruco, 97
- unions, 83–91, 113, 117, 151
- United Democratic Front, 151, 252
- United Kingdom, 2, 94–98, 179, 299
- United Nations, 255, 306
- United States, 27, 31–34, 44–45, 54, 123–124, 149–150, 152, 179, 180–181, 197–201, 224, 230–232, 234, 291–292, 299
- Utshani Fund, 259
- value chain, 8, 94–8
- Van Riebeeck, Jan, 311–312
- Van Zyl Slabbert, F, 295–296
- Victoria Mxenge Scheme, 263–264
- Villainous Animators, 224–226
- violence: abstract, 150; and circulatory capitalism, 168; global, 277–278; institutional, 283
- Volker, Paul, 149
- Washington Consensus, 4, 143, 152, 323
- Weber, Max, 4, 23, 198, 216, 279
- Weimar Republic, 166–167
- Werbner, Pnina, 299
- Westernization, 9, 120, 145
- White Paper on Education and Training* (1995), 60–61
- witchcraft, 301, 332
- Wodiczko, Krzysztof, 232
- women: and citizenship, 298; and community based organizations, 244, 249, 257; and savings collectives, 245
- World Bank, 4, 7, 89, 91, 244, 245, 247, 255, 300, 323
- World Trade Organisation, 85, 300
- xenophilia, 9, 136–138
- xenophobia, 9, 19, 29–130, 136, 251, 315
- Xhosa, 71, 77, 156
- Yugoslavia, 156
- Yuval-Davis, Nira, 300
- Zambia, 55, 57, 253
- Zimbabwe, 24, 74, 150, 165
- Zion Christian Church, 39
- zombies, 301, 314
- Zulu, 53, 156, 296, 308
- Zuma, Jacob, 165