

Burdened by race: Coloured identities in southern Africa

EDITED BY
MOHAMED ADHIKARI



CHAPTER 5

Collaboration, assimilation and contestation: emerging constructions of coloured identity in post-apartheid South Africa

BY

MICHELE RUITERS

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

The ending of apartheid provided opportunities for people to self-identify as they wished and to experiment with their identities. All South African identities are thus in the process of reconstruction as citizens adapt to new relations of power. This chapter examines contemporary reconstructions of coloured identity among elites¹ in the Western Cape and focuses primarily on reconstructions linked to Khoisan, slave and creole understandings of that identity. This study draws extensively on interviews with members of the coloured elite engaged in public debate about the nature and future direction of coloured identity. It juxtaposes these with analyses of political texts emanating from ruling party discussions around identity and nation-building.

The emergence of the 'new South Africa' has created new problems for communities that perceive themselves as marginal and who consequently either agitate for recognition or withdraw from political participation. Two processes of identity construction are happening simultaneously. The state is in the process of constructing a national identity while different communities grapple with their specific identities in response to the state's discourse. In post-apartheid South Africa, all identities are in the process

of being reconstructed particularly in opposition to their apartheid-era incarnations, presenting themselves, among other things, as not racist, not divisive and not isolated. South African citizens are redefining their identities on their own terms, both in relation to an emerging national identity and in relation to other identities within the South African context.² This chapter focuses specifically on attempts by coloured leaders and opinion makers to create meaning out of a previously imposed status within the new dispensation.

Under apartheid, many people previously defined as 'coloured' argued that they were not 'white enough' to enjoy the benefits of citizenship, and now in the post-apartheid era they claim that they are not 'black enough' to access programmes that address social inequalities. The Western Cape has a racial and political configuration different to the rest of the country. For example, the African National Congress (ANC) won landslide victories in the 1994, 1999 and 2004 elections nationally, but the Western Cape has always been fiercely contested. Coloureds constitute more than 50 per cent of this province's population and occupy the majority of positions in the service industry and civil service due to the legacy of the apartheid government's Coloured Labour Preference Policy.³ Many coloured people continued to support the New National Party until it was disbanded in 2005, and the Democratic Party despite strenuous attempts on the part of the ANC to win their support. The media portrays coloured people as having been 'bypassed by the reconstruction and development programme' and as a result, see themselves as the 'step-children of SA'.⁴ Reality argues against this perception as many senior and successful public figures regard themselves as coloured, or reject the identity but are nonetheless perceived to be coloured. However, perceptions of marginalisation persist. How has the state responded to groups that perceive themselves as marginalised in the new order?

A rainbow nation?

The end of apartheid afforded people new political and social freedoms which allowed them to determine their own identities. Stan Simmons, an ANC member of parliament formerly of the New National Party, and who defines himself as a 'brown person' explains that as a result of the democratic transition suddenly 'everyone is South African ... With our history we need to build a nation to improve our way of living, rather than to fight. We can differ but need to work together, not be enemies'.⁵ In the post-apartheid period, the nation-building project is vital for the

construction of a unified South African identity. It rejects difference and emphasises similarities between South Africans. In an address to the first sitting of the National Assembly of South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu prematurely exclaimed: 'We of many cultures, languages and races have become one nation. We are the rainbow children of God'.⁶ However, this imagery has not been as successful as both Tutu and Nelson Mandela had hoped.

Firstly, the imagery of a rainbow makes reference to difference, and especially the continued existence of racial differences in the post-apartheid era. Coloured people commonly argue that brown does not appear in the rainbow, which also evokes the image of the opposite ends of the spectrum not meeting. Neville Alexander argues that '[i]n the South African case, the, perhaps unintended, stress placed on coexisting colour strata or groups by using the rainbow image is to my way of thinking counterproductive'. He instead proposes the image of the Gariep, or Orange River, which crosses most of the country and moves us away from the 'sense of unchanging, eternal and god-given identities'.⁷

Multiculturalism is promoted as a way of celebrating difference and uniting the nation in its diversity. Multiculturalism maintains that all communities should have equal access to resources, be equally recognised by the state and have equal space for the expression of their cultural practices.⁸ A disjuncture exists in South Africa as coloured elites claim that the dominant discourse and imagery of the ANC government fosters a national identity that is narrowly black African.⁹ It is not possible for a multicultural society to succeed when race and ethnicity continue to mark identities in particular and unequal ways, and where they continue to play an important role in groups' access to political power and resources.¹⁰

The South African approach to multiculturalism implicates people in subtle power relations within a framework of intersecting identities. The tourism industry, which markets South Africa as consisting of people, cities and sites affording the consumer 'multicultural' experiences, is an example of a failing policy based on difference. Other dimensions of inequality such as caste, class, gender, and rural versus urban, which determine power dynamics in unequal societies, are sublimated in an effort to achieve cultural equality.¹¹ Communities are encouraged to promote their cultural heritage in the name of development and tourism. In an attempt to draw tourists, rural areas often maintain a 'traditional' state in order to capitalise on their differences. It is for this reason that Spinner argues against the call for 'cultural rights' because 'the language of culture should not displace the language of power and wealth'.¹²

Former president Thabo Mbeki created a national discourse around identity and power but while he attempted to construct a common South African identity, he also continued to use the divisive apartheid-defined identities of white, African, coloured and Indian.¹³ A national identity needs to be cognisant of localised identities that 'continue to constitute and reconstitute the mainstream'.¹⁴ An official ANC document argues that the concept of the rainbow nation could 'fail to recognize the healthy osmosis among the various cultures and other attributes in the process towards the emergence of a new African nation'.¹⁵ For this reason the rainbow metaphor has since been discarded as a viable political tool to unite South Africans. Subsequently, the ANC proposed a 'New Patriotism' that remains vaguely defined but could ultimately forge a national identity that is South African, with an emphasis on the African.¹⁶ Politically this translates into the recognition of identity differences that remain in play in contemporary South Africa and also recognises that those differences would need to be suspended for the sake of creating a homogeneous nation state.

Peter Mokoena, director in the Department of Arts, Culture Science and Technology in the Western Cape provincial government, concedes that 'a collective identity ... supersedes everything' but warns against the creation of a common identity that 'trample[s] over individual and group identities ... Nation-building is a political not a cultural process'.¹⁷ Mokoena's distinction between political and cultural identities is useful in that strong cultural identities could support a secure national identity. However, if localised identities do not feed into a national identity, many South Africans would only identify as South African when referencing their geographical origin and fail to identify with the nation in their day-to-day existence.

Mbeki's seminal 'I am an African' speech provides an all-inclusive myth of origin for South Africans and those who identify as African.¹⁸ His discourse rejects a narrowly defined meaning of African and emphasises a shared geographical and historical experience that unites people of this continent. Racial particularities are excluded except that they all combine to make us who we are. His speech, however, opens itself to unintended interpretations based on prior understandings of the term 'African'. Under apartheid, 'African' was understood to be 'black African' rather than an all-encompassing term referencing a shared political and continental identity. Many political activists previously defined as coloured self-identified politically as black or African, and continue to

do so, in an attempt to reject coloured identity. Grant Farred, a South African cultural studies scholar, originally from the Cape Flats but now based at Cornell University, writes that '[w]hereas "full blackness", or Africanness has translated into 'full citizenship of and belonging to the post-apartheid state, colouredness has retained its historic ambivalence'.¹⁹ Many communities which perceive themselves as marginal continue to retain a narrow understanding of the concept 'African' despite these attempts at broadening its meaning.

That ANC documents utilise both the narrow and broad definitions of African in their documents complicates matters. For example, one document affirms 'our Africanness as a nation ... in recognition of a geographic reality and the awakening of a consciousness which colonialism suppressed' and simultaneously refers to 'coloured', 'white', 'black', and 'Indian' communities as a means of distinguishing between the benefits obtained and roles played by each group in the liberation struggle.²⁰ Similarly, in the realm of culture, the term 'African' is understood by some coloured people to imply an 'authentic' black African culture. Race continues to hold sway in common and official discourse even though new opportunities have emerged for self-identification.²¹ These different discourses have led to divisions within South African society that are either inadequately addressed, or ignored, by the ruling party in its drive to create a national identity.

Official projects have tried to create national pride through, for example, the *Proudly South African* campaign that promotes products and services produced in South Africa. The South African Broadcasting Corporation also exclaims 'Simunye – We are one!' while the City of Cape Town markets itself with the slogan 'One city, many cultures' in an attempt to promote unity despite its divided historical past and continued racism. These attempts to construct a common identity among South Africans have produced varied results. The main problem is that the differences entrenched during the apartheid era are proving to be highly resilient in the face of largely superficial strategies to eradicate them. Communities struggle to come to terms with their former identities while they try to redefine themselves socially in the post-apartheid environment. Their attempts at rejecting the old have often resulted in a reconstruction of the old in new terms. It is thus evident that apartheid-era senses of colotredness continue to influence current expressions of the identity. Perceptions that the post-apartheid state favours Africans help reinforce coloured separatism.

Tensions between the legislated identity categories of apartheid and current constructions of those identities continue to exist because

these identities are reconstructed within boundaries that are familiar to people. In the coloured community, as in the case of others, apartheid-era parameters continue to define the construction of colouredness in a myriad of ways, drawing on past experience and shared geographies. Apartheid constructions of colouredness merged very different groups of people into a legislatively defined administrative category. The state identified coloureds loosely as people who were neither white nor black. With forced removals, the state pushed together people who would not otherwise have lived in the same area or have mixed socially. This process led to closer identification between neighbours and within neighbourhoods, cementing a closer sense of colouredness. Individuals and communities adopted elements from the state-legislated category of coloured, but also added other social and cultural aspects to their personal identifications as coloured. The identity was thus based on the 'neither white nor black' concept but incorporated distinctive religious, linguistic and class-based elements as well. The boundaries of the legislated category proved to be porous as some individuals were able to find ways around state restrictions and managed to pass for white because they bore the physical and cultural markings of whiteness.

The post-apartheid period removed racist legislation but the social identities built around it persisted because of the shared trauma of forced removals and being confined to coloured residential areas. For these reasons, strong identification with the South African nation has failed to emerge within the coloured community. Instead, old identities are being revisited, leaving the impression that new ones are unattainable and limited to re-imaginings of existing ones. Through 'new forms of imagining', it is not the identity that changes, but the ways in which it is constructed.²² This imagining points to the difficulty of constructing entirely new identities, even though the physiognomy of power has changed. The new power relations influence the ways in which people interact in public spaces. All identities are constructed relationally, meaning that people act in response to political and social realities when they define or redefine who they are.

Citizens reconfigure boundaries of inclusion and exclusion according to their perceptions of whose needs and aspirations are being represented in government. Those people or communities who continue to feel marginalised on the basis of race or class baulk at the idea of an all-inclusive national identity, against which they feel they need to protect their limited access to resources.²³ In those societies where communities

claim an insufficient level of service delivery, there is a 'marked upsurge in ethnic identities among coloured and African populations'.²⁴ If citizens are more likely to identify in localised terms, then it is important that a national identity encompasses all those differences or finds a way to create cohesion between groups. For many communities in the Western Cape, a racial identity remains the primary source of self-definition despite the removal of apartheid legislation because it indicates in social and political shorthand who they are, where they come from and their cultural distinctiveness. Apartheid legislation created correlations between race, space, language and class, and communities who struggle for meaning in the new South Africa continue to cling to these familiar configurations. Jordan is of the opinion that similarity because of difference could work well for national identity in South Africa but asks whether the ANC is 'leaving those of our people who identify ethnically to the political wolves of ethnic entrepreneurship by continuing to discourage ethnicity and favouring an inclusive nationalism'.²⁵

The state argues that those people who continue to identify ethnically are racist or ethnocist, and aim to derail the national project. The ANC's return to a black or African identity has revived a conservative conception of those identities and has returned the debate to issues of 'authenticity' which were found in 'traditional' societies prior to their supposed cultural and genealogical hybridisation. There are no 'authentic' cultures and traditions because identities and cultures evolve.²⁶ Even imposed identities are reconstructed to reflect the daily experiences and realities of a community and individuals, and this process could entail a reconstruction of an ethnic identity.²⁷ People's reconstructions of their ethnic and, by extension, racial identities in the post-apartheid period point to the process of creating their own self-understanding because of a shared history and space, and their own version of identity. This process, however, is affected by prior constructions of identities and the power relationships that undergird that structure, therefore the new constructions need to negotiate a space for themselves within a structure that still functions along the lines of race and ethnicity.

Elite reconstructions of coloured identity

Coloured elites who are calling for a new identity are not only driven by a desire for increased access to material resources but also by the need for political and social recognition, and healing in some cases. The process of reconstructing coloured identity is an elite process because it is driven by

people who have the ability to generate public debate around coloured identities. In the post-apartheid period, these elites have begun to question their identities and to reconstruct their old identities in order to move away from a negative representation of coloured identity. A process of conscientisation has taken place, where people have become aware that they can be agents for change in their own lives.²⁸ This awareness has led to a movement to renegotiate the position of coloured people in South African society.

Coloured elites have, through public debate and letters to the press, complained about their in-between identities, demanded state recognition for the Khoisan as the First Peoples of South Africa and claimed a 'new' colouredness. Through this ethnographic self-fashioning,²⁹ these elites have discovered in themselves what Homi Bhabha refers to as 'depth of agency'.³⁰ The coloured community has never lacked agency but has been forced to act and react within the bounds of the apartheid system. In the post-apartheid period, coloured people are no longer confined to the options of assimilation or countering apartheid policies.³¹ They are able to choose identities with which they wish to be associated. The media's reduction of issues concerning the coloured community to 'the coloured vote' in 1994 showed a lack of understanding of the debates around difference within the coloured community. Under the guidance of coloured elites, people have begun personal journeys around the questions of identity and now engage vibrantly in the media about their position in contemporary South Africa. Coloured elites argue that theirs is not a social movement, but a process that has taken root throughout the community, a social process which has been adopted by small groups of people in an attempt to refashion their identities.³²

The process of self-identification has been painful, because it forces people who have denied a part of themselves to come to terms with painful histories. For many, says Henry Cupido, an Afrikaans-speaking Capetonian and a leading figure in the African Christian Democratic Party, it is a confusing process: 'The brown people are confused because they must now self-identify'.³³ Many people who have chosen to redefine their personal identities are often ridiculed because they have revived and adopted Khoisan and slave identities which have historically been negatively stereotyped. Many coloured people have been 'socialized by seeing the photo's [sic] of ... white ancestors, not the black ones'.³⁴ Ironically, some white individuals flaunt newly 'discovered' African ancestry to show that they 'belong' to the continent and to the nation.

Afrikaners also tend to stress that they are African because they have been born and raised on the continent.

The ending of apartheid has 'significantly expanded the range and vitality of racial significations'.³⁵ Many coloured elites consciously use the term 'coloured' to show that they have reclaimed it and imbued it with new political meaning. Simultaneously they acknowledge that coloureds may have internalised the imposed identity and made it their own. Coloured people now have the agency to 'negotiate and reinterpret their mixed feelings and fragile identities in empowering ways'.³⁶ For many elites in the coloured community, the term 'coloured' is still inadequate and problematic for describing their identities, and they have thus embarked on constructing new understandings of their colouredness.

New conceptions of colouredness have emerged which include historical identities such as those of the Khoisan, creole and slave communities throughout South African history. These identities are linked to colouredness because, to date, it is largely coloured people who have claimed them. Mbeki, in his 'I am an African' speech, for example, claimed Khoisanness as part of his identity but this acknowledgement is not widespread in the African or coloured communities because Khoisan identities have been denigrated throughout colonial and apartheid history. Its reconstruction has highlighted the heterogeneity of coloured identity which, in the past, has always been represented as homogeneous, as if a stereotypical 'Cape coloured' identity existed. Many individuals who have chosen Khoisan identities have undertaken a highly personal process of self-definition and attachment to various ethnic or 'tribal' groups such as the Damaqua, Outeniqua, Griqua, and so forth. Even though people have come together to define their identities collectively, it is a personal process in which people renegotiate their relations with one another in the South African context.

Coloured identities are multiple, fluid and hybrid. Muslim, Christian, English, Afrikaans, rural, urban, rich, poor, educated and uneducated were grouped under the limited apartheid identity of colouredness, which continues to weigh on contemporary forms.³⁷ Soli Philander, a coloured comedian, points out that 'it is impossible to make the leap from just being an "old coloured" to an emancipated, evolved and free person'.³⁸ This statement serves as justification for those coloured people who wish to self-identify as coloured despite the advent of a new political dispensation. The 'evolved and free person' to which Philander refers has to be open to different identities and different hierarchies, and be a fully participative,

non-racial citizen. Colouredness can only be redefined if it challenges existing stereotypes and disrupts the power relations that have existed among coloured people themselves, and among them and whites and Africans. In order to understand colouredness in its myriad expressions, one needs to understand the positions each identity occupies.³⁹

Gail Smith, a Johannesburg journalist who identifies as coloured, feels that for many years she has been made to feel ashamed of her 'brown skin identity'. Smith argues as follows:

We need to make peace with coloured identity. I need to start celebrating the good things, to move away from negativity. In my work around Sarah Bartmann I began to understand where this negativity came from – this whole idea of *Gam*, people of mixed blood being less than. History. I began to understand the animosity between coloureds and Xhosa. It all starts to make sense. I began to write, talk and celebrate identity. We need to celebrate coloured identity. There are some wonderful things about being coloured, I can't explain them. It just is. A word, phrase, song ... I resist stereotypes.⁴⁰

Smith's reference to the almost mythical nature of colouredness and her inability to describe it speaks of an 'essence' of colouredness that is found within everyone from that community. Her recognition of her identity does not necessarily refer to a primordial identity but rather to a space, history and experience that she shared with a wider community. Her resistance to stereotypes implies a process of identity construction both personal and political that can be seen in pockets of the coloured community.

Chris Nissen, a former ANC chairperson in the Western Cape, in 1996 boldly stated that he 'refuse[s] to be called "so-called coloured". I am coloured'.⁴¹ Nissen's rejection of the qualification 'so-called' points to his reclamation of the term 'coloured'. Coloured elites, in an attempt to harness a collective identity for political reasons, have begun to rally around new conceptions of the term. Recently a journalist, Vincent Olyphant, explained that 'Coloured' has become a 'magical word' and 'his people' are the 'true rainbow people'.⁴² For Olyphant and many others, coloured identity is multiple and suffused with ethnic pride.

Generally, people resort to localised ethnic identities when they are faced with a crisis.⁴³ Analyses of the 1994 national elections produced a discourse that identified the 'coloured vote' as having cost the ANC

victory in the Western Cape. This both angered coloured voters who claimed they were as motivated as other voters by issue-based politics, and rallied the coloured community around a common identity under threat. Coloured elites in the Western Cape have tried to find ways to lobby for a collective political identity through mass identification with, and support for, working-class issues.⁴⁴ Political representatives such as Chris Nissen and Stan Simmons have employed their colouredness as political draw cards to lure coloured voters who have expressed feelings of marginalisation since the advent of democracy.

The persistence of a coloured identity in the Western Cape is directly related to how marginal that community feels in the post-apartheid era. Coloured respondents in a 2005 *Afrobarometer* poll have shown a reluctance to self-identify as anything other than 'coloured'.⁴⁵ Ethnicity, in this case, provides a safe space in which coloured people feel they can express themselves and maintain a particular lifestyle they had under the apartheid regime.⁴⁶ Many organic intellectuals in the coloured community were ANC activists who identified as black during the latter decades of the 20th century. Their support of the liberation struggle led them to deny an identity that was seen to be conservative and racist in favour of a more inclusive understanding of blackness. Because coloured identity was perceived to be closer to whiteness than blackness, it was regarded as anti-African. This forced coloured activists to show their allegiance to the Congress movement by denying coloured identity in its entirety.

Difference and belonging

Broadly speaking, the coloured community does not easily accept the idea of being African, despite some attachment to Khoisan identities, which they tend to define as not being black African. One finds that, in the 'new South Africa', educated and middle-class coloured people tend to be supportive of the new government and its policies, but do not identify as African because they see the state's conception of Africanness as being narrowly rooted. Hence there is a reluctance within the coloured community to identify as African or even South African.⁴⁷ It is not a resistance to citizenship but a yearning for full citizenship that drives the coloured community's demand for recognition and acknowledgement. Also, it is evident that South Africans resist a universal citizenship and continually refer to people as coloured, black African and white. Cheryl Potgieter, an academic and ANC activist originally from the Eastern Cape explains:

Whites and Africans pigeonhole and see us as 'coloured'. Theoretically I don't know how we should engage with this. Do we talk about building a South African identity, but then there's something lost. I do know that the ordinary working class person in Bonteheuwel, Mitchells Plain, and Eersterus says 'we are coloured'.⁴⁸

Potgieter's statement that coloured people are forced to be coloured by those with whom they interact shows the limitations imposed on that community in the post-apartheid era but warns against a South African identity that hides the particularities of citizens' experiences and contributions to the anti-apartheid struggle.⁴⁹ As a result, coloured people are 'possessed of a more fragile sense of belonging ... engaging in contradictory projects: they are simultaneously trying to write themselves into and against post-apartheid sameness'.⁵⁰ The Janus-like face of the coloured person shows both the agency of the individual in relation to identity choices that they make throughout their day and the lack of choice in terms of the range of identities that are available to them.

Despite the fact that many members of the coloured elite have embraced a broad conception of African identity, one that is as inclusive as that outlined in Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech, continued racism persists within sectors of the community towards black Africans and as a result coloured elites reject the narrowly defined conceptions of 'African' that still continue to appear in ANC documents. This appears to be the result of the perception that the ANC has embarked on a project in which South Africa was to become Africanist in its policies, outlook and culture. In recent letters to the editor in the *Cape Argus*, three readers confirmed these fears. The first claimed that 'President Mbeki's speech on Africanism to parliament was the turning point. It was not to uplift the African spirit but to impose a new brand of "black" African elitism'; another that '[w]e so-called coloureds are not in general black or, in particular, African. So what/who are we?'; and the third was of the opinion that '[t]he ANC is here to protect and entrench the rights of the blacks to the exclusion of coloureds, Malays and Indians'.⁵¹ All three argue that they do not fit Mbeki's description of African. For more conservative elements in the community, coloured identity is being threatened by Africanness and as a result they call for a protected and defined coloured ethnic identity which is defined in terms of language, religion and historical experience. These views are being propagated by an array of organisations that sprang up after the 1994 elections.

Coloured essentialists

In February 1995, a new coloured organisation, the *Kleurling Weerstandsbeweging vir die Vooruitgang van Bruinmense* (KWB) was established in Johannesburg.⁵² Its leader, Mervyn Ross, argued:

We are proud that we are ethnic. And once we are ethnic and being recognized by various other people, we can also go further and say 'Look, we are ethnic. We have our own language, our own culture, our own land and we want to govern ourselves'. We are not prepared to be governed by the white man anymore – he made a mess of it for 300 years. We are not prepared to be governed by black people.⁵³

Ross did not clarify who his constituency was, thus it is not clear who he represented. He spoke as though he represented all coloured people, which was clearly not the case. His claim to an ethnic identity has alienated many in the coloured community who associated ethnicity with tribalism and black African identity. The KWB has lobbied for support around issues of land claims, recognition of Khoisan languages and protection of their culture, and the right to coloured self-determination.⁵⁴ In the light of these claims, the KWB represented 'the most extreme ethno-nationalist portrayal of Coloured identity'.⁵⁵ Ross's attempt to mobilise around an ethnic identity has not garnered much support, nor has his use of Afrikaans been sufficient to mobilise coloureds to join the organisation. Despite many coloured people claiming Afrikaans as their mother tongue, the English language has been a marker of status in the coloured community. Mervyn Ross also invokes Small's conception of 'brown Afrikaners' to afford 'our people vision, economic advancement and political power'.⁵⁶

The KWB does not want an ethnic homeland even though it does want the state's land restitution programme to consider claims to land lost prior to 1913. In order to do this the KWB needs to prove that brown people had existed as a group historically, their longevity qualifying them as an indigenous population.⁵⁷ Ross cannot claim that brown identity has always existed in South African society as it is an identity that has drifted in and out of constructions of coloured identity since the early 1900s. However, since 1994 there appears to have been a growing trend for people to identify as brown. For groups like the KWB, people are born with their identities and because brown people always lived in southern Africa they belong to the land and are indigenous. Some coloured leaders such as Stan Simmons and Henry Cupido refer to themselves as '*bruin*'

(brown). Cupido and Simmons' denial of colouredness reveals the highly contested nature of the identity. Ultimately, the KWB's ethnic mobilisation in the coloured community did not succeed but it did reach a particular sector of the community which has identified with that organisation's call for an ethnic politics and a coloured party to represent coloured interests.

This dual process of engaging in contradictory projects was evident during the election period in the Western Cape in 1994. Former United Democratic Front (UDF) activist David Abrahams explains that the success of the UDF in the western Cape in the 1980s had given them a false sense of confidence regarding the outcome of the election: 'We expected [support for the UDF in the 1980s] to translate smoothly into an ANC election victory. It never happened and we didn't spend time to find out why it didn't happen'.⁵⁸ He argues that it was clear that the ANC was not willing to engage coloured voters as coloureds during the election campaign and had chosen to concentrate on predominantly African areas where the majority of their support was situated. There were class differences in voting patterns with middle-class coloured voters predominantly supporting the ANC and working-class voters supporting the National and Democratic parties.⁵⁹ Wilmot James explains that the ANC lost because it dealt with the coloured community as a homogeneous group.⁶⁰ David Abrahams clarifies this as follows:

[T]he way coloured people voted ... was a combination of fear, ethnic racial difference, them-us, representation of the ANC that primarily represents African people. We thought the [ANC] policies would inform people's decisions. The issue was not about who the National Party put up. In 1994 it wasn't about policies – it was about fear, ethnic mobilization and them-us.⁶¹

This short-sightedness proved to be the downfall of the ANC in that region. Father Michael Weeder, a Cape Town-based cleric and historian of Cape slavery, explains that the ANC lost the Western Cape as a result of an 'uncritical application of the national question' that did not 'contextualize' the issues or the 'revolution' in those areas. Weeder believes that the ANC's attention to differences between its voting communities cost it the opportunity to win over the '*bruinmense*' (brown people).⁶² The resultant backlash and ridicule of the 'coloured vote' then created a perception within sectors of the coloured community that they were

being alienated from mainstream political life. Zoë Wicomb refers to it as a 'shameful vote'.⁶³

The December First Movement and slave identities

In 1994, when the ANC lost the Western Cape to the National Party, many coloured political activists expressed shock that their constituencies had voted for their former oppressors. On July 26 1995, three coloured leaders, the well-known educationist Richard van der Ross, Afrikaans-language poet Adam Small and activist Chris April, launched the Coloured Forum in Delft, a coloured township on the Cape Flats. The Forum was established to provide a mouthpiece for coloured people in the Western Cape. It was premised on the idea that coloured identity is primordial and should be recognised within existing political and social structures. It was not established as an alternative to existing political parties but rather to encourage debate within, and about, coloured communities. Wilmot James, former executive director of the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, was instrumental in facilitating debate both about the Forum and coloured identity in 1995. James posited that:

[T]he Forum positions itself unmistakably in the main stream. It was to engage with, and not erode, democratic institutions. It purports to draw on, not supplant, the party-political framework. It encourages introspection, self-evaluation and self-criticism, as a way of energizing coloured people into the main stream. The social-psychological benefits of this approach are not to be underestimated for building self-esteem and confidence, as the Black Consciousness Movement of the 1970s demonstrated.⁶⁴

Many coloured intellectuals were of the opinion that through self-analysis their communities would gain self-esteem and confidence and thereby become fully engaged in the democratic process. The Forum did not 'create a particularly vocal or popular platform' in 1995 and 1996, but it did 'inspire' the formation of the December First Movement, named after the emancipation date of slaves in the Cape Colony in 1834.⁶⁵ The failure of the Coloured Forum was due to the conservative politics of its founder members. Like the KWB, the Forum's politics were problematic because colouredness was constructed in essentialist and fixed terms.

The December First Movement (the Movement) was established in 1996 to inform coloured people of their history and culture, which, due

to apartheid education, was largely unknown. The Movement was to be 'a political cultural formation' which has as its central focus the 'political awakening of coloured people'.⁶⁶ For David Abrahams, the rationale behind the formation of the December First Movement was as follows:

The movement originated because firstly, why did 1994 happen in the Western Cape? What is it about the coloured community that led to this? Secondly, what is it about politics inside the ANC in the Western Cape that needs to be addressed? ... We need to start putting the notion of understanding the political, social and demographic realities on the top of the agenda in the ANC.⁶⁷

The Movement was intellectually based, and engaged with debates on colouredness and coloured identity within an ANC-dominated political milieu. The leaders of the Movement had been UDF activists and supported the ANC. They did not distance themselves from it but wished to introduce the debate on coloured identity into ANC structures. This was an attempt to foreground the particularities of the Western Cape within a larger debate on identity in post-apartheid South Africa. Abrahams said that they wished to 'demythologize [colouredness] and to take it out of the realm of reactionary coloured ethnic group identity'.⁶⁸ The Movement attempted to create a deeper understanding of coloured identity that was not tied to an ethnic understanding of identities. For them colouredness was tied to a history of slavery and shared experience, rather than a primordial identity.

For the leadership of the Movement, material benefit for coloured people was not the primary focus of their project. They aimed to inform people of their past in an attempt to foster feelings of belonging and esteem. Weeder explains that 'the December First Movement pursued an agenda that said "this is the way we are African". We have equal access [to Africanness]'. He argues that the coloured stake was 'devalued' because coloured people are seen to be 'not fully African' or 'not having suffered fully'. Weeder explained that his interest in slave history motivated his role in the Movement because he wished to inform coloured people of their roots and origins, which could lead to a better understanding of their place in contemporary South Africa.⁶⁹ Trevor Oosterwyk defined the Movement as 'completely a cultural organization'.⁷⁰ The Movement wished to lobby and advocate for an end to the political and social marginalisation of coloured people, to develop and encourage an intellectual and political

understanding of non-essentialist culture through a politics of difference, and to organise among coloured communities to restore their right to self-determination and participation in the transformation of South Africa.⁷¹ Much criticism could be directed against it for promoting coloured identity, politics and culture, and in a later document the Movement recognises this essentialism. It explains it as follows:

There seems to be an obvious contradiction between wanting to 'bring coloureds into the political and economic mainstream' and yet also in the same breathe [sic] to talk about the 'development of a non-racial project'. My response to this is that we have to admit, as many other people have argued, that the so-called non racialism of the 1980s was largely a failure ... because it never moved beyond being an organisational ethic and principle which for many reasons never permeated to the masses in a fundamental way.⁷²

Weeder explains the failure of the Movement in the following terms:

December First was demonized and the biggest hatchet men in this thing were the coloureds in the unions and the ANC to show how much African they are within the image of Nguni African: the African as noble and the African as pure. They had to show how they went for these narrow coloureds. So to show how big I am, I have to go against my own people. I'm just saying how the December First initiative was aborted for ethnic politics' celebration of the First Nation in an idealized rewritten way.⁷³

The ANC did not support the continued existence of the Movement because it appeared to highlight differences between communities in the Western Cape. The Movement acknowledged that similarities existed between communities in the region and that racial differences were constructed as part of the apartheid government's 'divide and rule' strategy, but they opted to operate within the ANC structures which still recognised racially based differences. Abrahams also argues that 'the ANC is more comfortable with dealing with ethnicity [and the belief that] "coloured people are different" but it fails to address those differences and fears and instead produces broad-stroke policies that define citizenship in terms of Africanness with which the broader coloured community does not identify'.⁷⁴

Khoisan identities

Khoisan identity has emerged strongly from within the coloured community, but is not seen as a black African identity. Mervyn Ross is of the opinion that '[w]e were the first to have fought against colonialism; it was the Khoisan, our ancestors. Where was the black man then?'.⁷⁵ For this reason Michael Weeder rejects Khoisan identity as colouredness 'by another name. It is a post-modern tribalism that is driven by the impulse of separateness and quest for purity. It looks like a politics of ethnicity on appearance and doesn't look at power'.⁷⁶ Reaching back into history for a sense of belonging and differentiation shows a need for people to connect coloured identities to what they would regard as an authentically African identity that predates black African identities.

Like all identities, the Khoisan revivalist movement is instrumentalist as it links the identity to land rights and land restitution, and the political recognition of its leaders by national and international bodies.⁷⁷ Khoisan activists such as chief Joseph Little, chief Jean Burgess, chief Harleen Sassman, Hendrik van Wyk, Ron Martin, and chief Joseph Marks mostly argue that their movement aims to engage people in a more personal process of self-determination. These key individuals began to debate Khoisan identities in the public sphere in the period immediately after 1994. The link between Africa and Khoisan identities is strong as the Khoisan are seen to be the First People of southern Africa.

Khoisan chiefs generally do not wish to be included in the Congress for Traditional Leaders in South Africa (Contralesa), a body consisting of African chiefs that is afforded limited political power and recognised by the Constitution. Khoisan activist John Witbooi, on the contrary, demands that Khoisan chiefs be recognised as traditional leaders and join Contralesa, thereby giving them access to political representation in parliament, a stipend and power at local government level.⁷⁸ For chief Jean Burgess, a Khoisan activist from the Eastern Cape, the creation of a sense of belonging is of utmost importance to the Khoisan revivalist movement.⁷⁹ She finds humility in belonging to a continent and a place, humility that is connected to her belonging to an ancient people who always lived in Africa and therefore have a right to be in South Africa as equal citizens. Many Khoisan activists wish to highlight their attachment to a historical identity that could be traced to the period prior to the arrival of the Dutch. It could be argued that this is a search for purity, a purity that cannot be achieved through a hybrid coloured identity. Land rights are foremost in Khoisan politics because Khoisan land rights were

not open to negotiation as the ANC had identified 1913 as the cut-off date, thereby nullifying many coloureds' claims to land that their families had lost under British rule and during the early years of the Union.

Other Khoisan identities survived apartheid, and the Griqua one is still being practised in separate communities in Klaarwater, Ratelgat and Kranshoek. Cecil le Fleur, chairperson of the National Khoisan Consultative Conference (NKCC), said as much during his speech: 'Griqua culture and tradition survived despite the regime's attack on Khoisan people. It is through our doing that the Khoisan flame burns'.⁸⁰ Le Fleur explains that the apartheid government's 'purposeful attempts to transform our people [Griquas] into a coloured identity disempowered our people. There was forced registration by officials based on phenotype'.⁸¹ Under colonial and apartheid rule, the Griquas sought a separate existence that protected and maintained their culture within a racialised system that ignored their particularities and treated them the same as it did other coloured communities. The Griquas' search for separate development and self-determination and, more generally, the Khoisan revivalist group's project, renewed discussions around ethnic and racial identities.

In 1997, the Khoisan Identities and Cultural Heritage Conference was held in Cape Town to discuss the future of Khoisan identities in the new South Africa. The holding of the conference was prompted by two developments. Firstly, the declaration of the United Nations' Decade of Indigenous Peoples in 1995 highlighted issues around Khoisan rights and identity, and situated debate around them in an international context. Secondly, in 1996, Thabo Mbeki's 'I am an African' speech opened up a debate around who is 'African'. Mbeki stated the following:

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and dependence [sic] and they who, as a people, perished in the result.⁸²

The ANC government's claim that the Khoisan had 'as a people, perished' pushed the leadership to make surviving Khoisan communities more visible.

Unlike the KWB and the December First Movement, the Khoisan revivalist movement has entered the debate related to group rights of indigenous peoples. The NKCC's definition of 'indigenous' follows the

United Nations' understanding, which de-links the term from native or aboriginal identities:

The Khoisan people say they are indigenous. That is the basic argument about UN indigeneity. It's not about racial purity. Indigenous identities are mixed, but it doesn't mean that they cannot take on a specific identity. It's about the principle of self-identification.⁸³

Le Fleur talks about *volksregte* (people's rights), thereby removing Khoisan identity from the liberal conception of individual rights. The Khoisan movement wishes to obtain recognition for language and cultural rights, which Le Fleur claims are not protected by group or community rights. The Khoisan do not only need protection of their cultural, linguistic and religious rights but also need those cultural expressions to be constructed, reconstructed and corrected before they can be protected. He calls for a separate process through which the Khoisan could catch up with other groups, and argues that this is the reason why they need recognition first before they call for protection.⁸⁴

Efforts to revive the language and cultures of the Khoisan groups have emerged in the Western, Eastern and Northern Cape provinces. Social constructions of Khoisan identities are important because the culture has largely been eradicated through cultural assimilation into coloured communities. Ron Martin, a Khoisan activist in the Western Cape, explains that he is 'fighting the Khoi awareness cause'.⁸⁵ Another cultural activist, John Witbooi from the Eastern Cape, refers to this process as a 'reawakening and demystification of Khoisan identity'.⁸⁶ Martin calls for 'constitutional accommodation' of the Khoisan and the 'restoration of [Khoisan] identity and dignity as a people'. He has played a pioneering role in the restoration of the Nama language through the promotion of Nama language classes. Martin's purpose is to show that 'culture can be embraced by everybody'. For him 'coloured is Khoisan' and through knowledge and experience of that culture, stereotypes will be destroyed: 'we put it out there that these people are not nonentities, cultureless bastards; the working class of the Western Cape'. Martin distinguishes between cultural identity and racial identity by arguing that 'cultural groups are not ethnic or racial'.

Culture can transcend racial and ethnic barriers constructed in society. Evidence abounds in South African schools and universities, where students from all 'racial groups' share similar tastes in music and

fashion, and have a preference for the English language.⁸⁷ John Witbooi assisted with the establishment of the Khoisan Awareness Initiative (KAI) in the Eastern Cape that promotes an understanding and knowledge of the Khoisan groups in that area. 'How do we decide what is our authentic culture?' he asks. His answer is that 'KAI is not interested in political issues. We're interested in language, culture, history. KAI is non-partisan'.⁸⁸

Issues of authenticity are important to black Africans in the post-1994 period for particular social and political reasons related to access to resources. Ethnic identities such as Xhosa, Zulu and Sotho are grounded in historical writings, and can prove their belonging to Africa in terms of shared language and culture. Because of its rootless nature, coloured identity has not attained the same level of authenticity as the Nguni cultures. For this reason the Khoisan revivalist movement could be accused of attempting to define identity in 'pure' terms by relating Khoisan-ness to a past, prior to colonialism. Kwame Anthony Appiah equates the search for authenticity with the peeling of an onion as people try to find the essence of their identities. He warns that cultures constantly change and '[s]ocieties without change are not authentic: they're just dead'.⁸⁹ The search of an 'authentic' African identity that is tied to the land, such as Khoisan identity, will not prove those members' authenticity because society, and the state, has not attached any value, other than tourism value, to that identity.

Creoles and Africans

In 2002, Father Michael Weeder and ANC stalwart Reg September launched the Roots and Visions Forum in Cape Town 'to promote enquiry, information sharing, debate, cultural activity, engagement with issues of Africa, and proud celebration of our African heritage along with the full tapestry of our Creolised culture'.⁹⁰ The Roots and Visions Forum was to be inclusive, regardless of political affiliation or status within the society with the proviso that participants subscribe to a 'non-racist, non-ethnicist and non-sexist approach'. It rejected ethnic definitions which divided people, and called for a society in which there was gender equality. The Roots and Visions Forum's aim was to engender debate about identity in the coloured community to encourage it to engage with contemporary politics and the nation-building project. 'We use terms like "creole" and "creolisation", but we do not use these terms normatively where "creole" refers to people who have multiple ancestral roots'.⁹¹ Patric Tariq Mellet, an identity activist in Cape Town, asked the participants at the Roots

and Visions meeting in 2003 to '[g]o back and read President Mbeki's "I am an African" speech. I am also creole, the sum total of what I am, I am not what others say I am ... The more of us who proudly say "I am an African", the more of a movement there will be'.⁹² The nature of the debate around creole identities is not very different from that of the December First Movement. Both analyse identities and processes related to social change in post-apartheid society. It is important to note that the founders of these movements acknowledge the intellectual nature of the debate, and concede that not many of the objectives will be shared by the broader coloured community.

Mellet explains his use of the term 'creole' in the context of coloured identity, and manages to incorporate debates around who was an African and the position of coloured people within history.

The language that developed was made up of a whole array of languages. It was a hybrid language, a creole language, Afrikaans, emerged from slave population. There was contestation around Afrikaner creole identity versus Afrikander creole identity. For most of the 1700s and 1800s the term coloured did not feature. If you look at the first political organizations, the first recorded coloured organization was the Kimberley Afrikander League in 1880 and the APO 1903. There was a period when coloured people said proudly that I am an African.⁹³

Mellet also argues that African nationalism in South Africa came from the coloured people. He provides the examples of the South African Native National Congress, the Afrikander League, and the African People's Organisation, which he claims had moved black identity away from a racially imposed native identity towards a broader Africanness as had been imagined in African-American writings at the turn of the 20th century. Mellet advises nation-builders to adopt his Africanness and not to 'run away from creole-ness or mulatto-ness'.⁹⁴ For Mellet, the multiple identities found in an African context would form a part of the nation-building project. The national naming process should not engulf minor identities under a suffocating national identity, which will ultimately lead to dissatisfaction and increased tension within South African society.

The term 'creole' has not been well received in post-apartheid South Africa and has often been viewed as 'both racist and suspect'.⁹⁵ Some scholars have used 'creole' to explain that coloured identities are

based on 'cultural creativity [and] creolized formations shaped by South Africa's history of colonialism, slavery, segregation and apartheid'.⁹⁶ Zimitri Erasmus, a sociologist at the University of Cape Town, posits that creolisation 'involves the construction of identity out of elements of ruling as well as subaltern cultures' and that 'coloured identities are made and re-made by coloured people themselves in their attempts to give meaning to their everyday lives'.⁹⁷ Again, this is an intellectual debate which fails to gain a footing in the broader coloured community.

Many coloured people believe strongly that their 'mixture' occurred so far back in history that it does not feature in their contemporary consciousness. As a result, 'mixed' has new connotations in a post-apartheid South Africa in that it denotes children born of 'mixed' couples. Johannesburg journalist Bongiwe Mlangeni asks: 'What identity do you give a child of mixed race in post-apartheid South Africa?' because coloured is an 'inadequate definition ... "What am I?" is the question many children need answered without feeling they are the result of an immoral act'.⁹⁸ Here Mlangeni, like others, favours the remnants of an apartheid-era sense of colouredness. She misses the point that in the new South Africa, children 'of mixed race' could define themselves as they choose. This does not, however, preclude people defining such a child as coloured or 'other'. Terms such as 'creole' and 'hybrid' hide the negative stigmas attached to a coloured identity while signifiers such as 'brown' or 'mixed' would more likely appear in ordinary conversations that have consciously moved away from the use of the term 'coloured'. Neville Alexander refers to it as a 'cultural domain without boundaries' in which people can experiment with different computations of identities and cultural practices.⁹⁹

Conclusion

While accusations of race-based voting are well founded in some cases, issue-based politics have always been important in the coloured community. Racism does exist within the coloured community for reasons mentioned above. However, as this chapter argues, the coloured community has always sought a political and social home that best represents its interests. It is imperative that, in addition to addressing material and social needs, the state should be cognisant of the different histories and conditions of each community and acknowledge these differences. The nation-building project cannot succeed if certain identities are valorised and others are not.

People in post-apartheid South Africa are reconstructing their identities but are doing so within an apartheid mental framework. Coloured identity continues to occupy a space between whiteness and Africanness even though it moves through a continuum comprising Khoisan, coloured, creole and mixed people. Time, space and institutional structure feed into constructions of identity, therefore coloured people still create meaning within their communities and through experiences that are still tainted by apartheid. On a positive note, however, the group has begun to interrogate its own constructions of itself and to debate its conceptions of its 'authenticity'. By claiming an 'authentic' African identity, coloured people can claim to belong in South Africa and to be tied to the land. Constructions of 'authentic' indigenous identities cement the divide between black Africans and coloureds, which needs to be eliminated in order for South Africa to be truly democratic.

The ANC government is calling for a national identity at a time when specific identities are being sought. Fears of ethnic nationalism underlie the caution against localised identities. The argument is that in order for a young democracy to thrive, internal strife and differences should be minimised. This chapter argues the contrary. In order for a democracy to survive, specific identities are necessary so as to provide individual citizens with the ability to say, 'This is who I am' and to vote on their beliefs. This is not a call for searches for primordial linkages; rather, it is a call for 'imagined communities' to emerge according to the needs of each community and group. Coloured people are culture brokers in that 'what [they] have to offer ... in their deliberations of identity is the resilience entailed in crossing all types of boundaries rather than in simply forging negotiated agreements which harmonize interactions, but essentially allow the boundaries to remain'.¹⁰⁰ If coloured people continue to search for discretely recognisable identities, they will lose their resilience and ability to cross the boundaries to which Simone has referred.

The politics of identity in South Africa since 1994 have shown that this country is still beset by issues of difference. In turn these differences, in the present political milieu, determine whether groups gain access to resources and recognition, or are rendered politically or socially invisible. Coloured, brown, Khoisan, creole and slave identities have highlighted the nuances within the coloured community, thereby revealing individuals' agency in the process of choosing their individual and collective identities. Coloured elites have managed to find new ways to construct coloured identities that conform to the discourse around Africanness,

authenticity, indigeneity and belonging. The motives of elites could be instrumental or spiritual, but they have engaged in these debates in the public sphere that is dominated by the ANC. Steven Robins conceives of identity reconstruction as a 'recuperation of social memory'.¹⁰¹ It is a recuperative process but it is also one through which new memories are made and which responds directly to the nation-building project and the call for democracy in South Africa. Sharp suggests that the reasons for perceptions of marginalisation in the former coloured community 'may be that the dominant metaphors of the nation-building process have a different meaning for this segment of the population than for others'.¹⁰²

The process of constructing a national identity that hinges on conceptions of Africanness needs to be inclusive enough to embody a sense of belonging in its bearers. As Mellet puts it, 'ANC stalwarts – their Africanness is mine. Slave spirits are mine. Identity is not singular, it's plural'.¹⁰³ Perhaps this is the true hybridity which post-colonial writers have theorised. Sharp argues that '[cultural] hybridity involves a reflexive awareness of multiple subject positions rather than a simple "mixing" of two or more cultures'.¹⁰⁴ A society with multiple identities will bolster democracy unless the hegemonic identity conforms to old racialised divisions within South African society. Various identities within an individual that are recognised in particular contexts could provide for and reinforce participatory democratic practices.

Endnotes

- 1 In this chapter, coloured elites are taken to be those people who are leaders and opinion makers in their communities and who use their access to the media to theorise and shape debate about coloured identity in South Africa. These individuals, many of whom played leadership roles in the liberation struggle, are what Gramsci called 'organic intellectuals'. They maintain strong links with their communities and engage in, and influence, issues that affect their constituencies with the intention of creating a counter-hegemonic discourse.
- 2 See Steyn, M. 2001. *Whiteness Just Isn't What It Used to Be: Whiteness in a Changing South Africa*. Albany: State University of New York Press. For debates on Indian identity in a post-apartheid South Africa, see Ramsamy E. 2007. 'Between non-racialism and multiculturalism: Indian identity and nation-building in South Africa'. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 98, no. 4, 468–481; and Lemon A. 2008. 'Indian identities in the "Rainbow Nation": responses to transformation in South African schools'. *National Identities*, 10. For debates on changing black African identities, see Scheper-Hughes N. 2001. 'The recovery of spoiled identities in the new South Africa'. *The Multiracial Activist*, April/May <http://www.multiracial.com/readers/scheper-hughes.html> (accessed 22 September 2004).
- 3 <http://www.capetown.gov.za/home/demographics.asp>
- 4 *Business Day*, 27 May 1999.
- 5 Stan Simmons, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 14 February 2004.
- 6 Alexander N. 2002. *An Ordinary Country: Issues in the Transition from Apartheid to Democracy*. Pietermaritzburg: Natal University Press, 81.
- 7 Alexander, *An Ordinary Country*, 100, 107.
- 8 Baines G. 'The Rainbow Nation? Identity and nation building in post-apartheid South Africa', <http://www.arts.uwa.edu/MotsPluriels/MP798gb.html> (accessed 28 September 2005). See also McAllister P. 1996. 'Australian multiculturalism: lessons for South Africa?' *Indicator SA*, 13, no. 2, 2–78.
- 9 Most South Africans claim to be tolerant of each other, but are not. See Gibson J & Gouws A. 2003. *Overcoming Intolerance in South Africa: Experiments in Democratic Persuasion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 41–115.
- 10 See Taylor C. 1992. 'The politics of recognition', in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, ed A Gutmann. Princeton: Princeton University Press; Kymlicka W. 1995. *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press; and Adam H. 1995. 'The politics of identity: nationalism, patriotism and multiculturalism'. *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, 19, 87–110.
- 11 See Moller Okin S. 'Is multiculturalism bad for women?' *Boston Review Online*. <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR22.5/okin.html> (accessed 26 January 2006).
- 12 Spinner J. 1994. *The Boundaries of Citizenship: Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the Liberal State*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 136. See also Habib A. 1996. 'Myth of the Rainbow Nation: prospects for the consolidation of democracy in South Africa'. *African Security Review*, 5, no. 6.
- 13 Mbeki T. 1998. 'Statement of Deputy President Thabo Mbeki at the opening of the debate in the National Assembly, on "Reconciliation and nation-building"'. National Assembly, Cape Town, 29 May, <http://dfa.gov.za/docs/speeches/1998/mbek0529.htm> (accessed 22 February 2006).
- 14 Alexander, *An Ordinary Country*, 107.
- 15 Anon. 'Nation formation and nation-building – the national question in South Africa, 1997', <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/discussion/nation.html> (accessed 27 July 2005), 4. According to this document, coloureds are 'somewhere in the undefined middle of the rainbow'.
- 16 Mbeki T. 2001. 'New patriotism for a new South Africa'. *ANC Today: Online Voice of the African National Congress*, 1, no. 4, 16–22 February, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/anctoday/2001/text/at04.txt> (accessed 22 February 2006).
- 17 Peter Mokoena, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 14 February 2004.
- 18 'Statement of Deputy President T Mbeki, on behalf of the African National Congress, on the occasion of the adoption by the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Bill 1996', <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/1996/sp960508.html> (accessed 22 February 2006).
- 19 Farred G. 2001. 'Where does the Rainbow Nation end? Colouredness and citizenship in post-apartheid South Africa'. *The New Centennial Review*, 1, no. 1, 182–183.
- 20 Anon. 'Nation-formation and nation-building – the national question in South Africa', <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/discussion/nation.html> (accessed 27 July 2005).

21 Nuttal S. 2004. 'City forms and writing the "now" in South Africa'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 30, no. 4, 738.

22 Nuttal S & Michael C. 2002. *Senses of Culture: South African Culture Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2.

23 Jordan P. 'The national question in post-1994 South Africa – a discussion paper in preparation for the ANC's 50th National Conference, 1997', 10, <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/discussion/natquestion/html> (accessed 27 July 2005).

24 Habib, 'Myth of the Rainbow Nation', 4. See also Mattes R, Taylor D & Poore A. 1997. 'The role of identity in building a democratic culture in South Africa'. Paper presented at the conference 'Multicultural citizenship in the "new" South Africa', Cape Town, 15–17 December.

25 Jordan, 'The national question', 12.

26 Sharp J. 1997. 'Beyond exposé analysis: hybridity, social memory and identity politics'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 15, no. 1, 7–21; Robins S. 1997. 'Transgressing the borderlands of tradition and modernity: identity, cultural hybridity and land struggles in Namaqualand, 1980–94'. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 15, no. 1, 23–42.

27 Cornell S & Hartmann D. 1998. *Ethnicity and Race Making Identities in a Changing World*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press, 30.

28 Abdi A. 1999. 'Identity formations and deformations in South Africa: a historical and contemporary overview'. *Journal of Black Studies*, 30, no. 2, 150.

29 This term is borrowed from Wicomb Z. 1998. 'Shame and identity: the case of the coloured in South Africa', in *Writing South Africa: Literature, Apartheid and Democracy, 1970–1995*, eds D Atteridge & R Jolly. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 92.

30 Bhabha H. 1994. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 69.

31 Adhikari M. 2002. 'Hope, fear, shame frustration: continuity and change in the expression of coloured identity in white supremacist South Africa 1910–1994'. PhD dissertation, University of Cape Town, 24–33.

32 For further discussion on identity within social movements, see Stryker S, Owens T & White R (eds). 2000. *Self, Identity and Social Movements*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

33 Henry Cupido, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 14 February 2004.

34 Jordan P, Jaffer Z & Maré G. 2002. 'The formation of national identity: summary notes from debate of 9 November, 2002'. *Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection*, 14, accessed via <http://www.goedgedacht.org.za/view.asp?pg=archive>.

35 Simone A M. 1994. 'In the mix: retaking coloured identities'. Cape Town: Foundation for Contemporary Research, 2.

36 Field S. 2001. 'Oral histories of forced removals', in *Lost Communities Living Memories: Remembering Forced Removals in Cape Town*, ed S. Field. Cape Town: David Philip, 98.

37 See Erasmus Z & Pieterse E. 1997. 'Conceptualising coloured identities: preliminary thoughts'. Paper presented at the conference 'National identity and democracy', Cape Town, 14–18 March, 8.

38 *Cape Argus*, 28 May 2002.

39 Crenshaw K. 1991. 'Mapping the margins: intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color'. *Stanford Law Review*, 43, 1241–1299.

40 Gail Smith, e-mail to author, 25 March, 2005. Smith is an identity and gender activist who was instrumental in the making of the 1998 Sarah Bartmann documentary, *The Life and Times of Sarah Baartman, the Hottentot Venus* by Zola Mascko. She also played a major role in the repatriation of Sarah Bartmann's remains to South Africa in 2002.

41 *Cape Times*, 18 March 1996.

42 *Rapport*, 12 June 2005. Translated from Afrikaans.

43 See Bekker S, Leildé A, Cornelissen S & Horstmeier S. 2000. 'The emergence of new identities in the Western Cape'. *Politikon*, 27, no. 2, 231.

44 Trevor Oosterwyk, David Abrahams and Michael Weeder are prominent examples of former UDF activists who tried this strategy.

45 Mattes R, Chikwanha A & Magezi A. 2005. 'South Africa: after a decade of democracy: a summary of results'. *Afrobarometer*. Cape Town, IDASA.

46 See Dubow S. 1994. 'Ethnic euphemisms and racial echoes'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, no. 3, 355–370; Van den Berghe P. 1970. *Race and Ethnicity: Essays in Comparative Sociology*. New York: Basic Books; and Heese H. 1988. 'Ras en etnisiiteit: perspektiewe van 1938 en 1988'. *Kronos*, 12, 42–51.

47 Klandermans B, Roefs M & Olivier J (eds). 2001. *The State of the People: Citizens, Civil Society and Governance in South Africa, 1994–2000*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council, 101–102. In 1998, only 10 per cent of coloureds claimed a strong national identity.

48 Cheryl Potgieter, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 2 April 2004. The former two suburbs are working-class coloured areas of Cape Town and the latter a coloured area in Pretoria.

49 For discussion on limitations of an overarching South African identity, see also Erasmus Z (ed). 2001. 'Introduction', in *Coloured by History, Shaped by Place: New Perspectives on Coloured Identities in Cape Town*. Cape Town: Kwela Books.

50 Farred, 'Where does the Rainbow Nation end?', 182.

51 *Cape Argus*, 28 July 2006.

52 The name translates as 'Coloured Liberation Movement for the Advancement of Brown People'.

53 Caligure D. 1996. 'Voices from the communities', in *Now that We Are Free: Coloured Communities in a Democratic South Africa*, eds W James, D Caligure & K Cullinan. Cape Town: IDASA, 10.

54 Jackson S. 1999. 'The South African public sphere and the politics of coloured identity'. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 178.

55 Hendricks C. 2000. 'We knew our place': a study of the constructions of coloured identity in South Africa'. PhD dissertation, University of South Carolina, 239.

56 *Mail & Guardian*, 24–30 March 1995.

57 Jackson, 'The South African public sphere', 180.

58 David Abrahams, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 18 February 2004.

59 Seekings J. 1996. 'From independence to identification', in James, Caligure & Cullinan, *Now that We Are Free*, 35.

60 James W & Caligure D. 1996. 'Renewing civil society'. *Journal of Democracy*, 7, no. 1, 43.

61 David Abrahams, interviewed 18 February 2004.

62 Michael Weeder, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 12 February 2004.

63 Wicomb, 'Shame and identity', 93.

64 James W 1995. 'The South African public sphere'. *Cape Times*, 4 August. See also Jackson, 'The South African public sphere', 178–184.

65 Jackson, 'The South African public sphere', 182.

66 Oosterwyk T. 1997. 'December First Movement'. Report on a conference arranged by the Cape Town Heritage Trust, 2–4 April (unpublished document in the possession of Oosterwyk.)

67 David Abrahams, interviewed 18 February 2004.

68 David Abrahams, interviewed 18 February 2004.

69 Michael Weeder, interviewed 12 February 2004.

70 Oosterwyk, 'December First Movement'.

71 Abrahams & Oosterwyk, letter to the editor, *Cape Times*, date unknown (copies in the possession of Oosterwyk and the author).

72 Anon. nd. 'December First Movement: statement of intent' (unpublished document, in possession of the author).

73 Michael Weeder, interviewed 12 February 2004, Cape Town.

74 David Abrahams, interviewed 18 February 2004.

75 Mervyn Ross quoted in *Mail & Guardian*, 24–30 March 1995.

76 Michael Weeder, interviewed 12 February 2004.

77 See Sharp J & Boonzaier E. 1994. 'Ethnic identity as performance: lessons from Namaqualand'. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 20, no. 3, 405–416.

78 John Witbooi, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 28 October 2004.

79 Jean Burgess, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 16 October 2004.

80 Cecil le Fleur's speech entitled 'Die stryd om erkenning van Suid-Afrika se eerste inheemse mense in 'n nuwe demokrasie' (The struggle for recognition of South Africa's first people in a new democracy), delivered on 19 October 2004, University of Port Elizabeth, C J Langenhoven Lecture Series, translated from Afrikaans by author.

81 Le Fleur, 'Die stryd om erkenning van Suid-Afrika'.

82 'Statement by Mbeki on Constitution Bill, 1996'.

83 Le Fleur, 'Die stryd om erkenning van Suid-Afrika'.

84 Le Fleur, 'Die stryd om erkenning van Suid-Afrika'.

85 Ron Martin, interviewed by Michele Ruiters 18 February 2004.

86 John Witbooi, interviewed 28 October 2004.

87 Ron Martin, interviewed 18 February 2004.

88 John Witbooi, interviewed 28 October 2004.

89 Appiah K. 2006. 'The case for contamination'. *New York Times*, 1 January.

90 Roots and Visions Forum, <http://www.inyathelo.co.za/roots/about/main.html> (accessed 15 August 2005)

91 Roots and Visions Forum, <http://www.inyathelo.co.za/roots/about/main.html> (accessed 2 August 2005).

92 Roots and Visions Forum, minutes of meeting, 5 April 2003, 10 <http://www.inyathelo.co.za/roots/about/main.html> (accessed 15 August 2005).

93 Patric Tariq Mellet, interviewed by Michele Ruiters, 12 February 2004.

94 Patric Mellet, interviewed 12 February 2004.

95 Nuttal, 'City forms', 733

96 Erasmus, *Coloured by History*, 14.

97 Erasmus, *Coloured by History*, 16.

98 Mlangeni B. 'Racial identity is greyer than ever in the new South Africa, 2003', <http://www.sundaytimes.co.za/articles/TarkArticle.aspx?Id=857478> (accessed 7 February 2005).

99 Alexander, *An Ordinary Country*, 207.

100 Simone, *In the Mix*, 21.

101 Robins S. 2000. 'Land struggles and the politics and ethics of representing "Bushman" history and identity'. *Kronos*, 26, 69.

102 Sharp, 'Beyond exposé analysis', 15.

103 Patric Mellet, interviewed 12 February 2004.

104 Sharp, 'Beyond exposé analysis', 17.