

# Part III

## Case Studies

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## 6

# The Idea of South Africa and Pan-South African Nationalism

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If a crude and homely illustration may be allowed, the peoples of South Africa resemble the constituents of a plum-pudding when in the process of being mixed; the plums, the peel, the currants; the flour, the eggs, and the water are mingled together. Here plums may predominate, there the peel; one part may be slightly thinner than another, but it is useless to try to resort them; they have permeated each other's substance: they cannot be re-separated; to cut off a part would not be to resort them; it would be dividing a complex but homogenous substance into parts which would repeat its complexity. What then shall be said of the South African problem as a whole? Is it impossible for the South African peoples to attain to any form of unity, organization, and national life? Must we forever remain a vast, inchoate, invertebrate mass of humans, divided horizontally into layers of race, mutually antagonistic, and vertically severed by lines of political state division, which cut up our races without simplifying our problems, and which add to the bitterness of race conflict the irritation of political divisions? Is national life and organization unattainable by us? [...] We believe that no one can impartially study the condition of South Africa and feel that it is so. Impossible as it is that our isolated states should consolidate, and attain to a complete national life, there is a form of organic union which is possible to us. For there is a sense in which all South Africans are one [...] there is a subtle but a very real bond, which unites all South Africans, and differentiates us from all other people in the world. This bond is our mixture of races itself. It is this which divides South Africa from all other peoples in the world, and makes us one.

(Olive Cronwright Schreiner 1923: 60-61)

## Introduction

South Africa has a long history of identity crisis and contested questions of belonging and citizenship. This crisis is captured in such literature as *There Are No South Africans* by G. H. Calpin (1941) and recently by Ivor Chipkin's *Do South Africans Exist* (2007). Calpin posited that, 'The worst of South Africa is that you never come across a South African' (Calpin 1941: 9). This means that one of the enduring themes and inconclusive questions in South African political and social history is that of the making of pan-South African nationalism to underpin the imagined nation. This argument is confirmed by three modern historians, Colin Bundy, Saul Dubow and Robert Ross. Bundy argued that:

In the political catechism of the New South Africa, the primary enquiry remains the National Question. What is the post-apartheid nation? Who belongs or is excluded, and on what basis? How does a 'national identity gain its salience and power to transcend the particularities of ethnicity and race?' (Bundy 2007: 79)

Dubow urged historians to focus research on the making of the South African nation in these words:

It is surely time [...] for historians to formulate detailed questions about how South Africa has been conceived and imagined, to analyze the different forms in which ideas about South Africa and South African societies have developed over time, and to trace the ways in which the South African 'problem' or predicament has been conceptualized. In order to do so, we should remember that the struggle *for* South Africa has long been, and continues to be, a struggle to *become* South African (Dubow 2007: 72).

Ross, on the other hand, observed that:

[...] even if the essential unity of South Africa and the identity of South Africans are beyond dispute, there remains the question of what is, and what is not, South Africa. Who are, and who are not, South Africans (Ross 1999: 3).

All these arguments speak to the pertinent issue of who constitute the authentic subject of the post-apartheid nation. It is a new and old question as it pre-occupied the proponents of Anglicization, Afrikanerization and Africanization as discursive processes within which identities germinated and were reconstructed and contested. What further complicated the situation were the questions of indigeneity and nativity that have persistently existed as a hidden script across all imaginations of the nation within plural and multi-racial societies created by colonialism.

The metaphor of a 'rainbow' nation is an attempt to include various races and ethnicities into a single nation where there is a place and space for each and everyone. It is a clarion call and generous invitation of people of diverse cultures, languages, religions and races to unite under one nation. This is apparent in the country's coat of arms which carries the message: 'Diverse People Unite'. But South Africa is pushing the agenda of unity of diverse peoples at a time when other parts of the continent are experiencing narrowing conceptions of belonging and citizenship informed by what Geshiere (2009) termed 'the return of the local' with its 'perils of belonging' and what Comaroff and Comaroff (2009:1) termed 'Ethnicity, INC' (turning tribes into corporations) characterized by 'a lot of ethnic awareness, ethnic assertion, ethnic sentiment, ethno-talk; this despite the fact that it was supposed to wither away with the rise of modernity, with disenchantment, and with the incursion of the market.'

Theron and Swart (2009: 153) correctly noted that, 'Nowhere on the continent has this politics of identity been more prominent than in South Africa, during the pre- and post-apartheid eras.' South African leaders have not rested on their laurels and ignored the issue of identity and nation-building. A construction of a unique pan-South African nationalism that incorporates diverse ethnicities and races is ongoing and the challenging question is whether it will succeed in suturing and stabilizing this racialized and ethnicized society.

As far back as 1996, the then Deputy President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki attempted to define South Africanness as a historical rather than primordial fixture in his seminal 'I am an African' speech delivered to the National Assembly to mark the adoption of the Constitution of South Africa (Mbeki 1998). Mbeki unpacked various historical and genealogical processes that contributed to the construction of South Africanness as an African identity ranging from slavery to colonialism. His definition of an African clearly reflected his slant towards issues of commitment to the African cause of liberation as part of a process that created Africans.

Mbeki's definition also implied that being African was not an unconditional identity, rather it was imposed by history on people and was predicated on the form of consciousness that one exhibited towards the African cause and the sacrifices one made towards African redemption, liberation and freedom. What is missing in Mbeki's definition is who is a South African if understood outside the broader African identity that he eloquently espoused as flexible, generous and inclusive of people of different races and ethnicities. Mbeki's

conception of Africanness was that of a hybrid identity; born out of coalescence of various historical processes over centuries that brought the San, Khoi Khoi, Nguni, Sotho-Tswana, British, Malayan, Indian, Chinese, Afrikaner and other groups together. Mbeki explicitly stated that:

I owe my being to Khoi and the San [...] I am formed of migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land [...] In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence [...] I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetswayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonor the cause of freedom [...] I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas [...] I come from those who were transported from India and China [...] Being part of all these people and in the knowledge that one dare contest that assertion, I shall claim that I am an African (Mbeki 1998: 31-36).

This was indeed a superb historical contextualization of the very complex and ambiguous nature of the South African identity and its diversities. But despite these efforts by Mbeki to define South African national identity as a historical product of the coalescence of historical events and processes, the question of who is an authentic South African often continue to surface, threatening the 'rainbow nation'. Race, nativity and indigeneity continue to complicate the debate. The connection between 'whiteness' and 'Africanness' continues to be doubted mainly by those who define Africanness in racial terms (Friedman 2009: 79-83). In Chapter Two in this book I provided details of levels, degrees and varieties of Africanness.

This chapter traces the historical development and genealogies of the idea South Africa together with the complex questions of belonging and citizenship over a longer time-span beginning with a precolonial background, slicing right through the imperial and colonial encounters of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and up to the present constructions of the 'rainbow nation'. The key question here is how a plurality of identities develop, coalesce or condense around a popular imagination to create a singular national one? Does South Africa have a popular myth of foundation around which the nation can coalesce? The idea of South Africa is analysed as an encapsulation of the various initiatives and imaginations of the nation mediated by complex historical processes and human actions that often operated and unfolded tangentially and others that coalesced tendentiously, accidentally and directly to produce what we now call the South African 'rainbow nation'.

The central argument of this chapter is that the discursive formation of South African national identity is not only a product of the African nationalist struggle but something that has a long pedigree lodged within precolonial antecedents, imperial and colonial imperatives, 'Anglicization', 'Afrikanerization' and 'Africanization' as broad discursive identity processes. At the centre of these processes were differing definitions of who constituted the 'authentic' subject of the imagined South African nation. Throughout its development, the idea of South Africa was permeated by forces of inclusion and exclusion mediated by race, ethnicity, gender, and material accumulation considerations.

The idea of South Africa emerged as a figurative expression and has a long pedigree dating back to the 1830s. Shula Marks and Stanley Trapido argued that:

In the 1870s at the beginning of the mineral revolution, South Africa was a geographical expression. Precapitalist and capitalist modes of production existed side by side, as did state forms of varying sizes with their own ruling groups and systems of exploitation. There were two British colonies, two ostensibly politically independent republics and numerous still autonomous African polities. All these were multi-ethnic and multilingual, although not all languages and ethnicities were equal. Colonists of British and European descent lived side by side in the colonies with large numbers of indigenous peoples, and in Natal with indentured labourers from the Indian subcontinent; African kingdoms were equally heterogeneous entities, composed of peoples of different origins (Marks and Trapido 1987: 3).

What needs to be understood is how a geographical-figurative expression was translated into the idea of a nation. The translation took the form of a complex tapestry and catalogue of historical accidents, complex imaginations, evolving constructions, and contestations dating back to the age of cataclysmic migrations of Africans and Afrikaners historically referred to as the *Mfecane/Difaqane* (time of troubles/crushing) and the 'Great Trek/Treks' respectively (Cobbing 1988; Hamilton 1995; Etherington 2001).

The complex imperial and colonial encounters involving the Afrikaners, the British and the wars of conquest and resistance of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries also formed the broader discursive terrain within which the idea of South Africa developed as a contested concept with a racial tinge. The idea of South Africa also emerged between and betwixt clashes and syntheses between imperial and colonial imperatives, annexations, negotiations, reconciliations and unions that were invariably shaped by diverging and converging nationalisms of the English, Afrikaners and Africans.

At the centre of this idea of South Africa is the question of belonging, citizenship and access to strategic resources. This question is profoundly historical, political and cultural; hence the suitability of a historical approach that interrogates complex histories and unpacks ambiguous politics that coalesced towards the production and reproduction of the idea of South Africa as a conflict-laden arena of claims and counter-claims to membership of the imagined nation.

The idea of South Africa is a complex one with multiple genealogies, complex histories and different meanings, and any serious study of the making of the South African nation must engage with the complex genealogies of its constructions, ambiguous imaginations, changing receptions, consumptions, contestations, rejections, celebrations, condemnations and subversions. The idea of South Africa is both old and new as its constructions and imaginings pre-occupied imperialists, colonial-settlers, indigenous Africans, nationalists of British, Afrikaner and African stock as well as travellers and novelists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and the present-day leaders of South Africa.

### **Framing the debates on identity**

Anderson (1983) popularized the idea of the social construction of nations, leading to the retreat of earlier theories of the nation such as perennialism or primordialism. In 1983 when Anderson's book first appeared, two historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger reinforced the thesis of social construction of identities and invention of traditions. The current debate is no longer about whether nations and identities were constructed or not, it is about the various specific and contextual mechanisms used to construct identities and nations. Manuel Castells argued that what needs to be understood are some three-fold issues: from what were the identities constructed; by whom were they constructed, and what were they constructed for (Castells 1997: 6-7).

National identity formation in general emerged out of complex historical, political and social processes and events that sought to weave together, eliminate, blend or re-define a multiplicity of existing identities. Lewellen (2002: 90) argued that identity was a 'matter of imaginative and creative rediscovery in which contemporary interpretation and needs fill in the gaps, recreate the past and bridge the discontinuities with new mythologies'. In this sense, identity was never 'an accomplished end point, of a people's history, but a constant process of becoming' that was 'always temporarily positioned within a particular context that needs to be imaginatively interpreted'

(Lewellen 2002). In other words, an identity never existed as something out there waiting to be embraced and experienced. The importance of identities to human beings is emphasized by Craig Calhoun who argued that:

We know of no people without names, no languages or cultures in which some manner of distinction between self and other, we and they, are not made [...] self-knowledge--always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery - is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others (Calhoun 1994: 7).

Michel Foucault (1982: 212-221) argued that the processes through which reality was constructed and dissimulated were always acts of power and would always be resisted and contested. At the centre of identity construction is what is termed 'political frontiers', which Aletta J. Norval defined as follows:

Political frontiers are those mechanisms through which social division is instituted, and 'insiders' distinguished from 'outsiders'; it defines opposition; it dissimulates social division; it makes it seem that the institution of social division is not itself a social fact (Norval 1996: 4-5).

In the South African case, the discursive formation of national identity was permeated by casting and recasting of political frontiers as attempts were consistently made to order the relations among the blacks, the Afrikaners, the English and other groups.

The political frontiers were mediated by race and ethnic vectors. It is not surprising, therefore, that colonial systems such as apartheid tried to maintain African fragmentations into various ethnic groups including putting some legislative speed traps on the process of coalescence of multiple ethnic African identities into a singular national identity. But such constructions of political frontiers provoked further imaginations of nation by the oppressed and excluded African people who agitated for inclusion in the nation.

It is impossible to understand the issues and problems of the making of the South African nation without clear historical knowledge of the catalogues of socio-political dislocations such as the 'Mfecane' (Bryant 1929; Lye and Murray 1980; Cobbing 1988; Hamilton 1995), the 'Great Trek' of Boer farmers of 1834-1836, the discovery of minerals of the 1860s and 1880s, the Anglo-Boer War/South African War of 1899-1902, Bambata Uprising of 1906, the Act of Union of 1910, the formation of the Native Congress in 1912; industrialization and proletarianization of the 1930s and 1940s, the Second World War of 1939-1945, institutionalization of apartheid in 1948, Defiance Campaigns and the Sharpeville Massacre of the 1960s, the rise of the Black

Consciousness Movement in the late 1960s and 1970s, the Soweto Uprising of 1976, the age of the United Democratic Front (UDF) of the 1980s, and many others. These events and processes constituted the broader discursive terrain within which seeds of identities germinated, coalesced and were contested and redefined.

Dubow (2007: 52) has lamented how existing master narratives about 'class', 'nation', 'race' and even 'the struggle' have avoided 'complex questions of subjectivity'. He added that despite the existence of 'outstanding work on the invention of tradition and the creation of spurious ethnic and tribal entities, it is remarkable that 'South Africa has so often been analysed as a unitary category; the presumption that all its people were and are South Africans has likewise been taken for granted' (Dubow 2007: 53). This confusion arises from the fact that the history of South African nation-building has been so little explored from a deep historical perspective that traces it back to the time when the term South Africa was a mere figurative expression.

Most of the recent literature such as Ivor Chipkin (2007) that focused on how an 'African people' as a collectivity organized in pursuit of a political agenda came into being tend to confine analysis of identities and the nation to the period of the African nationalist struggle and the post-apartheid period as though the idea of the nation started in the 1960s (Chipkin 2007). Chipkin's main concern was to correct a false idea common within existing narratives of resistance, oppression, exploitation and popular nationalist discourses whereby 'the people' were viewed as 'existing' prior to the period of the nationalist struggle (Chipkin 2007: 2).

The central thesis of Chipkin's study is that the African people that are today called South Africans emerged primarily in and through the process of nationalist resistance to colonialism. He made a clear distinction between 'the people as datum and the people as political subjects' (Chipkin 2007: 2). Chipkin made it clear that he was not interested in studying people as mere datum or as 'an empirical collectivity of individuals in a given geography', rather he was approaching the concept of 'the people' from a political angle as 'a collectivity organized in pursuit of a political end' (Chipkin 2007: 1-2).

To Chipkin, once the concept of the people was clarified as a political one, then it was possible to step up the argument to engage with the meaning of 'nation'. To him, a nation is 'not simply a cultural artefact' but a political phenomenon. His definition of a nation is: 'a political community whose form is given in relation to the pursuit of democracy and freedom' (Chipkin 2007: 2-3). he went further to say that:

In this sense, the nation precedes the state, not because it has always already existed, but because it emerges in and through the nationalist struggle for state power. The history of the postcolony is, in this sense, the history of 'the people' qua production (Chipkin 2007: 2).

While Chipkin's robust intellectual interventions on the subject of identity and nation-building were useful in understanding the making of people and nations in postcolonial Africa in general and post-apartheid South Africa in particular, the key problem is that he confined his study to the period of the African nationalist struggle. He missed the point that the African nationalist struggle was just another layer and one version of nationalist imaginations of the nation that emerged on top of earlier ones such as the 'Anglicization' and 'Afrikanerization' processes that also contributed to the construction of 'South Africanism' (Dubow 2006: v-vii). But in postcolonial Africa, the thesis that 'the nation precedes the state' needs further interrogation because African founding fathers have often managed to build states but failed to build nations. This is a point well articulated by the Zimbabwean political scientist, Eldred V. Masunungure, who argued that:

Nation-building, like state-building, is a work of art and many African leaders have proven to be good state-building artists but poor nation-builders. In countries with a kaleidoscope of cultural, ethnic, racial, religious and other salient social identities, nation-building is a big challenge (Masunungure 2006: 3).

The point is that African nationalists inherited an already established colonial state without a nation. Their task was mainly to 'de-racialize' and 'Africanize' state structures. Nation-building is altogether a different structure and has remained a daunting task. It has continued to be contentious work-in-progress across the African continent. For South Africa, the challenge was how to mould the various ethnic and racial groups into a stable nation of diverse but equal citizens.

Dubow argued that 'South Africanism' as a form of imagination of a unitary nation 'took many forms and resists easy definition,' adding that it developed as a 'version of the patriotic or dominion nationalisms'. To him, South Africanism began as 'the expression of a developing settler society, and as such marginalized or denied the rights of indigenous African peoples' (Dubow 2006: vi).

What was paradoxical about this emerging 'South Africanism' within the confluence of imperial and colonial ventures, was that while it excluded black races, it 'steadfastly disavowed the politics of 'racialism' and 'its proponents professed their commitment to ameliorating tensions between Afrikaners and English-speakers by stressing common bonds of patriotism' (Dubow 2006: vi). This inclusionary-exclusionary

motif haunted the development of the idea of South Africa throughout various historical epochs and continues to reverberate even within the present 'rainbow nation'. Dubow (2006: v) further argued that investigations into the story of belonging should grapple with such pertinent questions as: 'How did understanding of the term 'South Africa' develop? What were considered to be its defining problems? Who laid claim to membership of the national community, and when?' Chipkin left these questions open-ended stating that: 'if South Africans were not a nation, they were, nonetheless, already some kind of people. The issue was therefore: Who was eligible for citizenship and who was not. At stake were the limits of the political community' (Chipkin 2007: 175).

It is important to investigate such processes as Anglicization that formed part of identity-forming mechanisms that put the English at the centre of the imagined nation and 'Afrikanerization' as a particular form of national identity construction that put the Afrikaner at the centre of the nation, while tolerating the English, but excluding Africans/blacks from the category of rights-bearing citizens. African nationalism was another layer of complex processes of imagination of the nation and construction of identity that sought to put the excluded Africans at the centre of the nation, while contesting the notions of racialized belonging that were exclusionary.

But African nationalist discourses of nation were not a homogenous body of thought but were always riddled by antinomies of various strands of thought such as radical 'Africanism' that was espoused by the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) and the African National Congress (ANC) that matured to articulate an inclusive nation founded on principles of non-racialism and liberal democracy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2007: 1-61; 2008: 53-85; 2009: 61-78).

The best way to gain a deeper understanding of the idea of South Africa is to read it carefully as a continuum that has been in the making since the late nineteenth century with various ideas of the nation germinating and cross-fertilizing each other, as well as contesting and blending with each other across various major historical epochs. The Foucauldian concept of genealogy as a tool for analysing the origins of social and political phenomena like nations and their embedment and implication in the complex political histories and social struggles taking place in 'unpromising places' is very useful (Foucault 1977: 42; Norval: 1996: 57). Aletta J. Norval captured the importance of genealogy as a tool of analysis in the following words:

Genealogy is an irreverent, essentially political practice, disturbing what was previously considered immobile, fragmenting what was thought unified, showing the heterogeneity of what was imagined to be consistent with itself (Norval 1996: 57).

If one deploys Foucauldian genealogical analysis, it becomes clear that the triumphal and celebrated African nationalism that was dominated by the current ruling African National Congress (ANC), the PAC, Black Consciousness Movement (BCM), the South African Communist Party (SACP) and other smaller African political formations, were never 'original' political formations but were hybrid and successor formations and inheritors of earlier nascent 'inclusive' and 'progressive' traditions informed by Victorian Christianity, Trotskyism, Civil Rights Movements, Garveyism, imperial liberalism, anti-slavery humanitarianism and Western notions of modernity and well as resilient precolonial ideologies of freedom (Dubow 2006: 277).

It is clear that the Zulu warrior tradition and the figure of King Shaka influenced the politics of Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and that the 'Port Elizabeth-East London-Alice triangle' became the seedbed of nationalist ideas informed by the effects on the Xhosa of black-white confrontations of the colonial encounters that were followed by increasing Christianization and exposure to modern schooling. The early assimilation of liberal ideas by some Xhosa elites had a deep influence on subsequent African nationalism (Williams 1970: 383).

This reality of the ANC and other African political formations as successors and inheritors of those inchoate modernist, emancipatory, revolutionary, and progressive strands to become a unique grand synthesizers and mixers of various nationalisms led such scholars as Eric Hobsbawm to characterize the ANC in particular as the last great 'Euronationalist' movement (cited in Bhabha Comaroff 1994: 15-46). The literary scholar David Attwell articulated this question of a continuum in South Africa political history in a more dramatic way:

South Africa became postcolonial in 1910 with the Act Union, which brought about a coalition of Boer and Briton in a white colonial state; a bleaker kind of postcoloniality emerged with the triumph of Afrikaner republicanism after the National Party's electoral victory in 1948; then, mercifully, in 1994, a constitutionally-defined, non-racial democracy was established, representing the point at which these various postcolonial histories have begun to coalesce, at least in the legal sense (Attwell 2005: 2).

Odendaal (1984: 287) also emphasized that the ANC is a successor to earlier traditions of resistance and an inheritor of the political mantle from previous African and non-African political formations and diverse ideological resources. He argued that the armed guerrilla struggle spearheaded by the ANC and the PAC was legitimized as 'part of the struggle that started with eighteenth-and nineteenth-century frontier wars'.

Therefore, the development of both African and white political consciousness is studied from a genealogical perspective that takes into account nineteenth century intra- and inter-African and white rivalries and initiatives within which racialized imaginations of the nation emerged. This is a point reinforced by Odendaal (1984: 286) who argued that 'the line of continuity between tribal or primary resistance to white expansion, early constitutional protests politics and present day African nationalism' is 'clear and deserves more attention from scholars'.

### **The genealogies of the idea of South Africa**

In the 1830s right up to the post-1902 period, there were no blacks and whites that existed as broadly defined racial identities. On the African side, such earlier identities as those of the Mbo, Thembe, Ndwandwe, Mthethwa, Ngwane and others had collapsed and were giving birth to new ones (Etherington 2001). What existed were numerous ethnic identities such as Zulu, Ndebele, Korana, Dutch, Griqua, Hurutshe, Hlubi, Xhosa, 'Hottentots', Afrikaner and Britons. These were at their formative and infancy stage. For instance, the nucleus of Afrikaner identity emerged in the interior in this form:

A typical group consisted of a handful of families travelling together under the leadership of a senior male. These groups tended to be known by the name of their chiefs, i.e., the Cilliers Party, the Bronkhorts Party, the Potgieter Party, etc., even though people with many other surnames were to be found among them (Etherington 2001: 244).

This means that what eventually became Afrikaners emerged as a historical coalescence of scattered families and smaller groups under some notable leaders, such as Hendrick Potgieter, Louis Trichardt, and Piet Uys. Such broader identities as native, Bantu, Coloured, and White did not exist. At times what eventually coalesced into African people were initially only known by the names of their leaders such as the Shangani of Soshangane. In this case, the leader's name became the name of his followers—it became a form of identity.

Like all identities, African identity developed in relation to white identity. White identity also developed in relation to black/African identity. In short, the 1830s were a period of identity formation in the midst of evolving colonial encounters, migrations and wars. Marks and Trapido (1987: 2) noted that new identities also emerged around 1910 when the state was being constructed as a single polity out of the British colonies, the conquered Afrikaner republics and African kingdoms. But the Act of Union of 1910 did not create a stable nation. As Marks and Trapido argued:

That this unification did not lead to a single pan-South Africa, pan-ethnic nationalism was the outcome of a history of regional divisions, the racism and social Darwinism of the late nineteenth century and the specific political-cum-class struggles which were being legitimated by the discourse of nationalism (Marks and Trapido 1987: 2).

In light of this, the argument that the 'development of humanity' as a 'series of interpretations' where the concept of genealogy 'is to record its history' becomes very important and revealing (Foucault 1977: 151-152). A genealogical analysis of the discursive formation of the South African nation makes visible the ambiguities, instabilities and fragmentary terrain within which it emerged.

Olive Cronwright Schreiner, whose words constitute the epigraph of this chapter, was an early creative and polemic writer who dreamt of a rainbow nation even prior to the Anglo-Boer/South Africa War of 1899-1902. She was described by her contemporaries as the spiritual progenitor of the South Africa nation (Rive 1976: vii-xxii). Schreiner died in 1920 having made clear her ideas of a united South Africa nation comprising of the Africans, Britons and Afrikaners. She posed the challenge of nation-building in this way: 'How, of our divided peoples, can a great healthy, harmonious and desirable nation be formed? This is the final problem of South Africa. If we cannot solve it, our fate is sealed' (Schreiner 1976: 62). Schreiner clearly identified the core problem of South Africa:

If our view be right, the problem which South Africa has before it today is this: How from our political states and our discordant races, can a great, healthy, united, organized nation be formed? [...] Our race question is complicated by a question of colour, which presents itself to us in a form more virulent and intense than that in which it has met any modern people (Schreiner 1976: 62-64).

Sounding rather prophetic, Schreiner had this say about the future of South Africa:

Our South African national structure in the future will not and cannot be identical with that of any other people, our national origin being so wholly unlike that of any other; our social polity must be developed by ourselves through the interaction of our parts with one another and in harmony with our complex needs. For good or evil, the South African nation will be an absolutely new thing under the sun, perhaps, owing to its mixture of races, possessing that strange vitality and originality which appears to rise so often from the mixture of human varieties: perhaps, in general human advance, ranking higher than other societies more simply constructed; perhaps lower—according as we shall shape it: but this,

certainly—will be a new social entity, with new problems, new gifts, new failings, new accomplishments (Schriener 1976: 370).

The genealogy of the idea of South Africa is traceable to the cataclysmic processes that engulfed the area which Norman Etherington termed the 'heartland'. This heartland referred to the interior of what finally became South Africa. It became a setting for 'great treks' of Africans, Griqua, Korana and Afrikaners in the period between 1815 and 1854 (Etherington 2001). The 'heartland' is a term used to distinguish the areas that were far from the coastal areas of Cape Town and Natal where white activities were concentrated during the period prior to 1834. The core area of the 'heartland' was the Caledon Valley that offered water and ideal places for settlement and security. Besides being a site of migrations and wars, it was also an arena of identity formation and imagining of new nations comprising people of different ethnic groups. It became the site of growth of Afrikaner identities that culminated in the birth of two Boer Republics.

Between 1815 and 1854, as noted by Etherington, the 'heartland' became a centre of contestation, war, migration, rise and fall of nations as well as emergence of new identities. In the first place, the 'heartland' witnessed some fragments of Nguni groups such as the Zulu, Ndwandwe, Qwabe, Dlamini, Ngwane, Mthethwa, Hlubi and Mkhize, and Ndebele, trekking into the interior in smaller groups (Maggs 1976; Ayliff and Whiteside 1912). These fragments included the Zizi, the 'Transvaal Ndebele,' the Ndebele of Mzilikazi Khumalo, the Ngwane of Matiwane, the Tlokwa of MaNthatisi and Sekonyela and others (Rasmussen 1978; Hamilton 1995; Warmelo 1938). But the 'heartland' was not an empty space. It was inhabited by various Sotho-Tswana groups such as Hurutshe, Ngwaketse, Rolong, Kwena, Fokeng, Kgatla and many others (Ellenberger 1912).

The period also witnessed the entry into history of mixed race communities such as the Griqua and Korana under such leaders as Andries Waterboer, Adam Kok and others (Ross 1976). Added to this layer of identities were the Boer farmers that eventually established the Boer Republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State. In the so-called 'British Zone', there existed not only the English Cape colonists but also Afrikaners and various Xhosa-speaking chiefdoms and remnants of the San and the Khoi Khoi. In the Durban areas there were British traders and others who eventually established the Natal Colony living alongside such communities as the Zulu and others (Etherington 2001).

But when did the name South Africa begin to be used as a form of identity and by whom? The term South Africa began to be used in the 1830s as a

reference to the region extending northwards from the Cape to the Zambezi River. For instance, P. A. Molteno had this to say about what South Africa means:

When we speak of South Africa, we speak of the country bounded by the sea on all sides except the north, where the boundaries may roughly be said to be the Cunene towards the west and the Zambezi towards the east (Molteno 1896: 39).

To Theal (1873), South Africa was a collective term for the Cape Colony, Natal, Orange Free State, South African Republic and all other territories south of the Zambezi. Moving away from understanding the idea of South Africa as a mere geographical expression, Dubow argued that the idea has always been 'an ideology of compromise' that 'developed out of a prior sense of colonial identity, namely, that which developed in the Cape from the early years of British occupation at the turn of the nineteenth century' (Dubow 2006: viii).

Dubow (2006: viii) traced the idea of South Africa from 'the institutions and associational life of Cape Town colonial culture, intellect, and politics'. What needs to be understood is the genealogy of South Africanism as a political aspiration, imagination of nation, a claim on citizenship rights as well as an initiative to promote indigenous/autochthonous forms of belonging and affiliation to a nation called South Africa. Early novelists like Anthony Trollope popularized the idea of South Africa as an identity of the people. In his popular novel entitled *South Africa*, Trollope wrote that:

South Africa is a country of black men—and not of white men. It has been so; it is so, and it will continue to be so. In this respect it is altogether unlike Australia, unlike the Canadas, and unlike New Zealand (Trollope 1973: 454-455).

Trollope emphasized that unlike earlier British colonies of Australia, Canada and New Zealand where settlers were numerically superior to the indigenous people, in South Africa the number of indigenous black people far exceeded that of white settlers. While the English conceived of South Africa to be an expansion of the Cape Colony, a counter Afrikaner imagination of South Africa, as constituted by independent Boer republics, was also developing informed by emerging pan-Afrikaner identity (Lester 2001).

### **Anglicization as an identification process**

It must be noted that by the late nineteenth century 'all the peoples of southern Africa existed to a greater or lesser extent under the hegemony of a mainly British merchant capitalism and imperialism (Marks and Trapido 1987: 4).

This omnipresence of British imperial power afforded any English-speaking settler some protection and power drawing from the ties with a powerful metropolis and its political, technological, economic and ideological resources (Marks and Trapido 1987: 4). It was during this period that the imperialist Cecil John Rhodes celebrated being born a British by becoming its dominant power and the 'mistress of oceanic trade', buttressing the arrogant British national ideology of 'splendid isolation'.

The British Queen and the British flag were symbols of national pride. Therefore, English imaginations of a South African identity were predicated on a developing British superiority over other races and ethnicities. The adherence and loyalty of English settlers to Britain made them pursue an ambiguous national agenda torn apart between a broader imperial mission and local colonial imperatives, unlike the Afrikaners that had a strong local agenda. Anglicization was also predicated on a contemptuous approach towards non-English people including Afrikaners who were considered an inferior race just like Africans. No wonder then that prior to 1902, a strong British jingoism locked horns with incipient Afrikaner republicanism leading to the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902. During this period Lord Milner was the face of British racial patriotism (Marks and Trapido 1987: 7).

Eventually, four contending conceptions of the South African nation emerged from the centre of imperial and colonial tensions. One was a liberal and civic trajectory that emphasized rational principles of economic and social progress founded on principles of constitutionalism as well as ethnic and racial tolerance informed by the Cape Colony experiences and liberal traditions. The second was the anti-liberal settler colonial version which was informed by upheavals of frontier life but still emphasizing freedom and autonomy as achievements of civilization and commitment to 'undying imperial loyalism' (Dubow 2006: 152). The Anglicization of South Africa aimed at incorporating the Afrikaners into the British colonial order with the Africans providing the needed cheap labour.

These two imaginations were part of the Anglicization process. The third strand emerged from the experiences of the Afrikaners and was informed by memories of the 'Great Trek' as a heroic struggle for independence and the experiences of Afrikaner republicanism as manifested in the existence of two Boer republics of Transvaal and Orange Free State. The fourth strand emerged from the experiences of African people who endured the pangs of being squeezed by both British and Afrikaners off their lands and being excluded from emerging white imaginations of the nation.

Dubow understood these related but differing imaginations as ‘rival pan-South African nationalisms’. On the overall discursive terrain within which they emerged, Dubow had this to say:

Yet, from a late nineteenth century perspective the colonial-imperial antinomy was all too apparent. Colonialism could well exist within a wider sense of imperial belonging, and it shared many common features with imperialism—most obviously a shared agreement that white political ascendancy should not be threatened. But those who considered themselves colonists took pride in their independence and achievements, and were resentful of unwanted external intervention. Jingo imperialists were scornful of pretensions to independence where these might challenge metropolitan interests, and were increasingly intolerant of local nationalisms (Dubow 2006: 153).

The template for Anglicization as a process of identity was the Cape Colony where the English language and other paraphernalia of British culture and ideology were in place. British colonial nationalism and British Crown imperialism tended to complement each other with some few areas of misunderstandings (Dubow 1997). The Cape Colony was a key launching pad for British imaginations of South Africa as an ‘anglicized nation’. In the Anglicization mind-map, the South African nation was to be nothing other than a ‘greater Cape Colony’ together with its institutions replicated across South Africa. The British flag was to be the national symbol.

The realization of this ‘grand national plan’ was to take the form of bringing Natal and Cape Colony together. But in between the two British colonies lay two Boer republics and African kingdoms and chiefdoms. Two options were available: federation under British overlordship or conquest. The imperial imperative to conquer the interior unfolded in the form of conquest of the remaining independent African kingdoms alongside the conquest of independent Boer republics.

The confrontation between forces of Anglicization/imperialism and Afrikanerization/Boer republicanism resulted in the Anglo-Boer/South African War of 1899-1902 which became a decider of the future trajectory of imaginations and reconstructions of the idea of South Africa (Porter 1980). Dubow had this to say about the place of this war in the construction of South Africanism:

A war that was at once fought over possession of the country’s riches, by what were to become South Africans, in what was to become South Africa, has surely to be understood as war for South Africa, not only in the immediate sense of acquisition and control, but also in the forward-looking sense of making a new nation-state—in effect, a ‘white man’s country’ (Dubow 2006: 158-159).

As Lord Milner said, the core thinking within Anglicization was to construct a white self-governing polity comprising both British and Afrikaners but subsisting under the British Union Jack as a national symbol (Dubow 2006: 159). Within this compromise between British imperialism and Afrikaner republicanism, Africans were to feature as labourers in the farms, mines and industries.

The problem with what was achieved by the Treaty of Vereeniging of May 1902 was a peace born out of conquest of the Boers and the exclusion of Africans from the nation. Both Afrikaners and Africans were resentful of British triumphalism. For the Africans, they expected the British to practise the liberalism they preached, including incorporating them into the nation as rights-bearing citizens. For the Afrikaners the war had affected their nascent republican nationalism where another imagination of a South African nation dominated by Afrikaners was emerging.

Anglicization did not succeed in constructing a stable white South African nation. Afrikaners were mainly in agreement with the British on exclusion of blacks from citizenship but still resented being dominated politically and economically by a minority of British people. Boer republicanism was not totally defeated and Africans who had supported the British were betrayed. In the midst of these disappointments emerged new counter-imaginings of the nation. Let us begin with the continuing politics of Afrikaner republicanism and its imagination of the nation before looking at African imaginings.

### **Afrikaner republicanism and apartheid as versions of South Africanism**

Just like the English, the Afrikaners were developing a particular vision of a South African nation informed partly by their tradition of ethnic republicanism engendered by the experiences of the 'Great Trek' and partly by challenges they met after the momentous events of the Anglo-Boer/South Africa (1899-1902 and the Act of Union of 1910. Norval argued that the specificity of Afrikaner nationalism and its re-emergence after the Act of Union of 1910 together with its radical ethnic republicanism was a response to a catalogue and series of 'painful and conflict-ridden experiences' (Norval 1996: 12). Post-1902 Anglicization policies of the British regime which were set to exclude Afrikaners from educational and administrative positions galvanized Afrikaner republican nationalism with the memories of the Great Trek providing the myth of foundation of Afrikaner nationhood.

Some of the upheavals that contributed to the development of particular Afrikaner identity together with a particular imagination of a South African

nation included the much celebrated 'Great Trek,' the Battle of Vegkop which pitted the Boers against the Ndebele of Mzilikazi Khumalo in 1836, as well as the Blood River Battle involving Boers and the Zulu forces of Dingani in 1838. It also included the memories of independence under Boer republics that were destroyed by British imperialists through Anglo-Boer/South Africa War, the industrialization and urbanization of the 1930s and 1940s that found Afrikaners still confined to rural agricultural sectors of the economy and not prepared for fast urban life, and other events that had a dislocatory impact on the life of Afrikaners who had remained as a largely rural community compared to the British. How the Afrikaners interpreted these events informed their nationalism.

It must also be noted that Afrikaner identity itself had to be constructed and was just emerging by the time of the South African War. The Dutch Reformed Church was one of the building blocks in the construction of Afrikaner nationalism. Finding themselves in the interior of South Africa, surrounded by African communities and having to learn to adapt and distinguish themselves from other people, they nurtured a strong Calvinist faith and developed notions of the Biblical chosen nation. By the early twentieth century, Afrikaans was not yet an acceptable and respected language. (1987) has demonstrated empirically that Afrikaans was a twentieth century invention.

The language began as a language of the poor and as a mixture of Dutch, Khoisan, San and Malayo-Portuguese languages spoken by slaves in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Cape Colony (Hofmeyr 1987: 95-123). The development of Afrikaans as a language is one of the reflections of complex inter-racial and ethnic encounters of colonial modernity in a frontier region. But the upper and middle-classes continued to speak Dutch while looking down at Afrikaans as either 'Hottentot language' or 'kitchen language' which they found embarrassing (Hofmeyr 1987: 95-123). It had the status of a belittled vernacular language which eventually assumed a better status alongside the intensification of Afrikaner republican nationalism and its drive for 'nativization' of the Boers as South Africans.

At the centre of Afrikaner nationalism were perceptions and realities of the fragility of their nascent identity that they were developing and strengthening within a context of a hostile and ever shifting political and economic climate of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The 'Apartheid' slogan emerged as a powerful but empty signifier promising the reconstruction of a lost unity (Norval 1996: 13). What the Afrikaners gained from Lord Milner's post-1902 reconstruction dispensation was agreement with the British to

reject the principle of equality between whites and blacks.

This was concretized through the Report of the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) chaired by Sir Godfrey Lagden which inaugurated the policy of segregation of whites and blacks (Odendaal 1984: 65). The SANAC was the first drive by a combination of the English and the Afrikaners to begin to deal with what became known as the 'native question'. The second concession to Afrikaners was the granting of 'responsible government' to the Boer republics in 1906 and 1907.

In 1908 the South Africa Party (SAP) dominated by members of the Afrikaner Bond assumed power at the Cape; this meant that in the four colonies (Cape, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State) the Afrikaners were becoming politically dominant to counter British imperial policies and designs. But they still had to cooperate with the economically powerful English elements that had the backing of the Crown. Their cooperation was demonstrated at the National Convention of 1908 that drafted the South African Act of Union that was released to the press on 9 February 1909 (Odendaal 1984:151). The Act of Union of 1910, while closing out Africans from the nation and denying them citizenship rights, did not succeed in eliminating intra-white tensions pitting the English against the Afrikaners.

The unfolding of South African capitalist industrial revolution backed by discovery of mineral wealth (diamonds and gold) was not favourable to Afrikaners who were agriculturalists. To scholars like Belinda Bozzoli, inspired by a materialist-Gramscian approach to the idea of South Africa, the early axis of intra-and inter-white conflicts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century took the form of clashes between strong imperial 'mining and industrial' capital which was represented by the British and weak 'agricultural domestic capital' represented by Afrikaners (Bozzoli 1981: 29-38).

The emergence of a national bourgeoisie crystallized around the economically powerful British mine owners and industrialists who began to imagine the nation in capitalist terms. Strong economic interest-group associations, such as Transvaal Manufacturers' Association, the Colonial Industries Protectionist League and others projected a concept of a nation founded on a uniform goal of capitalist development. The emerging national bourgeoisie favoured a South African nation of English and Afrikaners and rejected intra-white racialism of the pre-1902 and pre-Act of Union periods. For instance 'manufacturing ideologists' as Bozzoli terms them had this to say:

The Union of South Africa, being a nation in the making, cannot afford the luxury of perpetuating the race feud, with all its sordid insincerities, its internecine quar-

rels and its resulting blight [...] racial quarrels must be avoided like the plague if the Act of Union is to spell peace, progress and prosperity, and if the declarations of the Opposition leaders are sincere they will join hands with the Government in thwarting any attempt to revive the dying feud between Dutch and British members of the new South African brotherhood (Bozzoli 1981: 135).

The business elite even called for the formation of a new national party driven by national interests and representing a people under one flag. But Africans had to be excluded from this white nation. What was envisioned was a 'South African, white, version, of a bourgeois state' (Bozzoli 1978). But this imagination of a homogenous white South African nation masked important and deep-seated intra- and inter-white divisions mediated by ethnicity, class, ideological, and rural vs. urban cleavages. In short, the powerful English business class was trying to mobilize and incorporate a defeated Afrikaner community that was already 'subordinated' to imperial hegemony (Wolpe 1972; Martin 1974).

But imaginations of a white nation under British imperial tutelage did not succeed in containing Afrikaner republicanism due to a number of factors. In the first place, large-scale industrialization and urbanization created a group of poor Afrikaners that found themselves in the same strata with the despised and excluded Africans. Their plight was compounded by the failure of British liberal 'segregationism' (Norval 1996: 12). The result was a simultaneous proletarianization of majority of Africans and Afrikaners into poor labourers of the British.

The Afrikaners who expected a different life from that of Africans began to form interest-group associations on top of the old Afrikaner Bond and Federation of Afrikaans Cultural Association, and these included Economic Congress, National Youth League, Poor Welfare Council, and League for the Act of Rescue. Altogether these organizations began to push a common agenda of white Afrikaans-speaking people from economic, cultural and political fronts. The push for improvement of the plight of poor white Afrikaners became entangled with the question of black natives who were increasingly being proletarianized. Norval (1996: 19) argues that, 'Resolution of the Native question was thus central to the rectification of poor white problem, both socially and economically.'

To Afrikaner nationalists, urbanization led to 'denationalization' of their community and destruction of their hard-constructed identity. What they feared most was miscegenation as poor Afrikaner women intermingled with Africans in the urban centres. This problem was linked to the crisis of

segregationism in the 1930s and 1940s. Increasingly, Afrikaners called for a more rigid political and social frontier dividing white and black races leading to the invention of natives as a homogenous identity. SANAC invented this category and stated that, 'Native shall be taken to include an aboriginal inhabitant of Africa, south of the Equator and to include half-castes and their descendants by Natives' (Ashforth 1990: 33).

Those categorized as natives were later confined to reserves and homelands (Bantustans) as a solution not only to the question of poor whites but also as a response to the rising tide of African nationalism and pan-Africanism seeking to unite black people as Africans and authentic national subjects of the South Africa nation. Norval, therefore, traces the birth of the National Party (NP) and its ideology of apartheid to the dislocation of identities provoked by vicissitudes of industrialization and urbanization together with such events as the Great Depression of the inter-war years. Apartheid was born from the way Afrikaners made sense of their situation within a society dominated by races and ethnicities (Norval 1996: 52-55).

In 1948, apartheid was institutionalized and it continued to live through 'negative operations' and drawing of frontiers as it tried to survive numerous dislocatory events and African resistance. Apartheid's four pillars were: increasing restriction of franchise for Africans while monopolizing and centralizing state power in the hands of Afrikaners as well as tightening repressive state apparatuses; spatial recasting of urban African townships while constructing homelands; enforcing regulation that ensured supply of cheap African labour to the mines, industries, farms and white domestic households; and direct state intervention in spheres of employment, education, health and other daily life human activities (Cohen 1986: 7-10).

Apartheid as social engineering also reorganized whites into separate schools and other social spaces for Afrikaners and English. To further entrench the Afrikaner *volk*, Coloureds who spoke Afrikaans were excluded and given their own space. In short, apartheid was launched into action as a solution to the relations of subordination between Afrikaners and the English, the fragmenting experience of urbanization that dislocated Afrikaner community into social classes, and the native question.

In general, during the time of decolonization and socialism, apartheid assumed a different import. Broader African nationalism was framed as an external imposition of communists that was not in synch with African traditions, culture and 'real nationalism' that espoused ethnic differentiation.

African nationalists were framed as rootless trouble-makers created by colonialism working under the influence of foreigners and preaching unrealistic imaginations of a unitary pan-African nation.

Proponents of apartheid ironically feared 'colour consciousness' developing among Africans and caricatured it as nothing but 'common hatred of whites' that was not sustainable and deep-rooted in a continent where people existed as different ethnic groups (Hugo 1988: 571). Apartheid ideologists were busy resisting decolonization and broader African nationalism through re-creating the African world in their own image of separate development. Apartheid was far from being an irrational ideology; it was a particular logic of identity construction through constant imposition of political frontiers. But apartheid had its inherent internal and external limits that were going to wear it down with time as it received blows from African resistance and rejection by the international community.

Its exclusion of blacks from citizenship and belonging constituted a strong internal limit. The international community could not tolerate it. Its multiple revisions and piecemeal reforms could not save it. Its three survival techniques were not sustainable: apartheid began with a strategy of separating what was intermingled by liberal segregationist policies; its second strategy was 'separate development' including creating Bantustans/homelands as independent republics for the Bantu; and then shifting to the rhetoric of 'multi-nationalism' whereby people were treated as 'equals' but enjoying separate lives and development (Vorster 1977). Increasing urban African population had no space within apartheid. Coloureds had no space too.

What had started as a 'conjunctural crisis' in the 1960s and 1970s has turned into an 'organic crisis' in the 1980s and 'full-scale crisis of apartheid hegemony' towards the 1990s (Norval 1996: 218-220). Apartheid precipitated the dislocation of identities and, in the process, enabled the emergence of a new search for new identity, new imagination of South Africa and formation of a new myth to 're-suture the dislocated structure of the old, dying imaginary' (Norval 1996: 275). African imaginations provided a new imagination of South Africa and the ANC's 1955 articulation of a non-racial society was to become a pragmatic solution to the racialized and ethnicized national question.

### **African nationalism and imagination of a non-racial 'rainbow' nation**

By the 1880s, Africans did not exist as a collectivity pursuing common political objectives. Ethnic identities were dominant markers. The early educated elite that were a creation of mission and colonial schools had the mammoth

task of creating an African identity. A political consciousness that could be called African took time to emerge from the fragmented ethnic identities rooted in precolonial history. Even the early educated elite were much more closely tied to their specific communities, home areas and towns (Odendaal 1984: xii). Furthermore, the early educated elite were not fully opposed to colonial modernity as they had imbibed Christian faith and Victorian ideas of liberalism and become committed to ideals of equality, non-racialism and enfranchisement of educated Africans.

African identity formation emerged concurrently with the intensification of scientific racism rooted in social Darwinist theories that were increasingly used by imperialists and colonialists as a powerful legitimating ideology of domination and segregation in early twentieth century South Africa (Marks and Trapido 1987: 6-7; Dubow 1987: 71-94). The rise of South Africanism as an imagination of a white nation unfolded concurrently with the rise of racism as a key variable in the development of the idea of South Africa. While the Afrikaners and the English were not united, they both had a common position regarding the exclusion of Africans from the nation except as sources of cheap labour. It is not true that there was 'a relative absence of virulent scientific racism in early twentieth-century South Africa' (Dubow 1987: 75). While racism was not forcefully articulated it was acted out by both the Afrikaners and the British since the time of colonial encounters and it was systematized into colonial policy from 1902.

As racism was entrenched into colonial policy, African people began to be given such homogenizing terms as 'natives' and 'Bantu' identities, thereby reconstructing of broad African identities. The British liberal incorporation of ideology, premised on the ultimate possibility of assimilating indigenous people whether white or black, worked briefly for those people who were part of the Cape Colony, namely, the Dutch, Coloureds and a few educated Africans. But the liberal thinking did not mean that the British did not view black people as constituting a vast pool of labour available for their exploitation (Marks and Trapido 1987: 5). The majority of early African educated elite benefitted from this short-lived liberal moment and they became the strongest supporters of Cape liberalism even after it was abandoned by its English formulators after 1902. What the black defenders of Cape liberalism did not realize was that it was shot through by an equally strong assumption of English supremacy, patronage and belief in the superiority of Western civilization.

After 1902, the liberal incorporativ ideology was abandoned and a new segregationist policy was constructed by Lord Milner. This is how Marks and

Trapido viewed and understood it and its rationale:

The ideology of segregation did not only speak to the needs of the mining industry. It addressed a number of different audiences. It served white farmers demanding additional control over their tenants and labourers and white workers seeking protection from cheaper black labour. It was an attractive solution for the white ruling class in the face of the rapid urbanization of poor whites and poor blacks, with its increased possibilities of competition and conflict as well as miscegenation and a unified class struggle [...] That the segregationist solution emerged to solve the problems of industrialization was in a sense made possible ideologically through the development of the ideas of 'scientific racism,' social Darwinism and eugenics (Marks and Trapido 1987: 8).

This policy contributed to the making of broader African identities as excluded people from the nation. Rhetoric of cultural differences, used to justify the segregation of black people from white the people, was informed by commissioned anthropological studies that fully operated as handmaidens of colonialism. Afrikaners complained about the weaknesses of British segregationist policies as having failed to prevent the danger of the white race being 'swamped' by blacks and called for 'total segregation'. They also raised the dangers of 'black peril' (miscegenation). Under total segregation Africans, now framed as natives, were to be confined to the 'native reserves' as their 'homelands'. Under this policy of total segregation even the 'Cape Native franchise' had to be abolished as proposed under the Hertzog Bills of 1936. Norval noted that:

The elaboration of a segregationist discourse on the Native question took place, *inter alia*, via a series of official inquiries. These inquiries, which forged new practices of subjection, provide us with an important record of the construction of the Native problem. One of the most significant in this respect was the South African Native Affairs Commission (SANAC) (1903-5 [...] SANAC literally had to invent the category of 'the Native.' [...] This process of naming not only brought into being a new subjectivity, but also provided a highly contestable reconstruction of African history which redefined the nature of 'tribalism' (Norval 1996: 30-31).

The Native Economic Commission (NEC) of 1930-1932 framed 'Bantu speaking people' as a proper noun for black people (Norval 1996: 31). The important point here is that colonialists worked actively and deliberately to create a political frontier between whites and blacks through discursive and symbolic processes (a series of commissions of inquiry and a catalogue of pieces of legislation) that produced native/Bantu identity as natural species that deserved particular treatment and separate development, while justifying their exclusion from the nation and citizenship rights.

Therefore African imaginations of a South African nation were born within the context of resisting imperial, colonial and apartheid imaginations that excluded Africans from the imagined nation. The first semi-political African political formation was the Native Educational Association (NEA) formed in 1882 as a vehicle to promote African interests in modern education, social morality and general welfare of the 'natives.' This was followed in September 1882 by the earliest political organization that captured African imagination of a nation known as *Imbumba Yaba Mnyama* formed in response to the growth of the Afrikaner Bond that was viewed as threat to African people's interests. *Imbumba's* key aim was to unite Africans to enable them fight for their 'national rights' (Odendaal 1984: 8). A construction of national African identity by Africans themselves was beginning. This construction of African identity had a clear political goal of fighting for national rights.

Odendaal's (1984) book *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protests Politics in South Africa to 1912* provides excellent details of the proto-African political formations that arose as a response to particular exclusionary manoeuvres of the colonial state from the 1880s up to 1912, the year of the formation of South African Native National Congress (SANNC) as a black national political movement. Odendaal's book also reveals how the print media played a central role in the formation of black political consciousness and imagination of a non-racial South Africa that accommodated them on an equal basis with whites. Independent newspapers with vernacular names such as *Ilanga lase Natal*, *Ipepa lo Hlanga*, *Isigidimi Sama Xhosa*, *Izwi Labantu*, *Inkanyiso lase Natal* and many others propagated African issues and opinions on key national policies that segregated them.

Beginning with the SANNC, the African political organizations simultaneously contested racial discrimination while working to create national unity among Africans. For instance, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme's speech at the formation of SANNC emphasized that the white people had formed the Union of South Africa that excluded black people and that this action called for an African counter-union 'for the purpose of creating national unity and defending our rights and privileges' (Odendaal 1984: 273).

The situation of racial exclusion, political effacement and denial of citizenship rights to Africans inevitably provoked different responses. The first strand is the liberal tradition rooted in nineteenth century Cape and Natal liberalism premised on the politics of inclusion of Africans into the body politic and white nation. Colonial and apartheid intransigence and violence proved this strategy to be futile in the 1960s. The second strand was a

radical Africanist one that stressed a common African/black identity rooted in Ethiopianist and Garveyist ideas of 'Africa for Africans' (Hill and Pirio 1987: 209-253). It was represented by the PAC which imagined a black republic called Azania. The idea was deliverance of Africans from a white-dominated state instead of inclusion.

The founder president of the PAC Robert Sobukwe made it clear that the PAC did not claim Africa and South Africa for all people but for Africans and that their struggle was for complete overthrow of white domination (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2009: 291; Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008: 53-86). The third imagination of the nation is represented by the ANC. The ANC has always been an umbrella political formation that began as an advocate of a 'Native Union' that Pixley Isaka kaSeme called for in 1911. Seme was an advocate of African regeneration that looked towards activation and galvanization of the black race to take pride in themselves as a necessary condition for the birth of a proud African nation (Karis and Carter 1972).

In the 1940s, the ANC Youth League underwent a deep shift from mild liberalism to radical Africanism with Anton Lembede as the lead articulator. Lembede bluntly and openly asserted that 'Africa is a black man's country' (Lembede 1946: 317). But by 1955, the ANC still projected a liberal, non-racial imagination of multi-racial post-apartheid nation but without dropping the Garveyist slogan of 'I Afrika Mayi Buye' (Let Africa Be Restored To Us). The ANC claimed South Africa for all those who live in it as articulated in the Freedom Charter. The imagination of a South African nation as a multi-racial and democratic political formation was pragmatic for a society like South Africa whose history was dominated by complex historical interactions and coalescence of diverse people (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2008; Chipkin 2007).

There were other imaginations of the nation that included Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) that projected an ethno-cultural Zulu-focused nationalism that defended the idea of Zulu nation without necessarily ignoring broader nationalist politics. There is also the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM)'s imagination of a nation inhabited by thoroughly decolonized and proud Africans. Like the PAC, BCM also frequently used the name Azania as part of its rejection of white and colonial-constructed names. BCM's conception and definition of black people included Indians and Coloureds (Biko 1978: 103-106).

The African nationalist struggle crystallized around the idea of nation, the problem of race and that of class and ethnicity. The first issue was who was supposed to be the beneficiary of liberation in a context where the ANC defined belonging in terms of 'All' people living in South Africa. Radical

Africanist-oriented groups still insisted that black people were oppressed as a nation by whites; hence blacks were the subject of liberation from white oppression. Afro-Marxist groups increasingly defined the oppressed in class terms. The question of who were the oppressed people was not clearly defined by the Freedom Charter to the extent that at one time the people were invoked as 'national groups'; 'different races'; 'workers', and 'peasants' (Chipkin 2007: 72).

The South African Communist Party (SACP) became concerned about the identity of the revolutionary subject within the South African working class fraternity that was divided by race and professions. In 1962, the SACP coined two concepts of 'colonialism of a special type' to capture the complex situation of where the independent state of 1910 was created not as a victory over imperialism and colonialism but as a nominally independent nation created through compromise between imperialism and colonialism. Within this imperial-colonialist independent state, a white nation was given power to internally colonize, dominate and exploit black people (South African Communist Party 1962: 27). But the SACP, like the ANC, did not proceed to an outright definition of the black people as the subject of liberation but fell into the ANC trap of defining the oppressed as diverse classes and races.

It was also the SACP that came up with the concept of a National Democratic Revolution (NDR) where workers were identified as a revolutionary force. Within the NDR, 'workerism' and 'charterism' coexisted tendentiously mediated by tensions and blending between political interests of the people and those of workers. The NDR became an omnibus where the interests of all those opposed to apartheid across black, Coloured, Indian and white racial divisions as well as class cleavages were accommodated. The ANC became the bigger church leading this complex coalition of interests. The discourse of the NDR became more and more nationalist rather than revolutionary and worker-oriented. These developments within the liberation movements indicated how difficult it was to define in precise terms the subject of liberation and, by the same token, to pinpoint who was a South African beyond the rather elusive slogan that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it, black and white.'

Wa Muiu (2008) examined the factors that influenced the Africans' conception of community, its specific characteristics, relations with other communities and how relations among groups within the community affected its development. She realized that African and Afrikaner imagined communities shared some similarities being separately influenced by religion

and affected by class differences (wa Muiu 2008: 61). But the main difference was that the African imagined community was inclusive of all races unlike the exclusive community of white minority. This was so because, 'Apartheid represented a community that Africans wished to avoid at all costs' (Mueni wa Muiu 2008: 74). The ANC's multiracial debate developed as a reaction to apartheid and the PAC responded to apartheid by mobilizing its supporters as Africans -- a unitary identity that apartheid denigrated and preferred to see instead as different tribes with different political trajectories.

South Africa is a typical example where a movement of black people that started with a liberatory agenda was by the mid-1950s gravitating toward an emancipatory project having been hijacked by both white and black liberals. Even the socialism that was preached by the SACP was, to all intents and purposes, a form of 'Afro-liberal socialism'. The phase of negotiations involving liberation movements and the representatives of the apartheid state were an opportunity for both to further discipline and panel-beat the liberation movements away from radicalism into neoliberalism. The negotiation phase was a further moment to soften, if not corrupt, the ANC leadership to accept neo-apartheid and neocolonialism as liberation. Thus, in 1994, just like in 1910, South Africa gained democracy and the process of de-racialization of society began but without decolonization and liberation taking place.

This was made inevitable because the negotiations took place at a time of post-Cold War triumphalism of neoliberalism where any form of radicalism had to be beaten into supporting the global status quo that spoke the language of democracy and human rights. This argument is amplified by wa Muiu (2008: 149) who also concluded that the ANC got a neocolonial settlement that left it without control over South Africa's economy and security.

### **Conclusion**

The emancipatory ideology of non-racialism triumphed over both radical Africanism proposing a black republic of Azania and white ultra-racism of apartheid. In 1994 a non-racial and democratic South Africa was born after a long and violent process that was characterized by incarceration and shooting of those who fought for a multi-racial and democratic post-apartheid nation. The metaphor of the rainbow was used to imagine an inclusive nation that was different from the apartheid nation that was underpinned by fragmenting of identities and selfish and instrumentalist notions of separate development of races. A pan-South African nationalism of a unique character ensued from 1994 onwards. This pan-South African nationalism promoted ideas of

ethical and peaceful coexistence of people of diverse cultures and identities within a single nation. As articulated by Albie Sachs (1987), the current pan-South African nationalism existed in relation to apartheid which it sought to transcend.

This chapter has successfully deployed historical and genealogical analysis of the development, trials, tribulations and triumphs of the idea of South Africa and underscores how colonial modernity and its interaction with the African world created complex identities that Africans had to work hard to harmonize into stable nations. The race question was indeed a creation of Western and colonial modernity within the non-Western parts of the world. Such people as Afrikaners, English, Coloureds, Malayan, Indian, Chinese and other racial minorities were a creation of colonial modernity that threw them into foreign lands where they had to struggle to gain nativity through projection of particularistic and inflexible identities whose zenith was the apartheid system.

These groups had emerged at the tip of the African continent as a category of 'colonial-racial subjects of the empire' discussed in Chapter Five of this book. On the other hand, African ethnic identities were deliberately prevented from coalescing into nations by the policy of apartheid that further reinforced ethnic identities, which precolonial leaders like Moshoeshoe, Shaka, Mzilikazi and many others were constructing into broader identities like the Ndebele, Zulu and Suthu in the 1820s before the colonial moment ensued.

Over the years, African-oriented imaginations of nationhood had to develop as derivative and reactive phenomena that largely responded to questions of race and tribe which also directly impinged on politics of inclusion and exclusion. Since Africans experienced colonization, exploitation and domination as a racial group, their imagination of the nation emerged from the margins and the perspective of the subaltern, where they had to struggle to transcend racism and tribalism that was institutionalized by the colonial apartheid system which consistently created citizens and subjects as permanently divided political identities. Africans as a group that had experienced the harsh realities of racism and tribalism were careful during the struggles for decolonization to try and avoid the trap of reverse racism as a counter liberatory discourse. Africans carried the burden of fighting to build a new nation that was not permeated by racism and tribalism.

In short, the case study of South Africa indicated the difficulties of constructing stable national identity out of people of different racial and ethnic identities. It demonstrated the limits of the use of coercion to construct a national identity and the futility of trying to maintain a particular race as the

authentic centre of the nation within a plural and multicultural society. For such societies to succeed required pragmatism founded on the principles of de-coloniality, tolerance and recognition of difference. But today, South Africa is still struggling to transcend the racial categories and identities constructed by apartheid. The post-apartheid government is seen as using race categories for affirmative action and such policies as Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) that continue to be contested as taking the form of reverse black racism within a democratic state. The ubiquity of race in post-apartheid South Africa is well captured by Pierre de Vos:

In contemporary South Africa, the issue of race continues to permeate every aspect of public life. Citizens are regularly required to indicate their race when filling out government or other official forms; race often plays a role in decision on whether a job application or the application for admission to certain university programmes are successful; in political debates the race of various protagonists are often noted when evaluating the merits of their contributions; and when judges are appointed to positions on the High Court, Supreme Court of Appeal or Constitutional Court, the race of the appointees are duly noted or commented upon and taken into account when considering the suitability of the candidate for appointment to the bench. [...] We cannot escape our own race. Even when we claim that we have escaped the perceived shackles of race, we are merely confirming its presence by our stated yearning for its absence. This is the paradox: while South Africa has emerged from a period in its history in which the race of every individual played a decisive role in determining their life chances, allocating social status and economic benefits on the basis of race in terms of a rigid hierarchical system according to which very person was classified by the apartheid state as either white, Indian, coloured or black and allocated a social status and economic and political benefits in accordance with this race, in the post-apartheid era the potency of race as a factor in allocation of social status and economic benefit has not fundamentally been diminished in our daily lives—despite a professed commitment to non-racialism contained in the South African Constitution, the founding document of our democracy (de Vos 2010:2).

Erasmus (2010) described this ubiquity of race as the crisis of ‘thinking with our eyes’. Ballim (2010:1) described race as a ‘phantom tyrant whose language we have learnt and whose rule we quietly obey.’ This ubiquity of race, seventeen years after the official end of apartheid, indicates the complexity of the social complexion of South Africa that cannot be easily solved by professed commitments to non-racialism. It also reveals the continued contestations over who is the authentic subject of the nation. The non-racial ideology as a public transcript is continuously threatened by the hidden script of ‘Africinity’ and

'Afrikanerity' and other particularistic identities that have a life of their own within the rainbow nation.

These particularistic identities are the ones that cause Afrikaners to sometimes raise old flags of the Boer republics during rugby matches as well as the apartheid ones during the funeral of such Afrikaner figures as Terre Blanche in 2010. It is also the search for Africanity as the centre of the South African nation that led the firebrand ANC Youth League President Julius Malema to continue singing the liberation song 'dubul' ibhunu' (shoot the Boer) seventeen years after the official end of apartheid. It was the same spirit that underpinned the formation and launch of the Native Club in 2006 as a forum for black intellectuals with a task to lead the public discourse on re-building South Africa as a black nation. The theme of the inaugural conference of the Native Club was a deeply revealing: Where are the natives? The question of nativity/indigeneity remains unsettled and highly contested in this multi-racial, multi-class, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nation in the making.