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**‘Making our own means’:  
Counter-Narratives in Squatter Memories of  
Violence, Resistance and Transition in the  
Western Cape**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Development  
Studies

2013

Department of Development Studies

SOAS, University of London

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## **Abstract**

The transition from apartheid to democracy in South Africa did not bring structural economic transformation and the majority of black South Africans remain marginalised. This thesis examines the role of memory in legitimising and challenging this contradiction of transition without transformation. It asks how local actors who were involved in the squatter struggles of Crossroads in the 1980s bring their lived memories into conversation with national memory discourse. Key findings demonstrate a contradictory relationship between respondents' lived memory and national memory discourse. On the one hand, local memory is used as a resource through which respondents attempt to gain inclusion into the dominant memory identities and discourses of transitional justice and post-conflict development. On the other hand, it acts as a weapon which challenges the underlying assumptions of this broader memory field. This thesis offers insights into the way in which memory works and the ideological role it plays in the field of transitional justice and post-conflict development. Conclusions draw out an alternative narrative of struggle and transition that challenges the memory politics of South Africa's recent history.

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Map 1 Southern Africa



Source: McDonald 2008: xxv

Map 2 South Africa (showing post-1994 provinces)



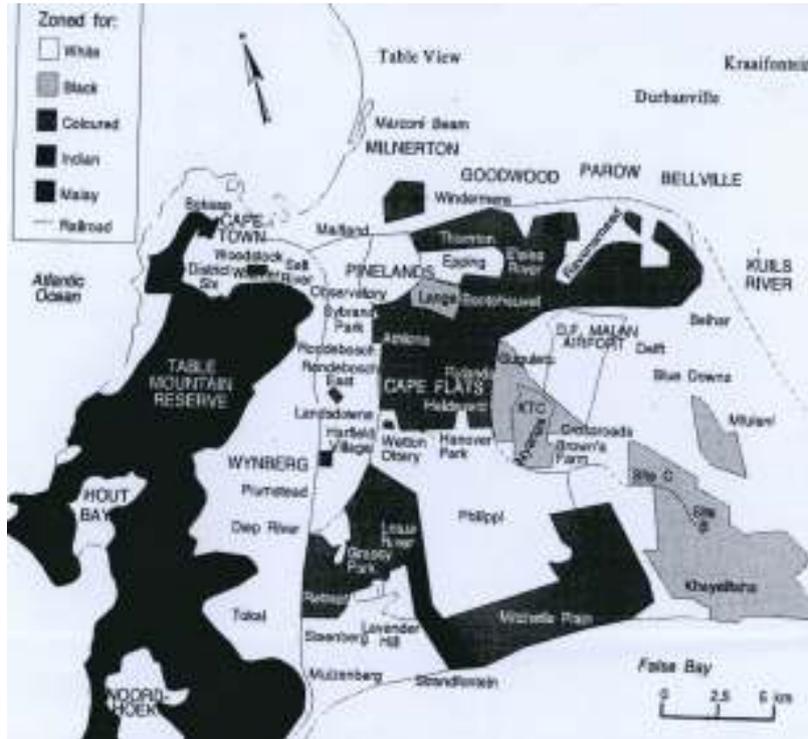
Source: Saff 1998: xv

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Source: McDonald 2008 xxiii

Map 4 Greater Cape Town showing Racial Zoning under the Group Areas Act



Source: Saff 1998: 84

Map 5 Crossroads Complex in the 1980s



Source: Cole 1987: xiii

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## Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
CAYCO	Cape Youth Congress
DDR	demobilisation, demilitarisation and reintegration programmes
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NP	National Party
SACP	South African Communist Party
SANCO	South African National Civics Organisation
SANMVA	South African National Military Veterans Association
SDUs	self-defence units
SVACOM	Struggle Veterans' Action Committee
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UDF	United Democratic Front
UWO	United Women's Organisation
WCCA	Western Cape Civic Association

## Glossary of terms

Amabutho (Zulu word for Warriors)

*amagoduka* (Zulu for migrant workers)

*amandla awethu* (means *power to the people*, commonly used to open political speeches)

*baas* (boss)

*boers* (Afrikaans word for farmer, commonly used to refer to the police)

*dagga* (marijuana)

*dompas* (colloquial term for the pass document, literally meaning stupid-pass in Afrikaans)

*impimpis* (informers)

*kitskonstables* (special constables, responsible for policing townships, usually provided with little training).

*mlungu* (white person)

necklace / necklacing (form of assassination which involves lighting a petrol soaked tire around the accused neck)

*sjamboks* (whips)

*toyi-toyi* (commonly performed protest dance, also used to refer to protest)

*tsotsi* (criminal)

*vetkoek* (a sweet cake)

Witdoeke – (literally means white cloth, and refers to the conservative elders in Crossroads under the control of Ngxobongwana, who wore white cloths to identify themselves).

## Introduction

It was during one of those drinking sprees that he learnt of the move by homeless people to establish another shanty town on an empty piece of land outside the city. Everybody in the shebeen was agitated. The government was refusing to give people houses. Instead, they were saying that people who had qualifying papers had to move to a new township that was more than fifty miles away? And yet there was land all over, close to where people worked, but it was all designated for white residential development. Most people did not even have the necessary qualifying papers. Their presence was said to be illegal, and the government was bent on sending them back to the places it had demarcated as their homelands.

The people decided they were going to move en masse, and unilaterally take this land on the outskirts of the city, and build their shacks there. This was Toloki's opportunity to get himself a house. He joined settlers, and allocated himself a small plot where he constructed his shack.

That was the shack that he decorated with newspapers and magazines. He was very proud of it, for it was the first property that was his alone. He was very angry when the bulldozers came and destroyed it. But like the rest of the residents, he immediately rebuilt it. Sometimes state-paid vigilantes would set some of the shacks on fire, but again the shanty town was resilient (Mda 1995:120-121).

In the passage above from Zakes Mda's novel *Ways of dying*, he summarises the experience of many creatively resilient black South Africans surviving under the draconian pass laws of apartheid (Mda 1995). The few who had papers allowing them legally to be in South Africa were controlled through programmes of racial segregation and relocation to far-removed townships. Those who did not have papers, however, faced arrest, fines and deportation to the 'bantustans' which were poor, underdeveloped, rural areas designated through separate development as African states within South Africa. Poverty and the lack of work meant that those deported would return again to face the brutal security forces of the apartheid state. Resistance to the oppressive apartheid regime of racial segregation and exploitation came in many forms. This thesis focuses on the memories of violence held by a group of South Africans who share similar experiences of squatter resistance to apartheid described by Mda in the quote above. It asks how these local actors bring their lived memories into conversation with national memory and analyses the politics of this conversation. The introduction aims to frame and introduce this question in terms of the research paradox it speaks to, the case study of squatter resistance, the theoretical and methodological approach taken and the structure and argument of the thesis chapters.

## 1 The Paradox of a Transition without Transformation

In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, the African National Congress (ANC) and the well-known leaders of this organisation have come to symbolise the memory and history of resistance to apartheid, but in reality many different organisations, groups and ordinary people played their part in challenging apartheid and creating the conditions for change. The particular history of Crossroads squatter resistance which forms the case study of this research is nestled within the popular resistance of the mass movement of the 1980s. Under the banner of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which formed in 1983, urban and rural struggles against everyday experiences of apartheid were brought together in mass resistance. Street and civic committees, based on the daily struggles to survive of poor black South Africans, formed throughout the country as expressions of people's power. In this context, powerful forms of anti-apartheid resistance emerged from below.

Squatter movements represented one of the ways in which black South Africans resisted the state's attempt to determine and control who could be in South Africa legally and where they were allowed to reside. Well-documented squatter movements emerged in the 1940s and 1950s in Johannesburg and Durban. The Western Cape is unique in that its famous Crossroads squatter movement in the 1980s coincided with the broader popular mass movements spreading throughout the country. The various squatter movements that formed in and around Crossroads emergency camp represented a significant example of people's power to survive and their resistance to the pass laws. Furthermore, various forces of oppression and resistance came to intervene within Crossroads and to vie for power over squatter spaces and the structures of violence within these spaces.

Like many black South Africans embroiled in violence and struggle in the 1980s, the squatters of Crossroads tried to make a better life for themselves in the context of the extreme oppression of apartheid. They suffered through a particularly brutal fight for survival against the forces of repression. They

formed part of the radical challenge from below that was erupting throughout the country into creative and empowered structures of people's power. Connected through the UDF, these organic structures developed out of everyday grievances and the determination to stand united against oppression in the process of creating a better life here and now. In the process of the transition to democracy the ANC, as a liberation party, came to stand on behalf of this popular resistance. However, many critical scholars have argued that, despite the symbolic connection between 'the people' and the ANC, the interests of the popular uprising were not represented in the politics of transition. This is evidenced in the lived realities of the majority of black South Africans, who continue to exist in dire poverty and experience political marginalisation.

It was a significant feat that the ANC was able to maintain legitimacy and quieten the resistant energies of the masses engaged in the popular struggle from below, while at the same time negotiate their interests out of the peace settlement. Histories of popular struggle nurtured budding forms of resistant consciousness and practice, combined with a powerful will to 'sacrifice with their lives' for liberation. However, for the majority of those involved in the squatter resistance of Cape Town, the liberation boat came and went, and today they find themselves in a very different situation to the one they had imagined. Many of those who were involved in squatter resistance continue to live in shacks or poor housing. Without employment and surviving on a few government grants and bits and pieces of work when it comes along, they eke out a bare life, trying to get their children through school in the hope that something might change with the next generation. Despite an incredible process of popular struggle and sacrifice, the majority of black South Africans remain poor and oppressed. For example, Wanda Malungisa, who became a co-researcher and translator in this research project, is one of the former comrades of Crossroads. Today he lives with his family in a shack in Khayelitsha. To summarise the lived experience of this contradiction, he asserts: 'We suffered for freedom and we suffer with freedom' (Wanda, Interview, February 2012). In this context, this thesis explores the way in

which this lived contradiction of transition without transformation is interpreted, engaged with, and challenged through memory.

## 2 The Theoretical and Political Concept of Memory

Collective memory studies is an inter-disciplinary field dealing with the social, cultural and political practice of remembering. Within this field the question of how nations deal with their memory of past violence is internationally pertinent, and the focus of this research is located within this broader question. Furthermore, the sub-field of popular memory studies deals with the relationship between local memory and national memory, and it is to this relationship that this thesis speaks. The reason for choosing memory as a theoretical site through which to engage with the lived contradiction of a transition without transformation in South Africa is three-fold.

Firstly, memory is a concept that connects the past to the present, and the conundrum of this research is one that is based in the relationship between these two temporal experiences of ‘oppression’ and ‘democracy’ held together through the concept of transition. Secondly, memory is used by the post-conflict state as a means through which to deal with the legacy of violence. Furthermore, memory was mobilised as a means on which to build the meaning of the new nation. On the one hand, the post-apartheid state chose to deal with the legacy of apartheid through healing its victims and forging reconciliation between victims and perpetrators of violence. This strategy aligned with the international politics of transitional justice and was articulated through a national discourse of reconciliation (Moon 2006). On the other hand the past was addressed through the demobilisation and reintegration of veterans of violence, while at the same time recognising and honouring members of the armed wing of the ANC, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) as the heroes of national liberation. This strategy aligned itself with the post-conflict struggle politics and discourses of ‘the national liberation struggle’ (Baines 2007). Therefore, processes of truth and reconciliation and veteran demobilisation and recognition were put into play in ways which determined how the past would be remembered, while at the same time they legitimised the new ANC government as healer and liberator of the nation

(Posel & Simpson 2002). In other words, memory is a key hegemonic force in the new post-apartheid dispensation. Thirdly, memory is also a site through which local actors engage in and challenge the politics of national memory discourse, especially in terms of the memory identities of victim and veteran (Wilson 2001; Hamber & Wilson 2002; Colvin 2003; Norval 2009; Bucaille 2011;). Similarly, through the lived memory of the history of Crossroads, local actors attempt to challenge what they experience as their exclusion from national memory discourse. Therefore, the analytical concept of memory does a lot of political work in post-conflict South Africa.

### 3 Crossroads as a Case Study

Memories of Crossroads emergency camp and squatter movements in the 1980s provide a rich experiential history of apartheid, violence and popular resistance in Cape Town. By drawing on Crossroads as a case study, this thesis contributes to the work being done by scholars attempting to capture local South African narratives of past violence (Foster et al 2005; Reynolds 2013). The history of squatter resistance in Crossroads has been powerfully captured and analysed in detail in Josette Cole's (1987) excellent book, which has been invaluable to my own background understanding. While Cole's book captures the politics and violence of Crossroads as it unfolded, the case study in this thesis focuses on the memories of those who were involved and affected by violence in Crossroads in the context of the present. Furthermore, the thesis provides an understanding of the nature and structures of underground, internal violence in squatter resistance movements, which were not possible to research at that time, for reasons of danger and secrecy. A brief summary of Crossroads' history, drawn from Cole's book and this research, and the motivation for selecting Crossroads as a case study are provided below.

The resistance of Crossroads squatters and the unregulated nature of their survival was a thorn in the side of the apartheid state. In 1983 the Minister of Plural Relations, Dr Piet Koornhof, announced a plan to remove all squatters to a distant piece of sandy land called 'Khayelitsha', which means 'new home'. It was hoped that the local urban African population could be brought

under control by moving them to an orderly, regulated, distant township space. However, the squatters, with support from the UDF and other anti-apartheid activists, resisted the plan and refused to move to Khayelitsha. As the mass movement took hold in Crossroads, and structures of popular resistance grew in power and leadership, it became increasingly difficult for state forces to enter, control and police squatter spaces. Eventually, an alliance was forged between police and the squatter leader of Old Crossroads, Johnson Ngxobongwana, who was battling to hold onto power against the comrades. Under this alliance, Ngxobongwana's men were armed and marked with white cloths as 'Witdoeke' and instructed to attack surrounding squatter communities. A war between squatter-comrades and Witdoeke ensued and lasted from 17 May to 12 June 1986. However, with uncontested police support for Ngxobongwana's vigilante forces, the comrades were defeated. One by one, Portland Cement, Nyanga Bush and KTC were burnt to the ground. People lost their loved ones, belongings and homes. Through this tragic and violent partnership between the state and vigilante forces, the forced removals from Crossroads left 13 dead, 75 injured and an estimated 70 000 refugees. The majority of squatters were relocated to Khayelitsha, where families attempted to rebuild their lives and comrades attempted to rebuild their resistance against the control of the state and its continued repressive presence.

The reasons for choosing Crossroads in the 1980s as a case study are also three-fold. Firstly, Crossroads' history provides a rich source of alternative counter-narratives to the national liberation struggle discourse which privileges the war-in-exile. It allows for a retelling of the popular struggle from below and a remembering of the significance of the experiences of this lived resistance to oppression inside the country. Secondly, many of the people who were involved in the squatter resistance remain in conditions of poverty and structural violence today, thus living the contradiction that this thesis explores. Thirdly, many actors who have emerged from this history continue to be actively involved in challenging national memory today, through non-governmental organisations that are committed to advocating on behalf of those who feel excluded from memory and memory processes.

These actors believe that their memories are important and excluded from a broader national memory industry set up in post-conflict South Africa. Furthermore, they believe there is a connection between their exclusion from the fruits of liberation and their exclusion from memory.

#### 4 Methodology and Research Questions

Methodologically this research explores the conundrum of a transition without transformation through the conceptual lens of memory. Methods of data collection and analysis focused on the life-history narratives of respondents in conjunction with qualitative questions about what their past means in relation to their present lives. Data was collected on national memory discourse through qualitative interviews with key respondents connected to memory activism and national memory. Data was collected on memories of violence in Crossroads through life-history interviews with respondents who were involved in the squatter resistance of Crossroads and who are historically, politically and economically marginalised in the history (and present) of national liberation. Through the analytical lens of narrative and discourse, the relationship between national and local memory as well as the interpretation of a transition without transformation are investigated.

By focusing on the concept of memory, this thesis explores the way in which respondents who share a history of squatter resistance interpret the lived contradiction between their experiences of squatter struggles, their hopes for liberation, and the realities of their lives today. The broader topic of this research addresses the nature and politics of the relationship between national memory discourse and lived memory for members from the Crossroads community. The key question posed by this thesis is: How and why does the Crossroads memory community bring lived memories into conversation with national memory discourse? This question is further unpacked, layered and deepened through a set of three sets of sub-questions:

- 1) How do respondents experience and engage (with) national memory discourse? How does national memory discourse affect local memory actors? What forms of discursive agency emerge in respondents' engagement with national memory discourse?

- 2) How do members of the Crossroads memory community construct their counter-narratives of violence in terms of their experiences of apartheid, violence, resistance and the transition to the present?
- 3) How do respondents' lived counter-memories engage (with) the hegemony of national memory discourse? In what ways do respondents' memory narratives work to support or subvert the hegemonic assumptions of national memory discourse?

A key concept which describes the relationship between lived and national memory explored in this thesis is 'engage'. However, the term 'engage' holds a double meaning and both are implied in the use of the term throughout the thesis. To *engage* something implies use or mobilisation, in this sense national memory discourse may be a tool which is engaged/mobilised for certain purposes. To *engage with* something implies a conversation, or an attempt to make sense of/converse with/challenge national memory from one's own perspective. Both uses of the term engage are relevant to what respondents are doing with and to national memory discourse, on the one hand it is a tool they attempt to use, on the other they converse with this tool in ways which support or/and challenge it from respondents own perspectives.

## 5 Thesis Structure and Chapter Outline

Chapter one develops a theoretical frame through which to explore the questions of memory, oppression, violence and politics, and integrates this framework into the broader questions of this thesis. Chapter two contextualises the relationship between oppression, violence, resistance and memory in South Africa and explores this relationship during the different periods of apartheid, popular resistance, transition, and post-conflict. It develops an understanding of the hegemonic identities of violence constructed within post-conflict memory, and their particular expression in the South African context, as well as the role they played in containing the contradictions of the transition to peace. Chapter three discusses the methodology of research, the motivations behind the research, and the processes, methods and ethical dilemmas of data collection and analysis.

Chapters four to seven are empirical and present the key findings of this research. These empirical findings are brought together in a broader argument in the final chapter; chapter eight. The first empirical chapter, chapter four, presents the key memory dilemma which respondents struggle with as they attempt to lay claim to the memory identities of veteran and victim, constructed in the context of national memory discourse of post-apartheid South Africa. However, the underlying assumptions of these memory identities do not make sense in terms of their lived experiences of the past and the present, thereby placing respondents in a paradoxical position. The rest of the empirical chapters tease out the contours, details and struggles around this memory paradox through a deeper analysis of respondent's memory narratives. Chapter five presents the counter-narrative expressed in constructions of oppression, violence and resistance in the context of Crossroads squatter resistance. These constructions emphasise the significance of the process of coming to understand and challenge oppression through squatter resistance and experiences of shifts in consciousness, empowerment, unity and creativity. Chapter five presents the lived memories of the past, and while these memories are largely excluded from dominant memory discourse, they do form the source out of which the narratives of the present are challenged.

In comparison, chapter six analyses the narratives of transition in terms of experiences of the present. While constructions of the past are characterised by awareness, unity, creativity, and empowerment, the constructions of the transition to the present are characterised by experiences of dependency and disillusionment. These experiences are interpreted through narrative themes of betrayal and abandonment which go some way towards critiquing the politics of the transition and the present. However, as respondents continuously assert, they are in a state of confusion and their narratives do not offer them enlightenment and awareness of what has gone wrong. While these narratives of disillusionment challenge the hegemonic assumptions of reconciliation discourse that oppression and violence are now in the past, in many ways they reproduce the assumptions that underpin the construction of veteran and victim identities. Chapter seven presents the subversive counter-

identity of ‘the people’ which respondents draw up from their lived memories of squatter resistance to challenge the assumptions of their own narratives of veteran betrayal and victim abandonment. This chapter therefore presents the double consciousness implied by the memory dilemma discussed in chapter four and the ways in which this is negotiated and expressed.

Bringing the findings of these empirical chapters together, chapter eight argues that there are different uses of memory occurring in respondents’ narratives. An argument is put forward in relation to national memory discourse and discourse theory, to demonstrate how memory is used as both a resource and a weapon, and the different politics implied. Furthermore, this chapter proposes a different understanding of the meaning of transition, from the perspective of popular struggle in conversation with theories of violence, oppression and memory. Finally it attempts to bring together the counter-narratives, to propose what ‘remembering well’ might look like for respondents in relation to their political interests. The conclusion draws out the implications for a theoretical understanding of the relationship between memory, consciousness and power and what this means for the practice and politics of transitional justice.

## **Chapter One**

### **The Theory and Politics of National Memory, Popular Memory and Violence**

This chapter deals with the theoretical study of the internationally pertinent question of how countries face, deal with, and remember histories of political violence. In particular it locates this question within collective memory studies and post-conflict development. This question has its own history within the histories of political violence of the twentieth century and the nations who have navigated transitions from violence to peace (Lorey & Beezley 2002). Many memory scholars have shown how a certain set of transnational discourses of national memory emerged from the after-effects of World War II to produce concerns with remembering war and recognising the suffering of ‘the other’ as victims of human rights abuses (Levy & Sznajder 2002; Winter 2006). These concerns around global and national processes that deal with how best to remember political violence take place within a more general phenomenon described as a ‘memory boom’: a fast-expanding concern with questions of memory, and especially the collective memory of nations (Winter 2006). This memory boom has unleashed a culture of trauma and a means through which to judge states on how well they redress reprehensible pasts (Olick et al 2011). This chapter aims to locate the research questions within a framework of the politics of popular memory in the context of post-conflict development and transitional justice discourse. It begins with a discussion of the debates within memory studies, situates this study within these debates and outlines the theoretical concepts and analytical framework.

#### 1.1 Theoretical Approaches in Collective Memory Studies: Narrative, Identity and Power

From the phenomenological perspective of Edward Casey (1987) memory has an omnipresent quality that infuses every moment and act of social life. Demonstrating this, he writes ‘in the case of memory, we are always already

in the thick of things' (Casey 1987:xix). A similar observation is made by Maurice Halbwachs (1992) where he argues that the only place we are free from memory is in our dreams. While dreams may consist of flashes and images from the past, they are not structured and coherent in the way that memory is (Coser 1992). In his path-breaking work on collective memory, Halbwachs (1992) draws attention to the structured and coherent nature of memory in order to show us that memories are always shared, and the social character of memory is found in these shared memory 'frames' which give them meaning and coherence. While it is individuals who remember, the frames through which they remember belong to groups, thus giving memory its collective or social character. Furthermore, these social frames within which memory resides are transferred through the media and cultural institutions and transformed by politics (Olick et al 2011). Memory, in other words, is a rich and omnipresent concept, which can be studied from a number of different biological, psychological, sociological, historical, cultural and political perspectives. Furthermore, within the concept of memory there are a vast variety of practices, processes and products that memory studies touches on, using a variety of different methods.

A working definition of the concept of memory for memory studies is given by Jeffery K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Serousse and Daniel Levy in their recent edited collection, *The collective memory reader*:

memory – relating past and present – is thus the central faculty of being in time, through which we define individual and collective selves ... the new insight of memory studies is thus not merely that it is omnipresent but that it is at once situated in social frameworks (e.g., family and nation), enabled by changing media technologies (e.g., the Internet and digital recordings), confronted with cultural institutions (e.g. memorials and museums), and shaped by political circumstances (e.g. wars and catastrophes) (Olick et al 2011:37).

Bringing together the field of memory studies under the term 'collective memory' emphasises the social/cultural and political rather than biological/cognitive aspects of individual memory. There is some debate over whether the term 'collective' or 'social' memory is more appropriate for this field (Olick & Robbins 1998; Olick et al 2011). While opinion seems to have settled on 'collective' memory, the social character of collective memory should be implied in the term to emphasise that individual memories are also

collective memories because of how they share the social frames of the collective.

Different disciplinary lenses ask different questions of the field of collective memory. In particular, the focus of this thesis is on the sociological, social-psychological and political questions of memory and its relationship to identity as constructed through narrative. Furthermore, the theoretical questions most related to this research on memory, narrative and identity are situated within studies that focus particularly on the politics of memory, the relationship between ‘official’ and ‘counter-memory’ narratives and the identities produced through these narratives.

### 1.1.1 Memory, Narrative and Identity

Collective memory is a social practice. The social character of memory can be located in the frames which give meaning and structure to memory. Frames structure meaning, so that memory is never a direct replica of the events of the past – rather it is a representation of those events. A useful concept through which to understand the frames of memory is narrative. The term ‘narrative’ refers to the stories we are told and tell ourselves about events and characters, and the way they are related to one another. Margaret Somers usefully defines narrative as ‘constellations of relationships (connected parts) embedded in time and space, constituted by causal emplotment’ (1994: 616). Jerome Bruner (1991) argues that there are a number of key components that make up narrative. Narratives follow a sequence which exists in time and are told through the intentional states of a subject who is acted on and acts on the world. Beyond this, for a narrative to be worth telling it must contain a narrative breach, where an implicit normative and expected script is violated, or unexpectedly deviated from. Bruner argues that narrative structure includes both what happened (the causal sequence in time) and why it is worth telling (breach in canonicity). A narrative contains both a construction of a human plight as well as directions for how the story should be thought about, acted on, or what it means in a broader sense (Bruner 1991). Therefore, memory narratives are representations of events, which implies remembering some things but

forgetting others. More importantly, narrative memories are representations of past events, in that they give meaning and structure to events by organising them in relation to other objects within time and space. In order to study the way in which memories organise content into social frames of meaning, a useful indicator is narrative, as it demonstrates the how different elements are organised in relation to one another and provided with meaning.

The understanding of memory as narratives is, at the same time, an understanding of the nature of human consciousness. Paul Ricoeur writes, 'the original link between consciousness and the past is to be found in memory' (2006:10). It is not surprising, therefore, that Halbwachs began his study of collective memory as a study of collective consciousness (Olick et al 2011). In particular this thesis explores the philosophical standpoints which emphasise the dialogical and multi-storied nature of memory as human consciousness, as well as theories of the ways in which these multiple voices of narrative are implicated in social structures and relations of power. Hans-Goerg Gadamer argues that story-telling is an ongoing process of reconstruction, where interpretation takes place within a 'fusion of horizons' (2004:305). This bears relevance to the study of memory, as Peter Berger argues: 'the past is malleable and flexible, constantly changing as our recollection reinterprets and re-explains what is happening' (1963:57). Berger gives us the term 'alternation' to describe this multi-layered quality of memory as the perception of self in front of an infinite series of mirrors as endlessly overlapping 'horizons' of possible being (1963:63). Through this metaphor then, personal biography becomes the process of finding oneself in different social worlds (or social frames), to which specific systems of meaning are attached.

A related term that speaks to the multi-vocal quality of the phenomenology of alternation within personal biography is Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of heteroglossia. Bakhtin defines heteroglossia as 'another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way' (1981:324). While Berger gives us the picture of a house of mirrors through which the different stories of self are reflected in the life history, Bakhtin emphasises the different voices and systems of meaning mirrored within the

story. This quality of memory has been demonstrated within the more recent work of Olick (1999), where he theorises the mnemonic practices as memories of memories and emphasises their dialogical nature, where different practices respond to the memories of each other. Memories are never pure, but imply layers as individuals and groups take in and respond to the memories handed down to them. Furthermore, within the narratives of the self, there are many voices that co-mingle to form multi-storied versions of the past.

The concept of narrative is closely connected to that of identity, as, in order to have ‘a sense of who we are’, ‘we have to first have an idea of how we have become, and of where we are going’ (Taylor 1989:47). Identity is formed through memory as a narrative about ourselves in relation to broader memory narratives about the groups we belong to and are connected with. Narrative identity is therefore both subjective and inter-subjective, a process of negotiating our ‘selves’ and our ‘stories’ in relation to broader stories (Whitebrook 2001). Similarly, Olick and Robbins (1998) argue that memory is a process rather than a static thing and the connection between memory, identity and contestation demonstrates the dynamic nature of memory.

Both narrative and identity are multiple, shifting and contested. Our memories are constructed in narrative and shared through narrative frames of remembering. The narrative frames give memory structure, coherence, meaning and a means through which to interpret the past. Furthermore, memory narratives are flexible and contain a number of different points of view that overlap with one another, giving collective memory a multi-vocal quality. However, if we use the metaphor of multiple voices and identities occupying memory narratives, this begs further political questions about where these voices come from, which voices and identities gain dominance, and why. Theorists who focus on questions of social structure, consciousness and power provide insights into how this metaphor may be developed in terms of these questions and their ideas are explored in the section below.

### 1.1.2 Systems of Meaning and Psychologies of Oppression

Marxist, post-colonial, and feminist theorists have contributed to our understanding of the way in which structures of oppression are supported by systems of meaning that come to influence individual psychologies. This section focuses on the work of Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser and Frantz Fanon towards understanding this relationship between structures of oppression and systems of meaning, supplementing this understanding with the more recent developments made in Marxist post-structural theory. Gramsci's concept of hegemony (1971) was path-breaking within a scholarly attempt to pay closer attention to the role of consciousness within power, domination and resistance. Gramsci attempted to understand why the working classes did not rise up against the capitalist system, even though it was in their class interests to do so. His answer came in the form of his concept of hegemony, that is, the way in which the dominant classes mobilise the consent of the masses through a collective psychology of norms and values that legitimises the status quo and is internalised by the working class as their own system of norms and values (Gramsci 1971). Thus, challenging the class system requires challenging the internalisation of a collective consciousness that supports it. Despite workers holding a class position, they do not necessarily hold a class consciousness that is in line with the interests of this position.

The relationship between power and identity is further theorised through Althusser's (1971) understanding of the relationship between the state, ideology and subjectivity. According to Althusser, ideology, which supports the power of the state, 'interpellates' individuals as subjects by calling to them to interpret their lived experiences through the particular subject positions made available through ideology. Althusser's notion of interpellation or hailing is useful as it shows how ideology, in the service of power, calls individuals to submit freely to the power of the state. However, a critique of Althusser's view is that there is no possibility for resistance, and that he cannot account for multiple subjectivities. The post-structuralist work

of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe responds to this critique by drawing on Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the concept of antagonism. Furthermore, instead of understanding ideology as monolithic and only in the service of state power, they develop the concept of a discourse that can be ideological and hegemonic but that contains the ability for rupture and contestation within it. Discourses are units of meaning that structure reality into chains of meaning; these chains of meaning can never contain all experiences and therefore are contingent. However, they become hegemonic when one particular interpretation of experience and chain of meaning settles as if it were the only interpretation (Laclau & Mouffe 2001).

To add to Laclau and Mouffe's view of hegemony and discourse, and to re-situate it within Gramsci's view of class oppression and Althusser's understanding of power and subjectivity, hegemonic discourses are also ideological in the sense that they support the worldviews and systems of power of the dominant classes in society. While hegemonic discourse attempts to articulate heterogeneous identities and histories into a single narrative, this discourse will inevitably be partial, and, according to Laclau and Mouffe (2001), it is at the site of this partiality that contestation is possible. Social antagonisms occur when social agents are unable to fully realise their identity within the bounds of constructed meaning. Laclau and Mouffe further distinguish between the concepts of subject positions and political subjectivity. The former refers to the way in which subjects' positions are produced within a discourse. The latter refers to how social actors act and is based on the recognition of the contingency of the discursive structure. When the experiences of subjects are not incorporated into the discursive structure a sense of dislocation occurs, which reveals the contingent nature of the structure. This failure of the discourse compels the subject to act and assert its subjectivity anew (Laclau & Mouffe 2001). The concept of political subjectivity is similar to the Marxist concept of a class-for-itself, which recognises the way in which its subject position has been produced within hegemonic consciousness and chooses to remake that consciousness in line with its own class interests.

While Gramsci, Althusser and Laclau and Mouffe help us understand how ideological systems of meaning (in support of dominant power) attempt – but do not always manage – to articulate subject positions within ideological discourse, Fanon (1963 [1961], 1986 [1952]) argues that this is a violent process with violent effects. The work of Fanon, therefore provides further important insights into the structuring of oppressed consciousness and its relationship to violence. Fanon's formulation builds on the philosophical contributions of Hegel's (1977) master-slave dialectic as outlined in the *Phenomenology of spirit*. Kojève (1969) clarifies Hegel by explaining that self-consciousness and humanity are born out of the desire for mutual recognition, that is, to be recognised and have one's self-worth confirmed by the other. Non-reciprocal recognition is what gives rise to the master-slave dialectic, where one being is recognised by the other, but the recognition is not reciprocated. However, the master is as dehumanised as the slave is because, in not recognising the other who recognises the self, the recognition of the other is not full recognition, so the humanity of the self is, in fact, not confirmed for either the master or the slave. This dialectic is set up through violence and the fear of death.

In Bulhan's (1985) discussion of Fanon's theories of the psychologies of oppression, he argues that what is clear from these theories is that oppressors are dehumanised in their attempts to gain privilege and power. In *Black skin, white masks*, Fanon (1986) analyses the psychology of racism in terms of the dialectic-psychic relationship between the black slave and white master. Fanon (1963), in *The wretched of the earth* situates Hegel's master-slave dialectic within the unfolding historical drama of racial domination. Gramsci and Althusser offer an understanding of the ideological systems of meaning that come to structure narratives of self in ways that align with dominant interests. Fanon extends this through an analysis of the ways in which the relationship between ideology, power and the construction of the self is set up through violence, resulting in the philosophical and psychological death of freedom and mutual recognition of both the oppressed and the oppressor.

Together, the theorists above offer us an understanding of how power structures meaning, which in turn structures the self, psychology and

consciousness in ways that coax individuals into submitting to power. Furthermore, Laclau and Mouffe give us the concept of political subjectivity to demonstrate how ideological discourse is contingent and certain subject positions do not fit well with the narrative of power, thus opening up possibilities of challenge.

To develop this theoretical framework, the next section looks more closely at questions of how resistance consciousness is possible within this understanding. If it is possible to contest hegemonic discourse and the subject positions it provides, and if it is possible to produce a new political subjectivity that is more aligned with an individual's experiences and interests, then where does the source of this possibility arise?

This question speaks to the age-old debate about the relationship between structure and agency. On this question, Anthony Giddens (1986) provides us with the concept of structuration as the process through which structures influence the agency (ability to act) of agents, which in turn changes the structures (or frameworks) through which particular actions are possible. Thus structure and agency are in a dialectical relationship with one another through the process of structuration. This thesis is concerned with memory as a system of meaning, and this system provides the structure through which agents (local actors) are able to make sense of and tell their own histories in relation to the present. In the section below the question of where memory agency comes from, or what gives actors the potential to reshape the structures of hegemonic memory, is addressed.

### 1.1.3 Psychologies of Resistance and Lived Experience

Even though the dominated have internalised a consciousness out of synch with their interests, they nevertheless continue to experience the lived realities of their position in relations of inequality. Thus Gramsci uses the phrase 'contradictory class consciousness' to theorise how aspects of consciousness, both from below and from above, exist together.

The active man-in-the-mass has a practical activity, but has no clear theoretical consciousness of his practical activity, which nonetheless involves understanding the world in so far as it transforms it. His theoretical consciousness can indeed be historically in opposition to his activity. One might almost say that he has two

theoretical consciousnesses (or one contradictory consciousness): one which is implicit in his activity and which in reality unites him with all his fellow workers in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which he has inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed (Gramsci 1971:641).

This concept of contradictory consciousness provides a political grounding for a multi-voiced and multi-storied understanding of memory and identity. Furthermore, out of the consciousness, which is ‘implicit in his activity’ and ‘unites him with all his fellow workers’, stems the possibility of ‘the transformation of the real world’. Systems of oppression are lived and must be situated in the lived experience and response to structural, cultural and symbolic oppression. For example, contributing further to the notion of lived experience of oppression, Philomena Essed (1991) moves the focus from the analysis of structures of racism to the lived experience of racism. This kind of work brings our attention to the micro-processes of macro-structures.

Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) theorising of the symbolic is particularly useful as it is a theory of practice; therefore his concepts and concerns pay close attention to questions of process and how meaning is both produced and consumed. Furthermore, in his theorising of ‘the field’ or ‘habitus’ Bourdieu provides a focus on the content and implications of social relations. As Thompson (1991) demonstrates in his introduction to *Language and symbolic power*, Bourdieu portrays linguistic interactions in ways that demonstrate how they bear the traces of a social structure that is both expressed and reproduced through such interactions.

One answer to the question of where contestation comes from is in Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of habitus as a set of orientations, ways of being, speaking and knowing that is inculcated into individuals and forms the basis through which they act on and make sense of the world. This habitus reflects an individual’s position within social structure and provides them with an orientation of how to act. Habitus, therefore can be thought about as the individual’s situated life world; the embodied knowledge that comes from an individual’s lived experience of his or her position in the world. This element of subjectivity accounts for why there is double or contradictory

consciousness and the possibility of acting against hegemony and ideological discourse in ways that are in line with the interests of lived experience.

A term that may be used for the subjectivity of habitus is 'lived subjectivity'; a term that refers to the way in which narratives are always embodied as 'narratives of location'. Floya Anthias (2005) develops the concept of a 'narrative of location' to propose a new metaphor for understanding narrative in terms of location and positionality. In Anthias' words: 'the narrative constitutes a means for understanding the ways in which the narrator at a specific point in time and space is able to make sense and articulate their placement in the social order of things' (2005:43).

With the development of the concept of 'the field' Bourdieu shows how, when people act, it is always in a particular social context or field. A particular response or action should be understood as derived not from an individual's habitus or lived position, but rather from the relationship between habitus and field (Bourdieu 1991). A field is, therefore, always a site of struggle between individuals with different interests, relating to their different locations within a structured space of positions.

The micro-sociology of resistance is further engaged in by the work of Scott (1990) and Kelley (1993). Scott unpacks the invisible infra-politics of everyday forms of resistance to oppression. These infra-politics of resistance include myths, stories and folktales about resistance and revenge as well as everyday resistant actions such as foot-dragging, squatting, evasion and desertion. Kelley draws our attention to the situated nature of everyday forms of resistance. In the quote below, Kelley demonstrates the ways in which the motivations for everyday resistance challenge our taken-for-granted constructions of 'the political'. Political acts of resistance to domination are often motivated by deeply situated experiences of hardship. It is often these experiences of hardship (resulting from the structural violence of racism) that move ordinary people to action:

By shifting our focus to what motivates disenfranchised black working people to struggle and what strategies they developed, we may discover that their participation in 'mainstream' politics ... grew out of the very circumstances, experiences, and memories that impelled many to steal from their employer, join a mutual benefit association, or spit in a bus driver's face. In other words, I am

rejecting the tendency to dichotomize people's lives, to assume that clear cut 'political' motivations exist separately from issues of economic well-being, safety, pleasure, cultural expression, sexuality, freedom of mobility, and other facets of daily life (Kelley 1993:77).

Thus, the infra-politics of resistance as expressed by Scott (1990) and Kelley (1993) draw our attention to the everyday, situated forms of resistance to everyday experiences of oppression. Scott adds that while everyday forms of resistance do not represent a public challenge to systems of domination, they contribute towards laying the foundation from which a public, collective liberation struggle can arise. Moving from these individual acts of resistance to forms of collective organisation refers to the process by which people come together to analyse and reflect on their current situations and where shifts in consciousness feed into concrete and realistic plans for active resistance (Foster 2004). Collective action comprises the public, visible, collective acts such as protests, marches, lobbying, armed struggle and guerrilla warfare.

Bringing the focus onto the lived experience of oppression and resistance into conversation with Fanon's understanding of oppression as violence, we see how violence and resistance connect. For Fanon, the oppressor-oppressed dialectic is set up through violence and the fear of death, where the master serves the tenet 'conquer the other or die' and the slave, 'submit to the other or die' (Fanon 1986). Since this dynamic is set up through violence and the fear of death, it can only be broken by the willingness to sacrifice physical life for social humanity and freedom. For freedom, the slave must risk the violence of the master in order to say, in Fanon's passionate words: 'No to scorn of man. No to degradation of man. No to exploitation of man. No to the butchery of what is most human in man: freedom' (Fanon 1986:222). However, this sacrifice of physical life by saying 'no' to slave-hood is at the same time a decision to say, 'Yes to life. Yes to love. Yes to generosity' (Fanon 1986:222). This abstract, philosophical understanding of human relations of inequality and inhumanity is situated by Fanon against the backdrop of colonialism and the anti-colonial struggle for freedom in Algeria (Fanon 1963). His insights, therefore, are powerful for our understanding of

the effects of oppression on consciousness and the process of the liberation of consciousness from relations of oppression.

The connection of oppression to violence is an important one. Bulhan (1985) points out that this is a connection that has been mystified and the process of liberating consciousness involves becoming aware of the violence of oppression; psychologically, materially and socially. Fanon (1986) argues that as long as the colonised accept servitude because of fear of death and are unwilling to die for freedom, the colonisers' tyrannical violence will not end. Furthermore, Fanon provides an understanding of horizontal violence in terms of the ways in which violence against the oppressor turns inwards on the self and on other selves like the self. As the colonised eke out an existence in an ever-narrowing margin of survival, the accumulated rage on their target is deflected and turned in on the self and on their own people. The oppressor becomes internalised and the anger against the oppressor comes out in self-sabotaging behaviour or horizontal violence against loved ones and community.

These different understandings of identity/subjectivity and their relationship to one another are particularly relevant for this analytical framework. To recap, subjectivity refers to the way in which narratives or discourses construct the meaning of the self within the broader, public realm of 'the field'. Dominant constructions of subjectivity in the field come to be internalised as hegemonic identity by ordinary people in ways that support dominant interests. However, when people act to produce their subjectivity, this is always in conversation with the lived experience of an individual's habitus. Therefore, through the conversation between dominant identity and lived experience, speech acts and narratives of self may become political subjectivities working to contest the dominant identities produced in the field.

The broad theoretical approach of this thesis connects theories of collective memory and identity to theories of oppression and psychological experiences of resistance. In doing so, I aim to show the ways in which individuals involved in lived resistance to oppression hold memories of what it meant to resist ideological systems of oppression from below. Furthermore, I aim to

demonstrate how respondents holding this memory (in all its complexity) bring it into conversation with the lived experience of their present lives and the broader hegemonic structures of meaning of the post-apartheid state. This line of questioning, which brings together memory, identity and power falls broadly within a politics of memory approach; therefore the section below aims to outline this approach, making an argument for what my case study offers to it and situating it within the specifics of post-conflict memory studies.

## 1.2 The Politics of Memory

In the first few pages of his novel treatise to memory, Milan Kundera gives us the phrase ‘the struggle of man against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting’ (1996:3). This phrase, often quoted by scholars of the politics of memory, interweaves the relationship of memory to forgetting with the question of power and contestation. These questions and the debates that arise from them are at the heart of a politics of memory approach. This approach starts from the premise that collective memories are constitutive of collective identities and therefore form a key part of contemporary political practice.

Demonstrating this constitutive role that memory plays in maintaining communities through shared narratives of suffering and success, Robert Bellah, Richard Madsen, William Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven Tipton (1985) assert that ‘a real community’ is a ‘community of memory’. The politics of memory approach further recognises that memory is continually remade in the present for present purposes, thus turning the focus from what memory does, to what we do with it (Olick et al 2011). Therefore, a politics of memory approach focuses on the political uses of memory as a form of collective identity constitution. It analyses the relationship of contestation between the voices of dominant or hegemonic memory and oppositional or ‘counter-memory’.

This section begins with a focus on studies of national memory as a particular form of hegemonic consciousness, within which different metaphors are used to theorise a contested relationship between past and present in the field. It

then moves onto the specific studies that develop the idea of counter-memory in relation to national memory, and, finally, to a discussion of the relationship between memory and oppressed consciousness in the context of systems of oppression.

### 1.2.1 National Memory

John Bodnar (1992) describes official memory as a dominant narrative of the past produced by leaders and authorities in ways that support their interests in social unity and their attainment of social goals and political agendas. The construction of the nation is a central part of official memory, which serves to establish the hegemony of the nation-states and the interests of the ruling classes (Alonso 1988). Collective memories represent a certain kind of narrative about the past, which speak to different identity positions and function within broader relations of power. Michel Foucault recognised in constructions of national memory a key source of disciplinary power: 'Since memory is actually a very important factor in struggle ... if one controls people's memory, one controls their dynamism' (1975:25-26). For Foucault (2003), power produces subjects, not by repression but by creating the possibilities out of which individuals can reflect and act on themselves. Power works through a combination of social practices, institutions and discourses (an apparatus) that define the conditions of possibility of knowledge and truth (Rabinow & Rose 2003). From within a Foucaultian perspective, official discourses of national memory are part of an apparatus of power in that they define how national subjects should remember the past and how they should act on themselves and the world in terms of that memory.

A key debate which emerges in studies of national memory is the relationship between the past and the present. Crudely put, this debate is between two camps representing an essentialist view and a presentist view, but in reality studies seem to exist on a spectrum between these two points. While those who veer more towards the essentialist view of the relationship see past events as determining memory in the present, the presentists veer more towards a view that the present determines how the past is constructed. These

different points of view result in different metaphors of this relationship, such as a pruning metaphor for the more essentialist studies and an inventing metaphor for the more presentist studies. By outlining these metaphors, this section will establish a useful middle ground and relational approach and will explore and contribute to these metaphors in the middle.

Beginning with the more essentialist point of view, an example can be found in Anthony Smith's *The ethnic origins of nations*. Smith (1991) argues that the 'past' is often fuller than is convenient for nationalists who seek to advance a particular view of the past and as a result nationalists have to prune a great deal. Thus, he gives us a pruning metaphor of nationalist memory located in the essential stuff of the past, which, like an overgrown tree, is pruned into a more desirable picture by nationalists.

Continuing along this vein, we have the work of Yael Zerubavel on 'master commemorative narratives' in *Recovered roots* (1995:237). Commemoration, she argues, reproduces a commemorative narrative; a story about the past and a moral message. It draws on historical sources but undergoes a process of narrativisation: when taken together, commemoration practices contribute to the formation of a master narrative, which structures collective memory. Therefore, locating this analysis within the pruning metaphor, if the historical sources are the tree, then narrative is the pruning mechanism or structure in which that past is told. A story-line is culturally constructed and provides group members with a shared past, gives group identity and contributes to the form of the nation. The pruning metaphor further demonstrates the place of forgetting in the politics of memory. According to Zerubavel (1995), suppressed memory becomes part of collective amnesia. By focusing attention on certain aspects of the past, it covers up and deems irrelevant that which does not fit.

On the other side of the continuum, presentist approaches place emphasis on the present in the constructions of the past. Eric Hobsbawm's (1983) term 'the invention of tradition' comes from his path-breaking work on collective memory and has become a key concept within the politics of memory approach. Hobsbawm defines the invention of tradition as 'a set of practices,

normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual and symbolic nature, which seeks to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past' (1983:1). The metaphor of invention pays less attention to what the past gives to memory and more to the way in which memory is created for cynical and instrumental reasons of the present.

A critique and re-evaluation of this term from within the tradition is provided by Terence Ranger, who, together with Hobsbawm, edited the volume *The invention of tradition* (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983). Then, in 1993, Ranger revisited the applicability of the concept in non-Western settings and concluded that the original work overemphasised the instrumental and planned qualities of invention. In Ranger's words, 'the word "invention" gets in the way of a fully historical treatment of colonial hegemony and of a fully historical treatment of African participation and initiative in innovating custom' (1993:277). Instead, Ranger favoured Benedict Anderson's term 'imagined' from 'imagined communities' to demonstrate how customary law, ethnicity and language were imagined by many different people and over a long period of time (Anderson 1991). While Hobsbawm's top-down and frozen invention is useful as a framework of ideal-type representations of powerful constructions from above at certain times and for certain purposes, 'imagined' is a useful term for analysing the movement, dynamism and travelling of inventions, how they are re-imagined, cobbled together and appropriated. Furthermore, Ranger stressed the importance of the realm of ideas in the term: 'above all, I like the word "imagining" because, much more than the term "invention", it lays stress upon ideas and images and symbols. However politically convenient they were, the new traditions were, after all, essentially about identity and identity is essentially a matter of imagination' (1993:277). Imagining, therefore, is a useful middling metaphor, as Ranger shows the present political constructions become more firmly rooted in the well of imagination as it is linked to identity, which travels along the stream of history from the past and is given to the present.

Continuing with the development of middling metaphors in the understanding of the relationship of the past to the present in theories of memory, Barry

Schwartz (2000) provides a particularly sophisticated account of this relationship. He seeks to overcome the dichotomy between presentist (the view that the past is made and remade in the present for the present) and essentialist (the view that the past defines identities and constrains action in the present) positions on collective memory. For him, memory is a cultural system rather than simply a resource, and serves as both ‘mirror’ reflecting the concerns of the present and ‘lamp’ which illuminates our understandings of the present through the light of the past (Schwartz 2000). He aims to insert the political approach to memories within the cultural realm, arguing that social memories have function and meaning. It is not just a question of why memories are mobilised, but also how the past is symbolised in memory, and what symbols of memory mean for people. The structures, symbols and meaning of memory are as important as its political uses. Collective memory is a filter to apprehend experience, in which we match our models to the broader world. For Schwartz (2000) the way in which the past is interpreted in narrative is both a model *of society*, which, like a mirror, reflects the concerns of the present, and a model *for society*, which, like a lamp, illuminates behaviour by providing a frame of interpretation within which people locate and find meaning for their present experience.

These middling approaches are not simply in the middle of the approaches that look towards the past and the present; instead they attempt to provide relational metaphors that connect the past to the present. With the concept of imagination, Ranger (1993) tries to connect the constructions of the present to the realm in which we find identity, which is given to us from the past. Similarly, Schwartz, with his mirror and lamp metaphor shows that ‘the present is constituted by the past, but the past’s retention, as well as its reconstruction, must be anchored in the present ... the past after all is a familiar country’ (2000:302).

Aligning this study with these dialogical and relational approaches of connectivity, I propose the metaphor of the infinity sign between the past and the present, so a formulaic summary of memory = present  $\infty$  past: a constant dialogical flow between the past and the present, as the past gives to us our identity frames, our systems and symbols of meaning through which the

concerns of the present are made intelligible. At the same time, the concerns of the present determine how we use the symbols given to us from the past to make memory in the present.

### 1.2.2 Popular Memory and Oppressed Consciousness

There is another layer or dimension to this memory equation that speaks to the equally dialogical relationship between the grounded points of view of 'lived' memory and the dominant points of view given to us from the 'field' of public memory. The section above focused on a particular form of what Bodnar (1992) calls 'official' memory in the literature on national memory. This section looks more closely at studies on the relationship between official/national memory and autobiographical/personal. The analysis of this relationship brings us back to the theoretical discussion as we see the relationship between different points of view (voices) and their place within relations of power. While, as we will see, contestation can occur within the politics of the official field, it also occurs between these two different levels of collective memory (autobiographical versus official).

In order to challenge the hegemonic and disciplinary power of memory, Foucault (1977) uses the term 'counter-memory' to refer to memories that differ from or challenge the dominant memory. The concept of counter-memory is an important critique of dominant ideology in popular memory and illuminates the connection between the hegemonic order and historical representations; however, it can employ an essentialist notion of authenticity, which imagines a homogenous, top-down, dominant narrative, challenged by a homogenous, bottom-up, authentic version (Miształ 2003). An example of this is found in the work of recovered pasts. By contrast, the alternative narratives constitute counter-memory, in that they present their own claims for a more accurate version of history. While political elites construct the past in ways that speak to their interests and political agenda, counter-memory challenges hegemony and becomes contested terrain. The debates within theories of national memory reproduce themselves within debates of contestation and popular memory. As argued above, Zeruberval's (1995) view is situated within an essentialist or pruning approach to the past-present

relationship, out of which a ‘missing piece’ metaphor of ‘counter-memory’ emerges. The study of counter-memory then becomes the desire to recover missing pieces of the past and challenge the politics that were implied in their denial.

In response to the ‘missing piece recovery’ approach, studies of popular memory focus on the relationship between dominant memory and oppositional forms across the whole public field. Working against this tendency, theorists of popular memory maintain that the intertwining of power and memory is subtle and dominant memory is never monolithic; neither is popular memory authentic (Olick & Robbins 1998). Any challenge to a dominant paradigm of national memory will also be acquiescent to some of its terms. Examples include Alistair Thompson’s (1994) *Anzac memories: living with the legend* and Luisa Passerini’s (2009) *Fascism in popular memory*. In their essay on ‘popular memory’ the Popular Memory Group (1998) define the concept as a ‘dimension of political practice’ and its object of study as the ‘social production of memory’, or all the ways in which people participate, unequally, in the social construction of the past in society. They identify two ways in which the production of memory occurs in society, which can be compared to Bourdieu’s theoretical schema of field and habitus.

The first place of social memory production is in public representations, which can be seen as the broader theatre of history and produces grand, shared, hegemonic versions of the past (Popular Memory Group 1998). The second place of production is much more situated in ‘lived’ realities and is connected to the realm Bourdieu theorises as ‘habitus’. The Popular Memory Group (1998) calls this second point of production ‘private remembrance’, which is constructed out of the experiences of everyday life; a common-sense view of the past that circulates in everyday talk of personal narratives, letters, diaries and photos. We encounter here the same issues of separating out the different realms of dominant and personal memory, as, by definition, dominant memory infuses personal memory, just as habitus and field are always in relationship with one another. Recognising this inter-penetration of these two realms of memory production, the Popular Memory Group argue for a relational analysis that cannot be limited to the level of recovery alone.

Furthermore, a relational analysis recognises that ‘private memories cannot, in concrete studies, be readily unscrambled from the effects of dominant historical discourse. It is often these that supply the very terms by which a private history is thought through’ (Popular Memory Group 1998:78).

The work of feminist, post-colonial and Marxist analysts, on the relationship between power, consciousness and resistance bear relevance to the study and theory of popular memory. Feminist memory studies, in its devotion to the study of the hidden histories of women and their feelings, thoughts and actions, challenges the very distinction between ‘private’ and ‘public’ which silences women’s lived sense of the past. The Popular Memory group (1998) argue that similar processes of domination operate in relation to working-class experience and memory, as those at the bottom of societal structures of dominance are robbed of their access to the means of publicity and are not used to the privileged habit of giving universal historic significance to partial experiences. However, despite the political nature of popular memory studies, the Popular Memory Group asserts that memory studies are only beginning to understand ‘the class dimensions of cultural domination by transferring the insights of feminist theory’. While Halbwachs (1992) came to his study on memory through a study on class consciousness, few scholars have followed up this connection. An unusual example is Richard Sennett’s (1998) study of computer programmers at IBM who have been laid-off and the way in which capitalism encourages workers to individualise their failures; thus they fail to ‘remember well’. In Sennett’s words, ‘the problem is why, in the kinds of economic experience of unemployment and premature uselessness ... These conflictual relations are not taking form, why collective memory of shared injury can become a detour rather than a confrontation with capitalisms current plans’ (1998:23).

In Orlando Patterson’s (1982) *Slavery and social death*, he reconceptualises the master-slave relationship through an incorporation of memory. He argues that slavery is constituted through social death and natal alienation, so that the bonds of lineage and maternity, which give us history and memory, are denied to slaves, thus dehumanising them. Like Fanon, we see the theme of social death as distinct from physical death, but as a death that deprives

slaves of their humanity. These studies ground the study of popular memory within the politics of oppression and its relationship to psychology. It is at this theoretical nexus that this research is located. Situated within the field of popular memory, it aims to take a relational approach to the study of personal memory, in order to demonstrate the contestation between dominant and lived memory.

### 1.2.3 Memory, Violence and Transitional Justice

Within the field of peacekeeping, peace-building and conflict resolution, much of the literature takes a ‘problem-solving’ approach. Broadly speaking, ‘peace-building’ refers to those forms of conscious intervention that intend to prevent, reduce or resolve conflicts in violent contexts, and also to address the destructive effects of that violence (Goodhand & Hulme 1999:15). Michael Pugh (2004:41) argues that writing in this field tends to speak from a ‘working with what we’ve got’ perspective, with the intention of drawing on lessons learnt, in order to improve dominant frameworks of knowledge-practice. While this kind of approach can produce important practical lessons, it does not critically evaluate prevailing wisdom. In response to the ‘problem-solving’ approach, a few authors have taken a critical approach to peace-building studies in an attempt to demonstrate the political workings of the kinds of unquestioned assumptions that underpin the field (Fetherston 2000; Duffield 2001). The politics of the production of subject positions within the knowledge frames of peace-building forms a central part of this critical approach.

The strand of peace-building that deals with questions of memory, and, specifically, memories of violence, lies within the field of transitional justice (Brito et al 2001). Transitional justice refers to the broad scholarship and practice that attempts to deal with a country’s history of violence and human rights abuses, in order to facilitate a transition to future peace and reconciliation (Sriram & Herman 2009:458). It may include tribunals, truth-seeking efforts, programmes of reparations for victims and institutional reform (Patel 2009). This research, however, is specifically concerned with the how transitional justice practices have produced particular memory

subjects, and how ordinary people engage with these memory subjectivities in their own expression of lived memory.

A recent critical review of the different approaches within transitional justice has been compiled in the edited collection *Critical perspectives in transitional justice* (Palmer et al 2012). The interests of this research speak to approaches that recognise the importance of locality and the different kinds of agency and experiences of those who are affected by the transitional justice processes (Crosby & Lykes 2011; Vinjamuri & Boesenecker 2011; McEvoy 2012). In addition, this research places issues of memory at the centre of its engagement with local actors, but also takes a critical approach to memory. The role memory plays in nation building and the identity of the state is a key recognition within this approach (Granville 2012). Connecting the politics of memory to local actors, Paulson (2012) argues that transitional justice needs to move away from questions of remembering and forgetting and towards questions of how state-sponsored approaches to constructing the past affect the daily lives of those who engage with them. Similarly Lia Kent (2011) examines the way in which local actors embrace, resist and transform transitional justice memory discourse. This connection between constructions of national memory and how it impacts on and is engaged by local actors is at the heart of this study.

This research asks these questions in a context that is recognised as post-transitional, therefore it aims to understand the issues as they continue to affect local actors long after the initial transitional justice process (Jobson 2012). To sum up: this study is less concerned with the practice of transitional justice and more concerned with the memory narratives and subjectivities produced through these practices. Furthermore, it aims to examine the ways in which these narratives and subjectivities travel into the personal memory narratives of local actors and continue to frame the way in which they relate to their memories in the post-transitional era.

While peacekeeping speaks to the broad requirements of transitions from violence to peace, transitional justice hones in on the question of how to deal with past political violence in a new peaceful dispensation. The research

focuses on questions of memory, and the object of memory is violence. Key studies include those which focus on the study of violence and memory in post-colonial contexts (Werbner 1998; Kössler 2007; Igreja 2010). In their edited collection on the connection between violence and memory, Nicolas Argenti and Katherina Schramm (2010) assert that we are in an age where discussing the experience of political violence is impossible without reference to trauma and post-traumatic-stress disorder. Furthermore, the lens of trauma and its subject, the victim of violence, forms a key part of the transitional justice practice of truth commissions.

Trauma is a key element within the discourse of remembering violence, and there are a variety of different approaches to the study of trauma in the literature. Psychodynamic approaches focus on the psychic process through which memory becomes traumatic, and the quality of traumatic memory as different from normal memory (Derrida & Johnson 1977; Abraham & Rand 1987; Lyotard 1990; McCann & Pearlman 1990; Caruth 1991; Van der Kolk & Van der Hart 1991; Friedlander 1992; Caruth 1995; Laub 1995; Agamben 1999; LaCapra 2000; Caruth 2010). From this perspective, the psyche is unable to integrate a past pain, and therefore is continually confronted with the un-integrated memory of past as if it were occurring in the present.

By contrast, there are three different but interconnected sociological approaches within the literature on trauma. Work on cultural trauma moves the focus away from the individual psyche and towards an understanding of trauma as a collective experience of a tear in the fabric of social life (Eyerman 2001; Alexander 2004; Eyerman 2004). Cultural trauma approaches examine the way in which shared trauma is constructed within narrative and discourse. Another social approach to trauma can be described as a trauma and advocacy approach (Jelin & Kaufman 2000). Trauma advocates are also called 'trauma carriers' in the study of cultural trauma as they attempt to include the broader public in sympathy for the pain of others (Alexander 2004). Trauma advocates aim to restore the collective psyche through the process of shared mourning and healing through remembering past pain. Finally, there is a more critical approach to the discourse of trauma and victimhood, which attempts to deconstruct its political workings as a

discourse within relations of power (Farmer 1996; Young 1997; Bracken & Petty 1998; Leys 2000; Hinton 2002; Edkins 2003; Fassin & Rechtman 2009).

The broader conception of this study is located in the more critical approaches to memory subjectivities of violence constructed through the lens of trauma and victimhood. This line of thinking has been further taken up within a group of studies that concerns itself particularly with the forms of 'therapeutic governance' reproduced within current conflict-resolution approaches to post-conflict reconstruction (Pupavac 2001). Moon (2006, 2008) and Humphrey (2005) have demonstrated how the therapeutic focus of the reconciliation discourse of transitional justice comes to play a particularly significant role in legitimising the post conflict state. Within the hegemonic politics of reconciliation discourse new conditions of victimhood are established through the concept of trauma. Trauma is the concept we use to make sense of the painful links between the present and the past. While gaining legitimacy from its original conception as a diagnostic category, this is no longer the way in which the concept operates (Fassin & Rechtman 2009). It has become a key part of the discursive moral landscape which serves to identify legitimate victims.

The politics of post-conflict narratives of nationhood and trauma are further exposed when they are understood within the context of a transition from revolutionary violence to democratic peace. In her review of global discourses of liberation struggle, Laleh Khalili (2007) demonstrates the way in which the agency of the subject of heroic discourses of martyrdom produced in the context of a national liberation struggle are replaced with a combined celebration of the heroism of the new nation-state and a human rights ethic of alleviating the suffering of victims. For example, in the work of intellectuals of national liberation struggles, they put forward what Khalili calls a 'liberationist' interpretation of the act of self-sacrifice, where, under oppression, martyrdom is deemed the only route to a meaningful life. With a transition out of violent struggle, the revolutionary moment and its forms of agency become domesticated and institutionalised in the apparatus of the state, supported by a new heroic narrative of nationhood. Furthermore,

through the politics of the trauma-drama, revolutionary agents are remade into helpless, suffering victims. The public is seen as in need of assistance, but without agency and the narrative depoliticises suffering by turning it into a case for charity (Ferguson 1990; Rieff 2002). In the South African case of a transition from a popular, violent struggle to a negotiated, democratic peace, these global discourses of national revolution and transitional justice were, therefore, part of the available political possibilities for constructing national memory after violence.

While the trauma-drama is one way in which transitional justice narratives produce 'the victim' as a particular subject of past violence, demobilisation discourse within the context of security studies is another way in which new nations construct and act on subjects of past violence. Writers across the security studies and transitional justice fields have begun to theorise the potential link between their respective reintegration and reconciliation aims (Theidon 2007; Patel 2009; Sriram & Herman 2009). As the subjects of demobilisation discourse, ex-combatants (or veterans) are often viewed as a potential threat to the nonviolent aims of transitional justice. For example Dzinesa (2007) argues that if demobilisation, demilitarisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes are not successful, ex-combatants who continue to identify with their violent past will pose a challenge to maintaining the peace.

The dominant DDR literature assumes the category of ex-combatant and, in line with the broader peace-building field, applies a programme evaluation and problem-solving approach that is concerned to facilitate better reintegration. However, a more critical literature focuses on the question of the politics and the discourse of demobilisation, which sets the terms of inclusion and exclusion, winners and losers. As with the transitional justice literature, this work is situated within a more critical strand of peace-building studies, and, in relation to the political construction of veteran subjectivity, it is situated within literature which either treats reintegration as a political discourse or attempts to read the situation of ex-combatants through another kind of frame. Examples of this kind of approach can be found in the work of Zoe Marriage (2007) who examines the politics and effects of demobilisation

processes and security sector intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as Lalli Metsola (2006, 2010) and Norma Kriger (2003) who both examine the politics of the discourse through which ex-combatants are given meaning in post-war society. Through the lens of reintegration in Namibia, Metsola (2006) explores the relationship between state formation and emerging citizenship and through the lens of ex-combatants, she explores the relationship between collective memory, political subjectivity and state formation (Metsola 2010). Speaking against an evaluative and prescriptive peace-building literature, Kriger (2003) examines the construction of a new political order in Zimbabwe through the lens of ex-combatants, and the way in which they are represented as both a revered and a neglected group.

### 1.3 Conclusion

Memory is the key analytical and theoretical concept that this research engages. This chapter outlines the theoretical approach to the study of memory used in this thesis. Memory is understood as a system of meaning which connects the past to the present and comes in the form of narrative. Furthermore, memory is multi-storied, as different versions of the past can intermingle within memory consciousness. Memories are representations of experience or of memories, thus memories can layer over one another to become memories of memories. Memory is closely connected to both individual and collective identity and power. At the level of national identity, memory often serves a hegemonic function, telling a version of the past that supports relations of power and elite interests. There are different versions of the relationship of the past to the present in literature.

This thesis takes a middle road, arguing, as Schwartz (2000) does, that memory comes from past experience, but is also constructed in terms of present interests. In particular, the popular memory approach is closest to the theoretical requirements of this research, as it is an approach that studies the relationship between local and national memory, recognising that this is a contested relationship. Within this approach, the broader contextual field in which I study the analytical relationship between local and national memory is the field of post-conflict development and transitional justice. Through a

focus on the question of discourse, I take a critical lens within this field. As such, I align myself with studies working to understand the politics of discourse and the construction of subjectivity within post-conflict processes, such as demobilisation of veterans; and within transitional justice processes, such as dealing with the meaning of past violence for the present. Furthermore, I contribute to approaches that engage with the politics between national and local memory in peace-building and transitional justice.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Squatter Resistance and Transitional Justice: Contextualising Memories of Violence in South Africa**

The international question of how countries should deal with legacies of political violence was central to South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy in 1994. Chapter one locates this question in the context of memory studies and post-conflict development discourse. This chapter contextualises the question in the context of South African politics and in relation to the case study of Crossroads squatter struggles in the Western Cape. It begins by locating the case study within the histories of migration policies and squatter struggles in South Africa. Drawing on Josette Cole's (1987) book, it provides a brief summary of the history of the Crossroads squatter movement, demonstrating how events in Crossroads dovetail with histories of popular struggle in the 1980s.

The research questions I pose to the Crossroads case study concern, specifically, memories of political violence, oppression and resistance; therefore I review South African literature on this question at three temporal moments. The first moment is during the 1980s period of popular struggle, the second is during the transition to democracy (early 1990's) and the third is post-transition (after 1994). At each point I review and locate this study within the literature that deals with the question of meanings and memories of violence and, specifically, the violence of popular resistance. Furthermore, I argue that the way in which violence has been remembered through national memory discourse is not only limited in terms of what it includes; it also plays a significant hegemonic role in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. As I move to a discussion of the memory politics of transitional justice in the South African situation, I focus more specifically on the production and politics of identity positions within memory narratives. Furthermore, I aim to situate this study not only within a critical understanding of the subjects of transitional justice, but also within South

African studies that aim to challenge these subjectivities through forms of contestation and popular memory.

## 2.1 Migration Laws, Squatter Struggles and Crossroads

This section provides a contextual background to the squatter struggles of Crossroads. When located within the histories of migration policy, these squatter movements can be read as forms of lived resistance. Despite their powerfully defiant character, the African National Council (ANC) liberation party kept them at a distance. However, in the 1980s with the rise of popular resistance and the United Democratic Front (UDF), the squatter movement of Crossroads formed a key part of the mass democratic movement. Crossroads squatter struggles represent an important, if excluded, example of the power, experience and memory of black popular resistance to apartheid.

### 2.1.1 Migration Policy and Squatter Resistance

The apartheid regime set up a violent world based on Manichean beliefs that ensured that the lived experiences, health and wellbeing of white South Africans would be radically different from those of black South Africans, whose lives were structured by institutionalised violence (Bulhan 1985). The migrant labour system was a key mechanism of the structural violence which was employed to control the movement of black South Africans to cities. Under segregation and apartheid governments, the majority of black South Africans were given residential and political rights only in ‘Bantustans’ or ‘homelands’, which were rural areas separated from city centres and operating under traditional community structures and systems of land tenure<sup>1</sup>. As Bantustans had little or no economy of their own, African families remained dependent on white industry for survival. The separation between black and white residential development was legitimised through the ideologies of separate development. This organisation of race and space also served a function within the needs of South African capital. Key Marxist

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<sup>1</sup> For an in-depth study of the history and politics of influx control and how it structured the geographies of South Africa, the conditions of living in ‘homelands’ and the regulation of movement and its effects on the lives of black South Africans, see Giliomee and Schlemmer (1985).

literature of the early 1970s demonstrated how the Bantustans functioned as a labour reserve, burdened with the costs of the reproduction of labour, thus 'cheapening' the supply of African workers for white owned farms and mines (Johnstone 1970; Legassick 1972; Wolpe 1972) . The movement of Africans between the different spheres of home and work was controlled and regulated through influx control laws (Schlemmer 1985). The violent policies of separate development and the related influx controls resulted in the harsh oppression and poverty of Africans relegated to these spaces.

When the apartheid government came to power in 1948 it introduced two Acts which further tightened the screws of separate development. Under the new Urban Areas Act Africans were prohibited from staying in proclaimed urban areas for more than 72 hours, unless they were classified as 'section tenners', on the basis of whether they had been born in urban areas and how long they had resided and worked there (Hindson 1987:201). The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act introduced a new pass book, known to most Africans as the 'dompas' (stupid pass), which all Africans over the age of 16 years were legally obliged to carry (Alexander & Chan 2004:612). The pass book was a small book that indicated, among other things, the bearer's identity, address, employment details and encounters with the police. The Abolition of Passes and Coordination of Documents Act drew a clear line between urban Africans and migrant workers, and this was further entrenched through the separate hostel dwellings for migrants and the family 'matchbox' houses for those with Section 10 rights (Beavon 2004:133). Those classified as migrant labourers were restricted from entry into this urban working class and were allowed to remain in South Africa only if their labour was required by white bosses. By contrast, those classified as settled, urban Africans with residential rights were given job preference in order to reduce urban unemployment (Posel 1991). Not only did the influx control laws manage the movement of Africans, but it set up divisions of relative privilege between migrant labourers and Africans with Section 10 rights. These divisions became a source of violence and tension, as the interests of these two groups were often different.

The pass system profoundly defined the lived experience of apartheid and came to constitute the very symbol of oppression and abuse for Africans in urban areas (Breckenridge 2002). Furthermore, the pass laws had the effect of reducing all Africans to the status of incipient criminals (Frankel 1979:206). In 1983, alone, 262 904 Africans were prosecuted for pass book offences and 142 067 were convicted (Giliomee & Schlemmer 1985). Africans faced extreme poverty in the homelands and without a pass they faced arrest, fines, deportation and police violence in the cities. Nevertheless, many took the risk of moving to the cities, in order to have access to work, escape the structural oppression of the 'homelands' and gain access to income so that they and their families could survive.

Placed within this history of migration policy and the violence of influx controls, squatting can be seen as a brave form of everyday resistance lived by black South Africans. Demonstrating this point, Schlemmer argues that this 'total' system of regulated movement and settlement and the structural violence implied was somewhat 'broken, openly and manifestly, by a very visible informal phenomenon – the growth of massive squatter and shack settlements on the edge of some industrial complexes' (1985:168). The planned system of apartheid was breached for all to see by squatters who set up communities outside of the compound gates and the laws of movement. Cato Manor, Orlando and Crossroads represent three squatter movements that have been recorded and analysed in South African historiography. However, as Phil Bonner (1991) argues, these movements represent the high points of a phenomenon that has occurred over the century. Squatting is part of the histories and lived experiences of many black South Africans before, during and after apartheid

In Durban, the Cato Manor squatter movement was originally created through a variety of insurrectionary resistance to the 1923 Urban Areas Act and by the end of 1950 the settlement was home to an estimated 50 000 squatters (Maylam 1983; Pithouse 2008). The city decided to relocate the squatters and, while some moved willingly, others resisted. In 1959 and 1960, squatter resistance to forced removals resulted in violent protest and rioting. By 1966, all the Cato Manor squatters had been removed (Maylam 1983). In

Johannesburg, while there were many different examples of squatter camps that spread over an area called the Rand, they began with one of the most famous squatter movements, led by James 'Safasonke' (we shall all die together) Mpanza in 1944. Mpanza led a group of sub-tenants in the overcrowded township of Soweto to an area of open land, where they set up illegal hessian shelters (Stadler 1979; Hirson 1989). He took control of governing and policing the settlement, constructed his own courts, saw to the day-to-day needs of his people and sold traders' licences (Mandy 1984; Bonner & Segal 1998). Due to the defiant and illegal nature of these squatter spaces, the council hastily developed plans to set up temporary accommodation in the emergency squatter camps of Jabavu (in 1944) and Moroka (in 1947).

In his analysis of the Mpanza squatter movements, Stadler describes these spaces as 'liberated zones', as they were somewhat free from the reach of the state (Stadler 1979). Squatter movements can be understood as examples of everyday resistance theorised in the previous chapter, as black South Africans responded to the everyday forms of oppression they experienced (Scott 1990; Kelley 1993). Furthermore, when viewed from the perspective of the politics of space as conceptualised by radical geographer Henri Lefebvre, the squatters' existences represented a challenge to the power relations that underlay the production of urban space in the apartheid city. For Lefebvre, social and political relations are inescapably connected to 'lived space' (Lefebvre 1991). Lived space refers to the connection between concrete space and the social construction of that space (or the meanings given to squatter spaces). The squatters, therefore, represented a radical challenge to the meaning and control of space in apartheid politics.

The liberation movements of the ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) were wary of the politics of squatter movements. Even though the squatter resistance amounted to much more than these parties could muster, the ANC did not want to align itself with squatter leaders. Pithouse argues that the reluctance of the ANC and SACP to engage with the vibrant and colourful expressions of squatter resistance was because of a very narrow notion of modernity and 'appropriate' resistance (Pithouse 2008). This is

particularly telling in a quote by ANC member, PQ Vundla, who, in a debate with the squatter leader, Mpanza, over the right to brew beer, argued, ‘we do not want these “native customs” because our township being part and parcel of the town we have to follow the white way of living’ (Lodge 1983:17). While squatter movements represented a powerful form of lived resistance from below to the control of the movement and settlement of Africans, this did not align with ANC notions of resistance at the time, which included acceptance and inclusion in white civilisation and modernity. These movements, which challenged the control of space under apartheid, developed out of a need to survive in the context of extreme oppression. Resistance may not have been strategised from above, but it was lived from below in the squatter movements. In many ways, Crossroads shares the features of squatter movements discussed in the literature on squatter movements cited above such as the leadership of charismatic leaders, the vibrancy of the environment and the self-government of squatter spaces. However a key way in which Crossroads differs is in the way its histories of resistance dovetail with popular struggle in the 1980s, therefore creating a case of combined comrade and squatter history.

### 2.1.2 A History of Crossroads Squatter Struggles

Crossroads was originally conceived by the newly formed Bantu Administration Board as a transit camp in a longer process of cleaning up Cape Town’s surplus population. In 1975 squatters were forced to move ‘to the crossroads’, a piece of land between Landsdowne Road, Mahobe Drive and Klipfontien Road, just East of Nyanga Township (Cole 1987). While the state conceived this space as a temporary camp, the new residents had different ideas. Most of them had experienced forced removal before and they were determined not to be moved again. Cole describes the different layers of inhabitants who settled in Crossroads, formed a popular alliance and asserted a strong moral and legal right to occupy this land:

In the course of these first few months, migrants, petty traders, women, the aged, youth, the unemployed, the employed and the unemployable all found a home in Crossroads. Here they would jostle side by side in their common struggle to survive the harsh realities of the apartheid state (Cole 1987:12).

This group came together, united in resistance. They held mass meetings in fields and set up rudimentary community structures. They also enlisted the help of liberal community organisations, such as the Black Sash and the lawyers of Athlone Advice Office. With the help of the Advice Office they managed to put forward a case to make Crossroads an emergency camp. Winning this case meant that, as an emergency camp, Crossroads was protected from the waves of forced removals that swept through the squatter areas of the Western Cape in 1978. Many of the squatters from Modderdam, Unibel and Werkgenot sought refuge in Crossroads when their homes were destroyed. The unity of the people in Crossroads and their victory over the state's attempt to remove them gave the Crossroads squatter movement immediate and international recognition. Furthermore, it served to bring the squatters together, with an inward focus on building up the culture and environment of the space that they had successfully fought for.

At the same time that Crossroads was celebrating its victory, the rest of the country was responding to the after-effects of the Soweto uprising. The uprising, which began as a peaceful student protest march against Afrikaans as a language of instruction in schools, turned into a week-long uprising joined and supported by young, unemployed workers (Kane-Berman 1978). Widespread mobilisation followed the uprising, as calls on workers to engage in stay-away strikes often met with great success (Hirson 1979). The Soweto uprising changed the face of African resistance and the nature of state repression. However, with the inward focus discussed above, Crossroads found itself initially disconnected from the energy of protest spreading through the country. This would change in the 1980s as groups within Crossroads became more radical and more connected to the anti-apartheid movement through the UDF. These events also impacted on the nature and strategy of repression. When Prime Minister (and later President) P.W. Botha came to power in 1979 he embarked on a policy of reform, in the hope of quelling resistance through winning over certain segments of the black populations. However, these policies seemed to have had the unintended effect of creating spaces for the deepening of mass democratic mobilisation through unions and urban movements on a scale never seen before (Swilling

& Phillips 1989). The Crossroads squatters formed a key, if complex, relationship to the mass democratic movement as both the UDF and state forces attempted to vie for the power of the squatters, with tragic results.

The new Minister of Plural Relations, Piet Koornhof personified the politics of reform. He took on the 'Crossroads problem' and put into play a new politics of negotiation with representatives of the Crossroads community. However, the outcome of the so-called negotiations shows that the Crossroads representatives held little power in influencing what happened there, and in the end they found themselves agreeing to 'a resettlement of Crossroads with no guarantees that everyone in the community would qualify to live there' (Cole 1987:35). Initially, New Crossroads was established in 1980, as part of a plan negotiated with Koornhof to upgrade Crossroads by dividing it into two spaces, which became known as 'Old' and 'New' Crossroads. This split formed part of a three-phased plan to develop Old Crossroads and create a new formal township. However, things did not go according to plan and the politics of reform resulted in Koornhof's announcement, in 1983, of a change of plan to remove all squatters of Crossroads to a newly designated township called 'Khayelitsha'.

This announcement caused crises for the squatters. Those who had been promised upgrades were suddenly faced with removal to a new area further away; and the thousands of illegal squatters feared they would be deported and lose their homes in the Western Cape (Cole 1987). The 1980s also saw the rise of anti-apartheid resistance movements in South Africa, which had been developing networks in the more radical squatter communities of Crossroads even before the rise of the UDF in 1983. The UDF functioned to bring together, empower and support the resistance of the squatters against the move to Khayelitsha, which contributed to the rise of the mass democratic movement and increased the influence of the comrades within Crossroads. Johnson Ngxobongwana, as the leader of the Crossroads squatter movement and the leader of the Western Cape Civic Association (WCCA), was welcomed into the UDF as their front man and the popular leader of the squatter struggles. Cole soberly comments 'history would show they backed the wrong horse by choosing Ngxobongwana as their 'popular leader'' (Cole

1987:87). The UDF turned a blind eye to the politics of Ngxobongwana, who acted ruthlessly to ensure his economic and military power in the area.

In 1984, political mobilisation was increasing as the UDF went door-to-door, collecting signatures against the squatters' removal to Khayelitsha. At the same time as anonymous pamphlets were being distributed describing Khayelitsha as a 'beautiful township on the False Bay Coast', the residents of Crossroads, along with the UDF, were saying 'Khayelitsha over our dead bodies' (Cole 1987). Amidst the broader politics of the progressive movement and the unity of squatters against their removal to Khayelitsha, squatters felt the repression and withdrawal of state resources from Crossroads. As competition for scarce resources increased, squatter leaders vied for control over land and resources. Despite these internal divisions, Crossroads squatters were able to remain unified, with the UDF encouraging them to fight against apartheid and not each other.

During 1985, the state faced increasingly politicised and militant squatter struggles in Cape Town. This began with the Rent Campaign in New Crossroads which was organised by the youth organisation, Cape Youth Congress (CAYCO), and the women's organisation, United Women's Organisation (UWO), both affiliates of the UDF. This was the first active demonstration of the UDF, and New Crossroads was the first black township in the Cape Peninsula to confront community councillors, who were the state's agents responsible for essential services (Cole 1987). In one week, the protest became violent and confrontational against the police and the 'sell-outs' in the community. Ngxobongwana, along with other UDF leaders, was jailed during the Rent Campaign. This temporary absence of Ngxobongwana from Crossroads marked the end of his alliance with the progressive movement. During his imprisonment, the youth of CAYCO took the opportunity to mobilise support in his area and to question his leadership. At the same time, rumours of the formation of a 'removal squad' to Khayelitsha sparked a wave of unrest in the Crossroads complex (Cole 1987). The role played by militant youth at the frontline of this unrest signified crises for the state and for the Old Crossroads leadership. As the UDF attempted to consolidate the gains it had made, the state, under Timo Bezuidenhout

deepened its strategy of divide and rule in Crossroads. On 15 March 1985, Bezuidenhout invited a number of squatter leaders, representing 12 different groups, to a meeting where he attempted to persuade them to move to Khayelitsha voluntarily and offered the concession of providing illegal squatters with temporary permits that would last 18 months. Melford Yamile, the more radical of the squatter leaders of the Nyanga Bush community, completely rejected the offer, and at a mass meeting he made it clear why:

We do not agree to this. We want Section 10 (1) (a) rights, not just a permit to stay for 18 months. We are not fighting. We agree to discuss things to solve our problems but the government is not negotiating, it is just telling us things. We've been staying in the bush for five years with just promises ... (Cole 1987).

A few days later, six squatter leaders signed Bezuidenhout's agreement. The squatter unity against the move to Khayelitsha was broken, but the three largest satellite camps (Nyanga Extension under Siphika, Nyanga Bush under Yamile and Portland Cement under Toise) remained and refused to move to Site C. As unrest increased in the second half of 1985, these areas became flashpoints of military resistance, something that local security forces watched with concern. The Cape Peninsula soon resembled a war zone with burning barricades and the 'necklace' (a form of public execution involving placing a paraffin soaked tire around an enemy or betrayers neck and lighting it) becoming a key sign of the times. On 26 October 1985 the state declared a state of emergency in the greater Cape Town area, arresting hundreds of activists in an attempt to gain control.

The strategies of the police during the popular uprising became increasingly brutal, especially with regard to how they infiltrated inter-community divisions and armed vigilante groups against UDF activists (Lodge 1991). This strategy of forced removal that unfolded in Crossroads, and that reflected the aims of the state to smash organised resistance and remove thousands of illegal squatters from the Crossroads complex, increasingly coincided with the aims of Ngxobongwana and the reactionary 'fathers' of Old Crossroads who were unhappy with the youths' lack of control. From December 1985, these forces aligned and embarked on a major offensive against militant activists living in the Crossroads complex, resulting in heightened conflict, which led to the destruction of the satellite camps and

KTC. During the five-month run up to the forced removal a variety of forces were caught in a battle for legitimate control of Crossroads, including political activists, Witdoeke, squatter leaders, Ngxobongwana and the security forces.

Cole identifies two key events that led to this outcome of violence in 1986 (Cole 1987). The first of these key events began on 3 March, when seven alleged 'terrorists' were gunned down by police in broad daylight in NY1, Gugulethu, and, at their funeral, ANC flags were paraded in open defiance. The second key event followed shortly after when nine of Ngxobongwana's men were killed in New Crossroads by comrades and activists, and then two policemen were killed in the Crossroads satellite camps. One policeman was reported to have been shot by a sniper, leading to numerous raids on satellite camps and searches for the comrades and armed 'terrorists', whom the police believed were hiding within these camps. After this second key event, the security forces went on the offensive, determined to find those responsible for this armed violence against police. For the first time, a paratrooper unit was deployed and massive hunts for 'terrorists' and armed caches were conducted in the satellite camps of Crossroads (Cole 1987). Melford Yamile was detained, with others from his area, and held under Section 29 of the Internal Security Act. The final blow was dealt during the period of 17 May to 12 June 1986, when the Witdoeke and security forces attacked the satellite camps one by one and burnt them to the ground (Cole 1987). The anti-apartheid movement suffered a major blow in the Western Cape, with one of its power-bases destroyed and its members scattered.

To describe the various forms of violence that cut across one another in the repression and resistance of Crossroads squatters as 'messy' is an understatement. The violence of Crossroads was brutal and confusing for those involved on either revolutionary or reactionary sides. While the lives of these squatters represent lived forms of resistance through illegal and defiant settlement, which turned into more organised and militant resistance under the UDF banner in the 1980s, the different expressions of violence within this space were complex and layered.

The summary of the case presented above is largely based on Cole's (1987) presentation and analysis of the history and violence of Crossroads and provides a useful background to the case study of this research. Cole's research was conducted using participant observation and in-depth interviews during the period in which the events were unfolding and published soon after. She unfolds a detailed account and analysis of the political forces and personalities operating. To add to this understanding, I ask a different set of questions to this case study. In particular the focus of this research is on the meaning of memory for the Crossroads memory community and the ways in which actors who come out of this history engage with national memories of violence. Therefore, the section below turns from a contextual background to a review of the literature, which deals with the question of remembering violence in South Africa and the different directions of violence that were at play in this context.

## 2.2 Multi-Directional Violence and Comrades in the Apartheid Struggle

In a book on the life histories of different protagonists of violence during apartheid, Don Foster, Paul Haupt and Theresa de Beer (2005) propose a multi-directional view of violence, in order to understand the nature of local violence experienced in South Africa. This section draws on their useful understanding of multi-directional violence to review the literature on the nature of violence during apartheid. It focuses on the politics of popular and urban struggles and especially the literature which aimed to understand comrade culture and consciousness within the mass democratic movement.

### 2.2.1 A Multi-Directional Understanding of Apartheid Violence

The violence of apartheid was multi-layered and multi-directional. On the one hand, apartheid represented the deep structural violence of oppression. This point is powerfully argued by Bulhan, who argues that in many ways the 'homelands' resembled concentration camps of reserve labour, where 80% of South Africa's population categorised as 'African' were stripped of their rights inside South Africa, and pushed out from 'white areas' onto 13.7% of the poorest land, where farming and mining was difficult (Bulhan 1985). In various spaces that Africans moved through in South Africa they confronted

the structural violence of the apartheid state. On mines, work was extremely dangerous and arduous and performed for little pay. In hostels, life was characterised by a lack of privacy, and few amenities, facilities or recreational opportunities. On farms, labourers were paid even less, called derogatory names by the white 'baas' (boss) and often beaten with whips called '*sjamboks*' (Bulhan 1985). Migrant workers were separated from their families and in townships African families constantly faced the brutality of police during raids, when police searched for illegal migrants.

In addition to the structural and everyday violence of apartheid described above, black South Africans also faced the state violence of the apartheid police and security forces which included arrest, detention and torture. Bulhan (1985) writes that a frequent trauma initiating black children into the obscenities of apartheid was the site of terrified parents scurrying to cover their naked bodies and find their pass books and then being violently forced into police vans and snatched away to prisons, where they faced further dehumanisation and torture. Foster et al (2005) describe the top-down violence of the machinery of the apartheid state as the 'uni-directional' violence of the powerful against the powerless, which includes the bureaucracies, chains of command, one-way instructions and dominant ideologies that support state violence against the oppressed. However, this view of violence excludes the many different kinds of violence of the oppressed.

Another lens offered by Foster et al (2005) is a 'bi-directional' view of violence that recognises the dialectic of oppression and violence. Through a bi-directional lens of violence, the violence of the state is characterised as violence against the oppressed. In the opposite direction, the violence of the liberation movement and its allies is characterised as against the oppressor. This classification is useful as it recognises the different political positions out of which violence arises within differential relations of inequality and power. Examples of violence against the oppressed during apartheid have been documented in the literature on the militarisation of the South African state, especially under the apartheid government's strategy of total onslaught against the popular insurrection from below (Grundy 1986; Cock & Nathan

1989; Cock 1991; Cawthra 1993). In opposition to this violence, the resistance movement of the oppressed enacted its own violence against the militarised state (Davis 1987; Cobbett & Cohen 1988; Manganyi & Du Toit 1990; Bornman et al 1998).

A third kind of violence of the oppression can be described as ‘horizontal’ or ‘lateral’ violence, which is violence enacted by the oppressed against the oppressors they conceptualise within their own group (Fanon 1986; Sidanius 2001; Moane 2011). Horizontal violence is recognised by theorists of oppression and violence, and is reflected in the various forms of necklacing, taxi violence, and other inter-community violence in black townships and settlements during apartheid (Foster & Durrheim 1998). However, far from being random and anarchic expressions of horizontal violence, these forms of violence against members of the oppressed are deeply politicised and connected to strategies of resistance and comrade culture (Marks 2001).

A final and fourth kind of violence is the vigilante violence committed by the oppressed against the oppressed in the name of the state (Haysom 1986; Cole 1987). Conceptualising the nature of past local violence through a multi-layered and multi-directional approach outlined by Foster et al is useful. It enables the conceptual disentangling of the kinds of violence enacted and experienced in Crossroads and how violence relates to a broader psychology of oppression and resistance.

### 2.2.2 Violent Resistance, Popular Struggle and Comrade Identity

The different forms and directions of violence discussed above intermingle within the histories of Crossroads. However, the violence of resistance and the memories of resistant violence are a central feature of this case study. This section focuses on the studies which emerged from the literature on popular resistance and violent identities of popular resistance. A number of studies on resistance within South Africa emerged in the 1980s (Davis 1987; Murray 1987; Mufson 1990; Lodge 1991). Furthermore, an edited collection from William Cobbett and Robin Cohen (1988) reviewed the different forms of popular struggle and debates within the mass movement at the time. In addition, more recent studies paid closer attention to the UDF, its connection

to the ANC and the popular struggles from below (Houston 1999; Seekings 2000; Van Kessel 2000). The chapters included in the edited collection of Cobbett and Cohen demonstrated the many different kinds of struggle that came under the label of popular struggle, including workers' struggles (Bonnin & Sitas 1988; Lambert & Webster 1988), rural struggles (Cobbett & Nakedi 1988), student struggles (Hyslop 1988) and urban struggles (Seekings 1988; Swilling 1988). Urban struggles in particular took the 'place of residence' as the 'locus of resistance' (Cobbett & Cohen 1988:10). The civic movement arose within the context of urban struggles and was based in the new forms of resistance and self-governance that arose in the 1980s out of grassroots and community organisations mobilising around everyday issues people faced (Adler & Steinberg 2000). While urban struggles represented local grievances occurring within places of residence, under the UDF these grievances came to form the site over which the masses were mobilised into an internal popular revolt with a national focus.

Much of literature on popular struggle and consciousness turned its attention to the question of the relationship between class and nationalist consciousness (Lodge 1983), or working class and popular consciousness (Moodie 1986; Lambert & Webster 1988). A few studies asked questions of the relationship between violence, resistance and consciousness. These studies attempted to explicitly or implicitly subvert popular white constructions of black violence as impulsive or irrational, emerging out of a state of anomie (lawlessness) and provoked by a few unruly individuals (the bad apples) (Straker 1992; Foster et al 2005). In opposition to this popular view, a number of studies conducted in the 1980s and early 1990s are discussed below, which set out to demonstrate the nature and meaning of comrade violence and consciousness

Catherine Campbell's study attempted to situate 'comrade' identity within a broader social context of racism, capitalism and patriarchy (Campbell 1992). She demonstrated how an alternative expression of masculinity as violence opened up for youths in the macho-militarist comrade identity. Studies on comrade culture were conducted by Ari Sitas (1992) in Natal and Monique Marks (2001) in Soweto. Both demonstrated that South African comrades of

the 1980s formed part of a broader comrade social movement. They emphasised that comrade identity was borne out of experiences of hardship, oppression and violence. Sitas (1992) illustrated the militarised cultural content infused into the songs, fashion, and ways of speaking developed within the comrade movement, demonstrating the complex systems of meaning and identity within which violence took place. Marks (2001) argued that the justifications for collective violence were deeply based within a sense of comrade identity as an advanced moral identity that entitled the use of violence to discipline any elements threatening the aims of the movement. Together, these studies demonstrated that, rather than being rule-less and irrational; violence in South African townships emerged within a broader social movement based in complex cultural meaning systems, rational justifications and comrade identity.

Bringing the focus onto the psychology of activists, Gill Staker's (1992) research on Leandra Youth demonstrated that, in opposition to assumptions that resistance is instigated by psychologically unhealthy and anti-social individuals, these activist youth showed significant psychological resilience to trauma and that it is the exceptional youth rather than the average youth who became chronically anti-social. Straker (1992) demonstrated that activists experienced an empowering psychological shift, allowing them to recognise the ways in which individual hardships were part of a broader social system. Similarly, research conducted by Mark Orkin (1992) on three personal accounts by Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) soldiers of their circumstances and motivations for becoming guerrilla soldiers demonstrated that all three accounts represented a refusal to accept the dominant political order. Orkin concluded this study by turning the issue of violent resistance on its head and re-directing the focus from explaining the violence of the MK soldiers towards explaining the inaction of the passive onlookers. In his final sentence he asserts that 'what really needs explaining is why the rest of us did less' (Orkin 1992:669).

These studies bring the meaning of violence into the focus of analysis and demonstrate how it is nestled within broader cultures of resistance and psychological understandings about the nature of oppression. The studies

above represent an attempt to theorise the comrade cultures within which violence unfolded in popular struggles, as well as to argue for a psychological view of resistant violence.

### 2.3 Transition and Memory

While the mass democratic movement was engaged in resistance from below, big business executives from Anglo-American and other large firms were beginning their talks with the ANC in Lusaka and arranging for secret negotiations with Nelson Mandela to begin in 1986. Realising that renewed economic growth and profit depended on dramatic change in the racial policies of the day, large-scale capital and its allies were anxious to establish a 'new national consent', involving the overturning of the 'political and ideological bases of apartheid rule' (Marais 2001:41). The election of FW de Klerk in 1989 signified the end of an era and the triumph of liberal reformers leading to the unbanning of anti-apartheid organisations and calls for multiparty elections (Murray 1987; O'Meara 1996).

Various analysts demonstrate the sacrifices made during the process of negotiations, and especially in the field of radical transformation and redistribution of wealth. The racism of apartheid had been tied to the unjust acquisition of economic resources (Deegan 2001). ANC rhetoric promised state-intervention towards redistribution of material inequality, however once in power, they steadily moved further away from the redistribution of wealth and towards the affirmation of the free market (Deegan 2001). The ANC's power at the negotiation table was significantly premised on the belief that it could act as leader of the mass revolts and bring them to heel. Therefore, the ANC liberation party piggy-backed on the threat to stability that the mass movement posed, but the agreement reached at the negotiation table was not one that included the voices and interests of those who had been engaged in popular resistance from below. The ANC agreed to a 'trickle down' approach to liberation which would protect the interests of white capital through adopting a liberal economic system and then trickling down the benefits of (hoped for) economic growth to the poor while gradually re-structuring the apartheid system (Hamber 2001). On the whole, the winners of the politics of

transition were the elites on both sides of the racial divide. Black South Africans became equal citizens under the law and were given access to democratic institutions enabling them as a majority to elect black leaders to power. However, property rights had to be respected and orthodox economic policies adopted (MacDonald 2006). While this outcome privileged local and global capital, in many ways its policies excluded the possibility of redistribution and functioned to work against the ANC's pro-poor promises (Terreblanche 2003). Therefore, the politics of transition and post transition fell towards free-market principles that privileged capital and away from the kind of radical redistribution and state intervention that would have gone some way to rectifying the legacies of apartheid and inequality.

In addition to political transformation to a democracy led by the ANC government, South Africa embarked on a national process of truth and reconciliation. This process was underpinned by a belief that South Africa had to deal with its brutal history (Boraine et al 1994). During the 1993 discussions leading up to the elections, a decision was made on this question, which facilitated the movement into the 1994 elections. It was decided that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) would be established for the acknowledgement and reparation of victims of gross violations of human rights, and that conditional amnesty would be granted to perpetrators (Deegan 2001). In the immediate post-transition era, through the combined efforts of Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu, the new South African nation was narrated through an inclusive discourse of the rainbow nation, premised on the need for reconciliation between the victims and perpetrators of human rights abuses. The TRC can be understood as a key part of this construction of an imagined rainbow nation of reconciliation.

The TRC hearings, which began in 1996 aimed to facilitate the negotiated transition to democracy by offering a space where survivors and perpetrators of gross violations of human rights could tell their stories, provide information about the past, express regret and ask for forgiveness (Norval 2009). In 1998 the first report on the initial, intensive two years of TRC hearings was released, but the work of the commission continued and a final report was released in 2013. The TRC in South Africa is an example of what

Vinjamuri and Snyder (2004) classify as an emotional psychological approach to dealing with past war crimes<sup>2</sup>. In line with this kind of approach, the TRC was victim focused and rested on an assumption that healing the past could take place through the catharsis of victims' emotions and the acceptance of blame by perpetrators of violence. Furthermore, the language of reconciliation is central to this kind of approach and it is assumed that, through a consensus on the truth of the past, reconciliation is possible (Vinjamuri & Snyder 2004).

The politics of negotiations and the TRC were closely tied to one another. The section below summarises some of the different interpretations and perspectives on negotiations, and locates this research within an approach that questions the politics of this connection between the political and economic implications of transition and how the memory of violence is constructed.

### 2.3.1 Perspectives on Transition

There are different ways in which South Africa's transition has been understood and analysed in the literature (for a review of early perspectives on transition see Howarth 1998.) The impulse for this research on the politics of memory is located at the intersection between three perspectives of transition. The first is a broad Marxist analysis, which offers an understanding of the material politics of transition and the implications for structural transformation (Saul 1993). This kind of analysis was already developing before the transition, as it sought to intervene in the potential movement towards 'democratically sanctioned capitalism' (Saul 1988). An argument that socialism was a prerequisite for democracy was made in reaction to the view of a 'two-stage revolution' favoured by the ANC and the SACP, which assumed that non-racial democracy should come first and then

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<sup>2</sup> In this article, Vinjamuri and Snyder review the literature on international war criminal tribunals and argue that there are three approaches: legalist approaches believe in the importance of applying international legal standards in prosecuting war criminals; pragmatist approaches focus on the consequences of peace and justice rather than sticking to international rules; and emotional psychological approaches aim to eliminate the social psychological conditions that breed violence in society.

socialism. The outcome of negotiations was non-racial democracy, rather than socialism; a process that is analysed in Marxist literature as driven by a crises of capitalist accumulation and efforts by the ruling class to preserve the market and rekindle economic growth (McDonald 2007). This analysis is useful because it explains why the inequality and poverty of the majority of South Africans citizens remains despite national liberation. Similarly, from a political economy point of view Michael MacDonald argues that, in the end the negotiations resulted in a trade-off. The masses' hopes for social revolution were traded in and it was agreed that the imperatives of capital would be protected and the national party traded in its hopes for power-sharing (MacDonald 2006). From the perspective of Marxist political economy, the negotiations represented the interests of capital, while the poor and previously oppressed of South Africa were the losers of this process.

A Marxist political economy is useful in understanding the material politics of transition, however it often stops short of understanding the connected politics of hegemony. For example, David McDonald argues that while the transition included 'undeniable moral aspects of the post-apartheid transition – the heart-wrenching testimonials and apologies of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission' – in the final analysis, 'the demise of apartheid was largely a result of a concerted effort on the part of a new, liberal ruling elite to reconstitute a revised capital accumulation strategy' (McDonald 2007:64). This understanding separates the politics of transition from the politics of memory. In order to understand the ways in which these two forces work together, this study speaks to a literature which conceptualises the 'moral' and 'therapeutic' aspects of transition as working to ideologically support the politics of negotiation.

Bundy argues that the TRC should be read within the political history of negotiated settlement as part of an attempt to balance the demands for justice with the politics of settlement, power-sharing and amnesty (Bundy 2001:10). Within this kind of reading, many scholars have argued that in the context of the contradictions implied in the terms of negotiation, the TRC functioned ideologically to construct and legitimise the new South African nation through the discourse of reconciliation (Barchiesi 1999; Mamdani 2001;

Posel & Simpson 2002). One of the ways in which this occurred was through the reduction of structural injustice to the individual language of victims and perpetrators, underpinned by simple moral binaries (Mamdani 2001; Posel & Simpson 2002). This focus on reconciliation between victims and perpetrators obscured the structural nature of the violence of apartheid and the way in which it functioned to systemically benefit white South Africans.

### 2.3.2 Transition and the Politics of Peoples Power

Bringing the material politics of transition, which set the stage for continued material injustice and inequality in South Africa, alongside the memory politics of reconciliation, allows us to understand the link between the continued material inequality and how violence is remembered. There is a third, important element to this equation of transition, which is the popular power that was negotiated out of the transition. In his review article of transition, Howard (1998) argues that, in general, the analyses of transition focus on what elites are up to, to the exclusion of the agency and role of those who are not directly involved in the bargaining process. While the collective agency of the mass struggles from below played a significant role in bringing the elite forces to the negotiation table, the interests of the masses were not represented in the unfolding of democracy.

How was this collective agency addressed and contained during negotiations, and how do we understand the structures within which this agency engages with the politics of negotiations today? These questions speak to the relationship between the ANC and the mass movement, during and after negotiations. It is at the point of this relationship that ‘people’s power’ was co-opted into the politics of negotiation and it is at this point that the politics of the present continue to be struggled over. Three important studies pay close attention to the UDF and its connection to the ANC and the popular struggles from below (Houston 1999; Seekings 2000; Van Kessel 2000). However, in his review of these three studies, Suttner argues that none of them pays attention to the way in which the UDF tradition introduced ‘modes of practising politics that previously had never been seen in South Africa’ (Suttner 2004b:695). It is this ‘mode of practising politics’ that is key to

understanding what was co-opted in the transition to democracy, and it will be examined further through an explanation of the analyses of Neocosmos (2009) and Suttner (2004b) below.

Neocosmos (2009), looking back on the 1984–1986 period of popular resistance in South Africa, argues that it constituted a unique form of politics in contrast to the National Liberation Struggle mode of party politics (Neocosmos 2009). Neocosmos argues that, while the ANC in exile constituted a party in waiting, by contrast the mass movement constituted a form of radical democracy which, outside the realm of party politics, was grounded in the various forms of democracy that developed from below. A key part of the mass movement was people's power, which Neocosmos (2009) and Suttner (2004b) demonstrate as one of the significant and distinct features of this period. Anthony Marx, for instance, notes that, by 1987, 43% of inhabitants of Soweto were reporting the existence of street and area committees in their neighbourhoods (1992:167). In many townships rudimentary services began to be provided by youth and civic organisations such as 'people's courts' and 'people's education'. Within the politics of people's power, it was not imagined that the aim of liberation was for the ANC to take over the state and implement trickle-down changes from above. Instead, Neocosmos (2009) argues, it was imagined that the changes required for people to live a decent life would be affected from below, through these developing modes of power. This was not just the theory of change, but the practice of it in the everyday lived modalities of people's power.

While ANC politics of national liberation may have been very different from the popular struggle politics of people's power (Neocosmos 1999; Suttner 2004b), and while national organisation often trailed behind the politics and action of the masses (Lodge 1991; Seekings 1992), the ANC nevertheless played a key symbolic leadership role. For example, Suttner comments on how, every night, the UDF affiliates would tune into Radio Freedom, the ANC's radio station broadcast live from Lusaka. Similarly, Siedman (2001) demonstrates the largely symbolic role of MK and the armed struggle for the young comrades of the popular movement. Therefore, while the role of the ANC as leader of the liberation struggle amounted more to self-perception

than to actuality, as Suttner argues, this influenced the UDF's decision to defer to the ANC and to go along with the politics of negotiation, even though it was in contrast to the politics of people's power. While there was a moment in the 1980s when the people led the liberation struggle from below and forms of revolutionary democracy grew organically from this layer of resistance, it did not develop the ideological confidence to challenge the politics of the movement (Neocosmos 2009). Therefore, the politics of negotiation contained within it a shift for those who had been involved in mass resistance from modes of practising people's power, to a connection and deference to the ANC as the symbol and leader of liberation.

This thesis is situated within an approach to the transition which lies at the intersection of the three approaches outlined above. Following the broad Marxist interpretations, it takes as the starting point the material injustice that resulted from the politics of negotiations. However, this thesis is particularly interested in the politics and hegemony of national memory and, therefore, supplements a material analysis of the inequalities sustained by negotiations, with an analysis of the role of memory discourse in gaining consent from groups whose interests are not represented in this politics. The historical experience of the masses in the process of negotiations forms a key part of this story.

In sum, the negotiated transition is understood as a process which brought continued poverty for the majority of black South Africans. At the same time, the potential challenge to this process by those whose interests were not represented was contained through the production of two key transition discourses. Through reconciliation discourse and the TRC, reconciliation, amnesty and reparation were emphasised over structural transformation. Through the national liberation struggle discourse, the ANC was positioned as the leader of 'the people' and the military wing of the national liberation party in exile was hailed as the liberator of the nation. Through this process, both memories and 'modes of practising people's power' were eclipsed, excluded and forgotten (Suttner 2004b). These two discourses continue to create the symbolic structure through which the politics of memory operates and the identity positions through which local actors assert their memory

agency. The section below discusses these memory identities, their relationship to national memory and the ways in which local actors engage memory discourse from below.

#### 2.4 Memory Identities and National Memory Discourse

The key structure of hegemonic power engaged through my case study is South African national memory. As argued above, this national memory was produced for and through the politics of the transition from violent anti-apartheid resistance to non-racial democracy. This section is devoted to the unfolding of the workings of national memory in the present, with a particular focus on studies that focus on the production of national memory as a hegemonic field, as well as the studies which look at popular memory in South Africa as contesting the frames of national memory. Furthermore, following the theoretical approach to popular memory outlined in the previous chapter, close attention is paid to the production, consumption and contestation of subjectivities of national memory. Finally the section provides a focus on the forgotten and excluded identities within South Africa's histories of violence and then embeds the theoretical questions within this particular case study.

One of the ways in which the ANC attempts to manage the contradictions emerging from the lack of structural transformation, despite so-called liberation, is through constructing legitimising discourses of nationalism. This section focuses more closely on the two important discourses of nationalism discussed above: the discourse of reconciliation and the discourse of national liberation. Both these discourses have played a role in legitimising the hegemonic order in post-apartheid South Africa, through prescribing how the past should be remembered and addressed in the present. Just as the memory of the national liberation struggle has been appropriated by the ANC as a key means through which their legitimacy is established, so too has this memory become a key symbolic site of struggle. This research is located within the politics of memory approaches that demonstrate how local actors engage with national memory and argues for the importance of integrating the excluded histories of popular struggle within this group of studies.

#### 2.4.1 Reconciliation Discourse and Victimhood

Various theorists offer critiques of the politics of the discourse of reconciliation, trauma and victimhood (Pupavac 2001; Humphrey 2005; Moon 2006; Fassin & Rechtman 2009). The concept of reconciliation incorporates psychological, structural and political elements. Therefore it can become problematic if it is used to emphasise some of these elements while denying others. Brandon Hamber (1998) demonstrates this issue with the concept of reconciliation, especially in the South African context. If reconciliation does not address issues of deep-rooted structural inequality, then it can act as a deceptive concept. Without incorporating these issues into our understanding of reconciliation, Hamber argues, it can act as a Jekyll and Hyde concept; showing us its flattering side as Dr Jekyll, while deceiving us about the structural issues (Mr Hyde) that lie beneath.

Claire Moon demonstrates the hegemonic framework through which people affected by oppression of apartheid became victims, especially through the TRC narrative of trauma and healing (Mamdani 2001; Posel & Simpson 2002; Moon 2006; Moon 2008). As a narrative about transition, reconciliation legitimises in the South African context certain political choices (such as amnesty and reparations) while excluding others (such as revenge and structural redistribution) and brings into being particular subjectivities that are central to the dominant narrative (Moon 2008). Political analysts further argue that reconciliation discourse plays a role in supporting the nature of the transition and settlement and sets the stage for how the South African nation would be remembered in the future (Bundy 2001; Mamdani 2001; Posel & Simpson 2002). The state claims legitimacy through its self-sanctioned role as healing the trauma of the nation. The TRC's engagement of history through the vocabularies of trauma and therapy was embraced by the ANC government and become a central feature of the professional and public discourses of memory in post-apartheid South Africa (Colvin 2003). Instead of confronting the structural effects of years of oppression and racism and dismantling these at the socio-economic end of the

spectrum, the focus shifts to individual victims and their psychic wounds of violence and the state is positioned as the legitimate healer of these wounds.

Reconciliation and identities of victimhood are engaged, transformed and challenged from below. Critiquing reconciliation discourse from the position of its key subject, Hamber and Wilson (2002) draw on victims' experiences to challenge the assumptions about the healing and cathartic qualities of the TRC. For these authors, the potential to expose and challenge the politics of the national narrative of reconciliation, trauma and healing lies in telling the individual stories in ways that demonstrate how survivors comply with or push against such hegemonic narratives through their own experiences of violence, trauma and the ideals of reconciliation (Hamber & Wilson 2002). The focus of attention, therefore, moves from the macro-politics of the national narrative to its micro-politics, as it plays itself out at the level of different civil society groups and individuals 'on the ground'.

Similarly, Colvin (2000), Norval (2009) and Wilson (2001) have evaluated the discourse of reconciliation as it is picked up, contested and reproduced by broader civil society. Studies into the micro-politics of reconciliation are described by Wilson as 'a sociology of human rights'; as such they seek to 'explore how the language of rights is transformed, deformed, appropriated and resisted by state and societal actors when inserted into a particular historical and political context' (2001:xxi). These studies demonstrate how local actors engage with and contest the structure of reconciliation discourse from below, speaking through the 'victim' memory identity set up through this discourse.

#### 2.4.2 National Liberation Discourse and 'Veteranhood'

Another key memory identity that structures how violence is remembered, is the identity of 'veteranhood'. Veteran or ex-combatant identity gains its meaning through a combination of national liberation struggle and demobilisation discourse. Working hand in hand with the discourse of reconciliation, the discourse of national liberation has become an increasingly popular means through which the government achieves legitimacy. While the ANC attempts to keep the idea of the national liberation struggle alive as a

key nation-building discourse through which it gains its legitimacy, this remembering is disciplined in terms of what Baines calls ‘ANCs Master Narrative of the Liberation Struggle’ (2007:283). This official narrative of past violence was set up through the TRC, in the name of reconciliation and nation-building, to act as the authoritative voice, functioning to delimit what should be remembered and what should be forgotten (Bundy 2001). Hart (2007, 2008) and Marais (2011) argue that recent struggles over power within the ANC government have been waged precisely around the meaning of the master narrative of the liberation struggle and who should be crowned its rightful owner.

Within the context of post-conflict development and programmes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) different identities of past violence have been grouped under the general label ‘ex-combatant’. In general, ex-combatant has come to settle as the term used by researchers attempting to understand the post-apartheid identities and experiences of individuals who were involved in the violent struggle of the past (Van der Merwe & Smith 2006). This overarching identity category, however, obscures as much as it reveals. There are a range of different groups who have come to be included under the label ‘ex-combatant’. Some fought on the side of the apartheid state and some fought on the side of the liberation struggle; some have taken on high-profile careers in government and others are destitute and feel betrayed; some fought in the MK military structures in exile and others formed part of the informal military structures of the comrades inside South Africa (Harris 2006).

Most of the studies on ‘ex-combatants’ or ‘veterans’ in South Africa speak through a DDR paradigm and attempt to assess the conditions of ex-combatants in post-conflict South Africa, in order to make recommendations on how they may better integrate into society (See, for example, Cock 1993; Liebenberg & Roefs 2001; Gear 2002; Mashike & Mokalobe 2003; Everatt & Jennings 2006; Langa & Eagle 2008; Mashike 2008). The assumption underpinning many of these studies is that ex-combatants are a potential threat, a ‘ticking time-bomb’ that needs to be diffused (this phrase is often used to describe ex-combatants, see, for example, Mashike 2004).

A more critical take on the role of the reintegration narrative in South Africa, comes from Barolsky (2005) who argues that through the politics of reintegration, ex-combatants become subjects of a new form of power, which seeks to gently re-train, reform, and rehabilitate thus constituting them as docile subjects. She argues that subjects and authors of violence are both inscribed and inscribe themselves within changing networks of power in post-conflict society (Barolsky 2005). Another recent study comparing ex-combatants in South Africa and Palestine looks at the relationship between official discourse and veteran subjectivities (Bucaille 2011). Through interviews conducted with 'lower-ranking, grassroots militants' in Johannesburg townships she demonstrates how the official discourse of reconciliation and its de-legitimisation of past violence has contributed to the way in which these veterans construct themselves as victims (Bucaille 2011:55). This research contributes to an understanding of how local actors attempt to package their memory in terms of the available memory discourses and identities.

#### 2.4.3 Excluded Memory Identities of Political Violence

In her 2009 book entitled *People's war: new light on the struggle for South Africa*, Anthia Jeffery critiques the TRC for forgetting an entire history of struggle in which whole communities within South Africa became war zones (Jeffery 2009). During the 1980s period of popular struggle inside South Africa, a number of studies emerged that focused on the identity of 'young lions' or 'comrades' who were engaged in very specific forms of violence based in distinct cultures, discourses and identities (Campbell 1992; Sitas 1992; Marks 2001). Furthermore, in the early 1990s important questions were being posed around the meaning of internal forms of violence during the 'era of the comrades'. For example, Marks (1996) provides a rare post-transition account of the comrades of the internal struggle, where she argues that, before passing judgment on violence, or making calls for reconciliation, we need to develop an understanding of why individuals engage in violence in their own words. While symbolically connected to the ANC, the comrades did not consider the ANC their organisational leader in the same way that MK did. Many of the youths interviewed by Marks believed the only way to

create real change was to overthrow the apartheid government and they felt deeply frustrated with the ANC's decision to negotiate a settlement. Chabani Manganyi and Andre du Toit (1990: 26), in their editorial introduction to *Political violence and the struggle in South Africa* asserted:

This book may provide some evidence that the political struggle in South Africa has at least succeeded in re-opening the question of political violence as a task for critical and theoretical investigation as well. The legitimacy of political violence is once more on the practical and theoretical agenda, and it is from there that the political and moral arguments may start.

This research argues that there is a need to properly comprehend the reasons for and meaning of this violence before rushing to interpret it through ready given lenses of 'reconciliation', 'victim' and 'perpetrator'. When ex-combatant studies have paid attention to forms of internal violence and resistance, researchers tend to understand it through the lens of Self-Defence Units (SDUs), the name given to the paramilitary units that consisted of small groupings of people who engaged in various forms of violence against the apartheid security police and the internal community betrayers, with the aim of protecting and disciplining the community (Motumi 1994). Those who were involved in internal resistant violence are labelled as former SDU members and then grouped with former combatants from MK and the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) under the general label of 'ex-combatant'. However the term 'SDU' only emerged in the early 1990s and these structures were created after the key periods of popular revolt in the 1980s.

As the categories of victim, perpetrator and ex-combatant came to settle as key subjectivities of memories of violence, so too was the memory of mass mobilisation of 'the comrades' forgotten by national memory and scholarship on violent subjectivities. After the transition, ex-combatants became lumped under a single category needing to be defused and reconciled. The differences of experience between the comrades and the exiled as well as the potential for those experiences to tell a different kind of story were eclipsed.

There are a few studies which look back at the comrades' memories of violence in the context of today (Foster et al 2005; Reynolds 2013). While there has been a focus on remembering and celebrating the military history of

the liberation struggle waged by the ANC in exile, historians and social scientists are turning to the excluded histories of internal struggle and violence<sup>3</sup>. The war waged within South Africa during apartheid, the effect of violence and the meaning of internal histories of the apartheid war for those affected and involved requires deeper understanding. This study contributes to the work that is being done to remember the violence of popular struggle; however, it also aims to demonstrate the memory agency of these actors as they attempt to engage national memory discourse. The dominant memory of national liberation is told, either through the lens of individual victims and perpetrators, or through the lens of militarised combatants linked to externally based liberation parities. Within this schema, there is no subject position of popular struggle and, as a result a denial of the kinds of violence experienced and enacted at this level. Foster et al (2005) argue that much is missing in the TRC's construction of violence. The structural violence of the apartheid system is not addressed; therefore there is no account of how entire populations were actively kept poor and exploited and no adequate structural response to this violence.

In addition, the psychological violence of the oppressor and the effect of this violence on the oppressed are not considered through the TRC lens. The environments of popular struggle were complicated and involved various forms of 'horizontal violence' against those who were believed to be supporting apartheid within resistant communities. Instead of addressing these forms of violence, they are excluded as examples of 'bad apples', rather than integrated within an analysis of popular violent resistance within the context of oppression. Finally, the violence of perpetrators is not only individualised, but treated as equal, whether or not it was in support of or resistance to apartheid. The significance of resistant subjectivities versus oppressive subjectivities is denied under the victim-perpetrator label. While resistant violence is celebrated within the national narrative, and military violence rewarded through reintegration programmes, the violence of popular

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<sup>3</sup> The importance and need for a deeper historical understanding of the nature and memory of popular struggle inside South Africa was a key theme discussed at a recent conference on *Legacies of the Apartheid Wars* held at Rhodes University in July 2013.

movements is either reduced to the subjectivity of ‘victimhood’, claimed as part of liberation party military structures (MK/SDU), or demonised as an opportunistic form of criminal violence.

This final section demonstrates that there is a lot that is missing from the dominant memory identities. Important studies discussed above show how ‘victim’ and ‘veteran’ identity is constructed within hegemonic discourse and is contested by local actors. Furthermore, the studies expose the issues with the individualism of the TRC, where violence was structural with collective effects, and resistance was collective, memories of which should recognise collective identity. The key identity of ‘the people’ and ‘people’s power’ discussed in the history of the mass movement does not feature within the identities of ‘victim’ or of ‘veteran’. This thesis addresses this exclusion through a focus on a case study of collective resistance, and examines how respondents who come out of this history engage with these national memory discourses.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the histories of squatter resistance, popular struggle and the comrade movement. Placing Crossroads squatter history within this broad history, I have provided the background against which the narratives of my research unfold, and have argued that this case study represents an example of the histories of popular resistance in South Africa. Through a review of some of the perspectives on the transition from violence to peace, or from apartheid to democracy, I have demonstrated the approach to this research at the intersection of a material analysis of continued economic injustice, a symbolic analysis of hegemonic memory discourse and an analysis of what the transition meant from the perspective of the mass movement and people’s power. This three-legged understanding of the transition sets the stage for the questions of this research, which aim to understand those who were involved in the popular resistance of Crossroads and who continue to suffer economic injustice and attempt to interpret this contradiction in relation to the national memory discourses discussed above.

This research aligns with the studies discussed thus far, which aim to understand how local actors engage national memory. However by focusing on the narratives of struggle of those involved in the squatter movements in the Western Cape, this research attempts to give voice to the hidden histories and identities of violence contained within the oral histories belonging to squatter forms of popular struggle. Furthermore, as it involves a group of people who have been both economically and historically marginalised by the politics of the peace settlement and the hegemonic memory narratives born out of the settlement, this case study represents an alternative form of liberation struggle memory. In this sense, the case study analyses the relationship between three influences in the construction and mobilisation of memory narrative of squatter resistance: national memory discourse; lived experience of the material injustice of the present; and lived memory discourse.

## Chapter Three

### **Researching Excluded Squatter Memories in Post-Apartheid Cape Town**

This research is based in qualitative methodology and epistemology, as it emphasises the quality or depth of data rather than its quantity (O'Leary 2010). It is based within the humanist epistemological tradition, which, following Wilhelm Dilthey, assumes that 'human beings live in a web of meaning that they spin themselves' (Bernard 2006:21). Working within this tradition turns the focus of research onto the systems of meaning in which people are embedded, give meaning to and act on their social world. Furthermore, this research works within a critical or emancipatory paradigm in its attempts to demonstrate how taken-for-granted ways of knowing function within broader relations of power to benefit some groups at the expense of others (O' Leary 2010). It aims to analyse the ways in which individuals mobilise their lived memories in conversation with these broader relations of meaning and power.

My particular case study of popular memory comes from a lived experience within the South African context, which is historically, politically and materially marginalised. However, instead of analysing it through the missing piece lens, I aim to follow the popular memory tradition of using a relational analysis to ask how a relationship between dominant and lived memory takes form within personal memory narratives and to show why it takes the form that it does in connection to past and present lived experience.

In general, this research addresses itself to the question of how respondents make sense of their histories of violence resistance and transition, despite their continued position of oppression and in relation to broader memory discourse. It is based in the data-collection methodologies particular to the ethnographic case study method, such as observation, oral history and in-depth-interviews. Data was analysed using a narrative and discourse analytic approach. The section below begins with a discussion of personal, political and historical motivations for conducting this research within the broader framework of relations of oppression and memory. This is followed by a discussion of the methodologies of data collection, some of the challenges of

this research in terms of ethical issue and power dynamics as well as the personal dilemmas which arose from the kinds of data collected and choice of methodology. The section ends with a discussion of methodologies of data analysis and presentation, unpacking the broader question into the sub-analytical questions that were posed to the data collected.

### 3.1 Personal-Political-Historical Motivations for Researching Memories of Crossroads Squatters

Implicitly the concept of memory underlies the history, geography and methodology of research in two ways. On the one hand, we see memory as a force that binds groups together in relation to other groups; as a ‘community of memory’, functioning to create group identity (Bellah et al 1985). A second way in which the concept of memory underpins South Africa’s squatter histories is through its connection to geographical space. Within memory studies, various authors have demonstrated the link between memory and geography, especially in the connection to geographies of pain and violence (Küchler 1993; Lovell 1998; Mueggler 2001; Stewart & Strathern 2003). In the South African context, space, memory and identity have been intertwined within the histories of segregation, apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. South Africa’s ‘communities of memory’ have been produced through the legally enforced separation and unequal treatment of South African society, along the lines of the socially constructed concept of ‘race’, within the demands of a system of capitalist exploitation. The contextual histories of the Crossroads squatter struggles in the Western Cape are usefully understood through the concept of a ‘community of memory’, bound together today through their shared experiences of the memories of being black, migrant squatters during apartheid. For the squatters of Crossroads who now live in the townships constructed for them on the geographical and symbolic outskirts of Cape Town, their past and their present is deeply impacted by the racial-spatial policies of the apartheid state and the continuation of racial geography in post-apartheid South Africa. The separation between ‘township’ and ‘suburb’ spaces is maintained and legitimised by discourses of crime. In general, white South Africans do not have any reason to travel through township geographies, and choose to steer

clear of these spaces, navigating the city in ways that avoid 'entering' townships.

The lived experience of white South Africans was so vastly different from what was going on for black South Africans that it was as if two different countries existed in one space. The motivation for this research initially came from a desire to breach this subjective schism that allows many white South Africans to live in privileged worlds of denial. Most white South Africans from Cape Town did not and still have not absorbed the histories of Crossroads and the memories of the homes and lives lost there. In contrast, for black South Africans living in Khayelitsha, this memory runs deep and painful. Therefore, it is still possible to see the symbolic and geographical racial divisions, especially as they relate to questions of memory in Cape Town.

A central and personal motivation for this research, therefore, came out of my interest in questions of white identity, and a desire to challenge my own white memory of Cape Town. However, the lines of racial segregation cut much deeper than memory and remain traced in the geographical organisation of the city. In fact, the denial of Crossroads memory and the continued racial segregation of Cape Town go hand in hand. The poorest members of Cape Town are separated out in the black-only township of Khayelitsha, where they hold their histories of squatting, resistance and forced removal to Khayelitsha. The chances for inter-racial connection and inter-subjective penetration of the two racial-memory life worlds existing in Cape Town are extremely unlikely. Even when middleclass spaces of schools, universities, and workplaces in Cape Town are racially integrated, racial segregation remains. There is little to no communication and integration across the township and suburb spaces and memories in Cape Town. This is emphasised by David McDonald when he writes of Cape Town:

What makes the city's inequalities so exceptional are the highly spatially segregated way in which they operate. More than any other city in South Africa, well-to-do residents can live a life that is largely separated from the socio-economic 'other'. The grinding poverty of the Cape Flats is far removed from the

suburbs and hidden behind concrete fences, transport corridors and industrial zones (2007:44).

McDonald emphasises the separation of privileged residents of Cape Town from the poor residents of the 'Cape Flats', commonly known as 'apartheid's old dumping ground', a large, flat, sandy region on the outskirts of the city, which was historically designated for non-white races during apartheid. Within the Cape Flats, Khayelitsha is the township situated furthest away from the city centre (approximately 30 kilometres away) on unstable sandy soil, with a population size measured at 406 779 in 2005 (Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation 2006:72). Most of its residents live lives of economic and structural insecurity, poverty and violence. Around 70% of residents still live in shacks and one in three people have to walk 200 meters or further to access water. Around 53% of Khayelitsha's total working age population is employed, with the five most common forms of employment being domestic work (19.4%), service work (15.2%), skilled manual labour (15.2%), unskilled manual labour (11%), and security services (10.4%). Furthermore, a report on food insecurity in Cape Town estimated that 89% of households in Khayelitsha are either moderately or severely food insecure (Battersby 2011). These statistics indicate that, almost two decades into democracy, Khayelitsha's residents continue to live insecure lives of poverty and hardship, despite liberation.

The connection between poverty and racial segregation in South Africa is further demonstrated through analysis of the 2010 results of the annual reconciliation barometer produced by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). Analysing the data collected by the barometer for 2010 in terms of the relationship between poverty (measured in terms of living standard measure), racial category (measured in terms of the socially constructed apartheid categories of white, black, Indian and coloured) and inter-racial contact (measured in terms of the amount of inter-racial contact reported) demonstrates that the poorer you are in South Africa, the more likely you are to be black and the less likely you are to engage in inter-racial

contact in an average week of work or socialising<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, class inequality is deeply connected to racial reconciliation. The geographical boundaries that continue to exist in South Africa and are reflected in the relationship between Khayelitsha and the rest of Cape Town remain a problematic barrier to transformation and genuine mutual understanding and reconciliation.

These quantitative findings, generalisable to South Africa as a whole, are born out in the experience of my research in Khayelitsha. Race was a significant factor throughout my fieldwork and I often felt like I was driving to a foreign, unfamiliar space within the city I call home. My whiteness in Khayelitsha often felt like a spectacle and children would gather, laugh, stare and point at the ‘mlungu’ (white person). The spectacle of whiteness in Khayelitsha is similarly demonstrated in Steven Otter’s 2007 book, *Khayelitsha: umlungu in a township*, where he captures his experiences of living in the township as a white South African. It is an unusual occurrence for a white person (and especially a white South African) to be spending time in Khayelitsha, despite the reality that Cape Town is home to many white South Africans. Because of the geographies of the city, residents of Khayelitsha are forced to enter into city spaces and ‘white worlds’ in order to earn a living, often working for a white boss. However the geographical veil between these worlds requires poor, black South Africans to know,

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<sup>4</sup> These findings on the relationship between racial reconciliation, class and racial group come from an analysis I conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) on the reconciliation barometer dataset for 2010. The dataset can be accessed from the IJR, and a summary of the results can be found in the 2011 report (Lefko-Everett, Lekalake, Penfold & Rais 2011). The analysis demonstrated that in terms of the lowest three Living Standard Measure (LSM) categories, or the poorest South African citizens, 19% of black South Africans, 0% of white and Indian South Africans and 2% of coloured South Africans fall in these lowest three LSM categories. Furthermore, 99% of the South Africans in this lowest LSM grouping are black. By contrast, 82% of white South Africans fall in the highest three LSM categories and only 8% of black South Africans are in these categories. In sum, this analysis of the relationship between racial group and LSM status demonstrates that class inequality and racial category remain significantly related and the huge majority of the poor remain black, while the majority of white South Africans are in the upper classes. Analysing racial contact in terms of LSM group for black South Africans demonstrates that as many as 70% of black South Africans in the lowest three LSM groups, compared with as little as 17% of black South Africans in the highest three LSM groups, report rarely or never engaging in everyday talk with other races. Therefore, racial group is significantly related to class status which, in turn, is related to inter-racial reconciliation.

understand and engage in wealthy, English-speaking, white cultural spaces. The door between these worlds of race consciousness does not open in both directions, allowing the obliviousness of whiteness to remain, but black South Africans cannot afford that luxury. Highlighting this point, one of my respondents asked me, ‘Why don’t white people come to Khayelitsha?’ I responded, ‘I think it’s because of the past and that white people grow up and never go to “the townships” and there is a curtain that exists for them and they are too nervous to enter it’. He agreed and talked about the boundaries that were created in the past, but then he added, ‘Our mothers worked and lived in the homes of white people as domestic workers and the young ones did not know that boundary, they were close to the black mothers, but then they grow up and separate’.

This reflection on the nature of the geographical veil within Cape Town throws up a number of tricky and painful contradictions in South Africa, of the familiar and intimate within the unknown and alienated. I use the metaphor of a curtain and of ‘entry’ and, while doing my research, it did feel like I was travelling into and out of a foreign and dangerous land. This is the lived legacy of apartheid, that it created these separated spaces which continue to be separated and unfamiliar to white South Africans. The quote from my respondent reflects on the close and intimate relationships that were formed between black women (‘our mothers’) and the white children they looked after. These black mothers would ‘know’ the worlds of white children very intimately but that knowledge would not be reciprocated. My personal motivation for this research came out of a desire to look beyond the symbolic veil of denial and ignorance that characterises white identity construction in South Africa and to bring an engaged understanding of the lived experience of my respondents to a broader audience through this study. Therefore, at a personal level, this research represents an attempt to challenge oppressor consciousness of white memory denial and to confront it with the consciousness and lived experience of the oppressed.

South Africa’s transitional justice project, through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), did not succeed in challenging this unequal relationship of understanding one other’s different racial experiences

and life worlds. The majority of white South Africans have not had to engage with the experiences of violence of the oppressed under apartheid and the implications for their lives today and therefore I hoped to disrupt this denial at different levels of communities of memory, ‘national memory’, ‘Crossroads memory’ and ‘white memory’. However, this attempt at disruption was tricky, as it was cut through with inescapable power relations and embedded in assumptions and performances that were, in many ways, beyond my personal capacity to cope with and transcend. This dilemma and the ways in which I attempted to engage with it will be further discussed in the ethics section of this chapter.

Alongside the inter-subjective politics of resisting oppressed psychologies of denial, there is a broader socio-political motivation for the choice of this case study, which is based in a political understanding of South Africa’s histories of oppression, resistance, transition and transitional justice. Histories of people’s power demonstrate a time when impoverished black South Africans united against the violence of oppression. However, the settling of negotiations represented a usurping of people’s power in the interests of an alliance between the white elites of capitalism and the black elites of the national liberation party. This settling has had severe effects on the lives of the average black South African who, in the words of Nigel Gibson, ‘leads an imaginary life as a citizen of the state and a real life as an alienated and monadic isolated being, an object of the capitalist economy’ (2005:92). Many of those who faced the violence of the state and resisted it in Crossroads continue to live in the poor townships on the outskirts of Cape Town. The respondents of this research continue to be geographically separated from the city centre, unemployed, and living in inadequate housing or shacks. This was certainly not what they expected from liberation.

Crossroads memory community continues to live in conditions of hardship, despite being involved in popular resistance and despite the transition to liberation. In this context, my research aimed to ask how members of the memory community interpret the role they played in the past in terms of the present. The urban social movements of the 1980s experienced a period where the oppressed people succeeded in controlling their own lives as well

as providing alternatives to state structures in the form of people's power. However, while the movements were a central feature of resistance from below, they have been largely unrecognised by intellectuals and by the ANC. Furthermore, the meaning of violence for comrade consciousness, in relation to the structural violence of the apartheid state has been excluded from the frames of memory and violence in the transitional justice politics of post-apartheid South Africa. Therefore, in attempting to understand these memory politics, the memory of the violence of oppression and resistance is particularly important, as it attempts to tell a different kind of story to the one told by the transitional justice field.

By bringing the focus back to the meaning of memories of violence for the squatters involved in the popular struggle of Crossroads, this thesis attempted to challenge the politics of the negotiated settlement and its connection to the national narrative of past violence demonstrated in the previous chapters. Through disrupting this hegemonic role of national memory, it further hoped to challenge continued structures of inequality, separation and privilege in South Africa. In order to fulfil these aims, the research focused on researching, analysing and developing an understanding of how those who were involved in popular struggle make sense of their historical involvement in violence, in relation to the way in which the negotiated transition has impacted on their lived realities of post-apartheid South Africa.

### 3.2 Methods of Data Collection

This research addressed itself to understanding the politics of the relationship between national memory discourse and local lived memories. Therefore, there were two spheres of memory that required engagement in relation to one another. The most important sphere, however, was the lived memory of Crossroads memory community, which was analysed in relation to the second sphere of national memory discourse. The central method of collecting data on lived memory was through oral history and in-depth interviews with thirty respondents from Crossroads memory community, who were selected through a snowball and purposive sampling method. In addition,

ethnographic data on the lives and living spaces of respondents was collected through observation and field notes.

In many ways, national memory discourse has already been usefully unpacked and understood by the literature and was discussed in the previous chapter in terms of the discourse of reconciliation and national liberation struggle. Therefore, the data collected in terms of the national memory sphere focused more on how national memory discourse informs the remembering of the violence of Crossroads. This data was collected from an analysis of the TRC report, as well as interviews conducted with key members of memory activist organisations, and government and veterans' organisations. These interviews helped provide background data on the memory fields and discourses, within which respondents were giving their own histories relevance. Finally, data on the relationship between lived memory and national memory and how this impacts on Crossroads memory community was collected through eight group interviews, each ranging from three to thirty people, in three different locations in Khayelitsha and Philippi (home to many survivors of Crossroads). This section outlines the process of the research, how sites and respondents were selected, and the nature and length of the interviews conducted.

### 3.2.1 Memory Activist Organisations and National Memory

The starting point for this research was the memory activist organisation of the Struggle Veterans Action Committee (SVACOM). 'Memory activist organisation' is the term I use to refer to organisations that have been created in the post-transition context to advocate on behalf of those involved in and affected by histories of local violence. They are situated at the nexus of national and local memory. As such, they are key gatekeepers of local memory communities, and play a role in influencing the way in which memory communities structure their memories, in line with the requirements of national memory discourse. Those involved in histories of local violence attempt to gain access to the state and its transitional justice programmes through these organisations. SVACOM was a starting point through which I gained access to the Crossroads memory community, and, through interviews

with this memory community, they often discussed their experiences with Khulumani, another memory activist organisation. In addition, I came into contact with a different form of memory activist organisation, the local Khayelitsha Museum, committed to recording and keeping alive the legacy of struggle in Crossroads and Khayelitsha.

My journey to SVACOM began a number of years before the start of this PhD research, with a Master's thesis on the life histories of five internal combatants in Khayelitsha in 2007. Commander Zet (Zwelitsha Mghlutwa) was the Commander of a unit that the other four respondents belonged to. He was particularly driven to raise awareness about issues of exclusion from the history and memory of the anti-apartheid struggle, and to find ways to gain inclusion for him and his comrades. The Masters research was very intense and confusing at the time, as I did not have the time or resources to engage in the kind of historical and ethnographic research that the issues required. The thesis, therefore, only scratched the surface of understanding the issues that these five ex-combatants were confronting in the context of the present, and I could only begin to understand the broader histories of violence and resistance to which they belonged.

I continued to follow the memory struggles of Commander Zet and his comrades and a year later I was invited to attend a launch of the Struggle Veterans Action Committee (SVACOM), which they were very excited about. They had joined forces with another group of internal veterans who were struggling with the same issues of exclusion and marginalisation. SVACOM became the starting point through which I wanted to explore these issues of exclusion from national memory, the attempts through which people tried to gain inclusion and the relationship between their lived histories of the past and the politics of memory discourses in the present. The leadership of SVACOM combines two internal histories of struggle in the Western Cape; the one emerging out of the squatter movements of illegal settlement by black urban Africans, the other coming out of the resistance of what was previously classified as 'coloured' communities under the apartheid Group Areas Act. Both groups are joined by a shared sense that their experiences and activities of violent resistance are marginalised from liberation struggle memory.

To gain information on SVACOM, I interviewed Faizel Moosa, the chairperson and former member of the urban guerillas, of the previously designated 'coloured' areas of Cape Town. I also interviewed Commander Zet, the vice-chairperson and former Commander of the Amabutho unit of the radical Crossroads squatter area of Nyanga Bush. These interviews were conducted in Faizel's home in Athlone (a previously designated 'coloured' area and site of anti-apartheid struggle of the urban guerillas in the 1980s). The interview questions focused on the nature, formation and 'story' of SVACOM; why it came into being; how it has changed since its inception; who it aims to speak on behalf of; its purpose and its challenges; and its understanding and engagement with broader struggle memory and the ANC. Faizel's home is also where SVACOM holds its bi-monthly meetings and I attended a number of these meetings. During the interview, which lasted about three hours, first with Commander Zet and then with Faizel, Fahreed and Archie, two other members of SVACOM who previously belonged to urban guerilla units were present and contributed to the story of SVACOM being told.

Many of the respondents I interviewed from Crossroads memory community had come into contact with another well-known memory activist organisation in South Africa, Khulumani, who advocate on behalf of what they call 'survivors' of gross violations of human rights. Respondents spoke of their experiences and perceptions of Khulumani, and I conducted an interview with one of the leading members of Khulumani, Shirley Gunn, a well-known and outspoken MK veteran. I conducted this half-hour interview in Shirley's office, where I asked her questions about the nature and purpose of Khulumani, as well as her views on the uses and issues of memory and research into memories of violence. In addition, this interview gave further insight into her perspective of SVACOM and the comrades of internal violence who belong to this organisation, in relation to her own experience as a former MK soldier.

To gain further information on the discourse of military veterans and the place of Crossroads memory community within this discourse from the perspective of government, I interviewed the Deputy Director of the

Department of Military Veterans, Tsepe Motumi. This interview took twenty minutes and was conducted in Johannesburg over lunch at a workshop on the South African National Military Veterans Association (SANMVA). While waiting to speak to the director general, I also engaged in useful conversations with members of SANMVA. Furthermore, I attended the SANMVA meeting in Cape Town (which SVACOM had been invited to). These interviews and observations enabled an understanding of the place of the comrades within a broader discourse of military veterans, nestled within the discourse of the national liberation struggle. Furthermore, a life-history interview conducted with the former ANC counsellor and veteran comrade of KTC, Gladstone Ntamo, at his home, confirmed this understanding of the place of the comrades in national memory. These interviews with leading members of these memory activist organisations and with members of government provide useful background data through which to understand the field of national memory, the claims made to this field by local memory and the way in which gatekeepers of national memory respond to these claims. A total of six interviews (three with members of memory activist organisations who speak on behalf of the Crossroads memory community and three with key players in government) provided the data through which to understand the place of Crossroads memory community within national memory.

### 3.2.2 Crossroads Memory Community

The main data for this research was collected through oral history and in-depth interviews with individuals and groups who share memories of violence and resistance in Crossroads. Respondents were either directly involved in or affected by the violence of Crossroads emergency camp (created in 1975) and especially its satellite communities set up in 1981–1983 and demolished in 1986. The central focus of this case study of local squatter history was initially on the veteran-comrades of Nyanga Bush and KTC satellite camps, but came to include interviews with former community leaders and committee members, people who were involved in or affected by the violence within these spaces, and community activists working with progressive organisations. While the historical focus of Crossroads in the

1980s is central, life-history interviews included what came before and after Crossroads.

The case-study method seeks to focus on a single phenomenon, individual, community or institution in order to provide a holistic description and explanation of that single case. Through applying a case-study method, the researcher is able to capture the patterns and nuances within a case (Berg 2007). Stake (1994) differentiates between intrinsic and instrumental reasons for choosing a case study, but adds that, in many instances, these two reasons are combined. My own reasons for choosing this case study are both intrinsic (in the sense that I wanted to understand the specific case of Crossroads resistance and the particular memories of violence experienced by this community of memory) and instrumental (in the sense that I also wanted to use the case to provide insight into the relationship between local and dominant memory). Crossroads memory community represents a situation where: a) individuals continue to share a sense of collective memory of past violence; b) they feel excluded from national memory; and c) they actively attempt to challenge this exclusion through memory activist organisations. Therefore, Crossroads memory community is particularly suited to the aims of this research into the relationship between local and national memories of violence.

Respondents were identified through non-probability sampling methods of snowball sampling, selecting key informants and purposive sampling. Probability sampling implies that the sample is randomly drawn and is required when the researcher aims to collect data about individual attributes (for example, age, preference, income) and estimate from their sample the parameters of the broader population (for example, average age of the population) (Bernard 2006). Non-probability sampling does not allow the researcher to generalise their findings to a broader population, but is required when the researcher is collecting labour intensive, in-depth research on a few key case studies. I chose non-probability sampling, as I was collecting data on the construction of meaning for a particular population. This sampling method is purposive, in the sense that I decide what I want to study and then I go out and find the informants who fit that purpose (Bernard 2006). This

method is often used for similar kinds of qualitative or life-history research on special populations. I gained access to respondents using snowball sampling methods. Beginning with key informants from SVACOM, I was then further introduced to other members of the memory community of Crossroads.

Through SVACOM and Commander Zet (who is a central force within SVACOM and was a commander of the internal forces, Amabutho of Nyanga Bush, under Melford Yamile), I was introduced to members of this unit and to members of SVACOM at community meetings. Commander Zet also became a key informant and helped me find my translator and research assistant, Wanda Malungisa. Wanda, who served under Commander Zet in KTC squatter settlement, was arrested in 1987 and placed on death row until 1990. He was only recently released in 2007, and remained under house arrest until 2013. Having studied in prison, he has a good command of English and a diploma, but is currently unemployed. He was, therefore, available to help with the research and the translating of interviewees who preferred to speak in Xhosa. Wanda's contribution to this research was invaluable. He has an intimate knowledge of the squatter and comrade experience, and has spent a lot of time reflecting on it. He became a co-researcher and key informant and helped facilitate my movement within spaces that otherwise would have been very difficult for me to navigate.

I followed a number of strands in selecting interviews to ensure that I came to the sample from different places. In addition to members of SVACOM, I also interviewed people who were not connected to SVACOM but who were friends and acquaintances of other people with whom I had interviews. Furthermore, I collected interviews during a process of assisting the Khayelitsha Museum to document the township through photographs of people and places connected to this history. Within the networks of this community of memory, I was particularly interested to get interviews with the underground movements that formed part of the anti-apartheid struggle in Crossroads, as well as to get interviews with a variety of different key players in the history of Crossroads, including community activists, women's groups, squatter leaders, committee members and ordinary community members. I

spent a lot of time finding and interviewing the members of Amabutho, as this was a key part of the history I wanted to understand in relation to the broader discourse of the national liberation struggle and veteranhood. However, as I conducted these interviews, it soon became clear that there was a broader history with a variety of different players, and in order to capture the history of the Amabutho, it had to be embedded in the history of Crossroads memory community and the different players within the broader squatter struggles.

I followed the Popular Memory Group in using the oral history method of data collection as closest to popular memory. 'What oral history gives us,' they write, 'is not just nuggets of fact about the past but ... the whole way in which popular memories are constructed and reconstructed as part of contemporary consciousness' (Popular Memory Group 1998:219). Furthermore, oral history captures 'the place where the tension between competing historical and political aims is most apparent' (Popular Memory Group 1998:219). Oral histories are a useful method for gaining access to the ways in which people attribute meaning to past events through the construction of narrative (Portelli 2006) and the collection of oral histories can contribute towards documenting the experience and perspectives of people otherwise 'hidden from history' (Perks & Thompson, 1998:ix). For these reasons, I used oral history interviews to collect data on how individuals in the Crossroads memory community construct their memories of past-violence and the meaning of this past in the present context. In addition, I used a semi-structured interview method, in order to probe respondents on certain key questions during the oral history interview and after they had completed their telling of their past and present. Semi-structured interviews are based on an interview guide with a list of key topics and questions to be covered, but they also give the researcher flexibility to follow relevant and unexpected leads as they emerge in the interview (Bernard 2006).

Some of the interviews were conducted in English, some in Xhosa and some in a combination of both languages. Translation happened during the interview and I gave Wanda instructions to translate as closely as possible to

the words of respondents and explained that the words that they used to describe themselves and their experiences were very important. However, in practice this was not always possible, as respondents would sometimes forget to pause to allow Wanda to translate word for word, and then he would paraphrase and summarise as best he could (and I would make a note of this in the transcription). Wanda and I spent a lot of time discussing the research and thinking through what we were learning, my confusions and his realisations. Our understanding of the research developed together and Wanda became very attuned to what I needed to get from the interviews, as well as what I was not understanding or not getting. In the end we conducted the interviews together as a team and Wanda asked questions and worked with me to facilitate the process of uncovering people's histories, contradictions and points of frustration. In a discussion, Wanda described the intuitive and sensitised ways we were able to conduct life-history interviews towards the end of this process as follows: 'Listening to people's stories is like swimming round in a pool. You circle around listening out for the key point of opening, and when you find it you dive down deep into their minds'. While Wanda co-interviewed with me on all the interviews, not all required translation. This is indicated in the reference list of cited interviews.

I collected oral history interviews with 30 respondents; 19 men and 11 women. These interviews ranged from an hour long to seven hours long, in multiple sittings. The focus was initially on squatter comrades claiming veteran status, therefore the majority of interviewees were men, as the majority of comrades within the Amabutho and leadership structures of the squatter movement were men. These interviews tended to be longer as I was very interested to unfold the structure, function and experience of the Amabutho comrade structures as they related to the history of squatter resistance and liberation struggle history. However, this was done in narrative form, as respondents told detailed and vague stories of the process of how comrade networks came together and worked. There is a lot of secrecy surrounding the history of underground violence, therefore these stories were not neatly pre-packaged versions of history and required a lot of time and labour to unfold.

The interviews took an open and fluid approach, allowing respondents to construct their histories in the ways they saw fit. While respondents would be briefed on the topic of the thesis as collecting their stories on histories of violence and squatter resistance in Cape Town and what this meant to them in relation to their present lives, the interview would generally begin with the question, ‘Tell me about your experience of growing up under apartheid?’ and then move on to questions of their experiences of migration from the Eastern Cape to Cape Town, joining a squatter movement, the transition to democracy and their lives today. The interview would hone in on certain key areas, such as their lived experiences of squatter spaces, individual and group processes of politicisation and the unfolding of violence that emerged within these spaces; how structures within these spaces formed and worked; the connection of squatter resistance to the national liberation struggle and the ANC. Questions were posed throughout and after the oral history interview, in order to gain data on what respondents memories mean for them in the context of the present, how they experience and interpret their lives in post-transition South Africa, whether they think what they fought for has been achieved, what freedom means to them, the relationship between past and present violence, and their understanding and experience of transitional justice and post-conflict discourses and processes.

In addition, I conducted seven group interviews of two to five hours long. These groups consisted of 5 to 15 people, however in one instance (Zulu’s place, 21 October 2011) a group of 30 people arrived for the interview. The large number meant that although respondents could not engage in discussion with one another, they provided short ten minute histories for me to record. These histories allowed me to identify the common themes and stories which respondents wanted to get across to me in a short period of time, which could be further unpacked and discussed in smaller groups. On three different instances of these group interviews, respondents were brought to particular locations, such as schools or houses, in order to tell me their stories one by one and have their names recorded as ‘victims’ of the past, in the hope that they might gain access to reparation or land-claim benefits in the present. These interviewees often sought me out, rather than me seeking them out,

and I was also often seen as a member of a memory activist organisation. These interviews were a constant site of contestation as I tried to explain why I was there, and they attempted to offload, not only their suffering, but their frustrations around being ignored, and their interactions with the reconciliation industry through memory activists, their view of this industry, and their place in it. Although these stories were not as useful as the life histories in providing historical data and detailed lived experiences, they became a very powerful source of data showing how people coming out of these histories of violence attempt to engage with the reconciliation industry and the meanings that their memories of violence have for them in the context of this industry and their current lives. The ethical issues involved in these group interviews and their negotiated relevance for this research are further discussed in the next section.

I was especially careful to ensure that respondents understood why I was collecting the research, in order that they could decide whether it was safe and desirable for them to participate in the research. Furthermore, expectations had to be managed through clear explanation of the outcomes of the interviews, to ensure that respondents were not giving interviews with the hope of material reward. I therefore informed all research participants of the aims of this research and asked for permission to use personal data gathered from interviews. In terms of life histories, participants were given the choice as to whether they wanted to remain anonymous or have their names in the research. Due to a desire to be recognised and acknowledged, respondents specifically wanted their names mentioned. However, in some instances this was tricky, for example, in group interviews where it was difficult to follow who was speaking, from the recording. In conducting and transcribing interviews I did my best to keep track of names. Where I am unable to connect a name to a statement in a group interview, I have used a pseudonym and indicated this with an asterisks (\*). Furthermore, I have included a reference list of cited interviews, where, for life history and individual interviews I include the name and surname of the respondent. For group interviews, the date and place of the group interview is cited and only the first name or pseudonym\* of the respondent is provided in the text.

### 3.3 Power, Ethics and Challenges of Research

The issues that made this research challenging were also crucial to understanding the drama and dynamics of the memory conversation, as well as the politics involved in it. While I was coming to interviews as an individual, rather than through a memory activist organisation, I was, nevertheless, imagined as a conduit to memory benefits. This issue allowed for the tight-rope dilemma that is investigated in this research to unfold, as I encouraged respondents to discuss and think through their attempts to gain access to memory benefits. This process required constant negotiation, and resulted in many ethical, political and emotional challenges discussed below.

#### 3.3.1 Racial-Spatial Power Dynamics

Power dynamics are inherent in the research process, as well as related to my social location relative to that of my participants (Alcoff 1991). My race, gender, age and research history have and will continue to influence this research. In general, white South African identity is one of entitlement, which is oblivious to the histories of oppression and experiences of black South Africans (Steyn 2001). In terms of my identity, this research constitutes an attempt to push against that obliviousness, but is also handicapped by it. My position set up a number of challenging hermeneutic boundaries, which will be further discussed below. I decided to interview respondents in their homes, as I felt this would be easier for them, but also it would allow me to get a fuller sense of them and the lives they live in Khayelitsha. I chose to immerse myself in the lives, homes and struggles of the people I interviewed.

Due to the potentially traumatic nature of these memories of past violence and participants' sense of being excluded from history, I took care to create a comfortable physical and emotional interview environment, and to be sensitive to how the interview was affecting the participant. When dealing with histories of violence and trauma, the decision to come close to that experience is one that is fraught with emotional challenges. However, if I had remained distant I would have been reproducing the boundary I sought to cross. Maintaining a balance between showing empathy and engagement and protecting my own emotional ability to function was a constant source of

tension throughout the research. Furthermore, my decision to put myself at the centre of the racial-spatial contradictions and separations of Cape Town, while at the same time listening to stories of oppression and violence, in the context of the power dynamics inherent in research created a cocktail of challenges. I express these in a quote from my fieldwork journal below. I had been away from Cape Town for three weeks and in that time Wanda had been forced to move his shack from one site to another in Khayelitsha. When I arrived back, I went to visit him on the day he was reconstructing his shack in a new spot. His wife, Betty, and four-year-old daughter, Afica, were sitting in the sun outside the construction with all their belongings in big bags. Reflecting on the visit, I wrote:

When Afica sees me, she runs into my arms as she has taken to doing recently, and I cross over to hug Wanda and Betty hello and take a look inside at the make-shift re-building of their home, thinking about the amount of times they have had to do this in their lives. An elderly woman sitting with Betty laughs in amazement and says, 'This is not like a white woman, she is so familiar here, she is like one of us'. I respond that I am trying slowly. But it doesn't get any easier and the spectacle (of my whiteness) is fine and rather amusing, even fun to play with, but the effect on my psyche, my fear, the split between home and the unfamiliar at home, and the sense that now I should feel at home and familiar in Khayletisha but I am still neurotic and panicked, stressed and nervous before I have an interview. Is it because I feel there is so much expected of me and I can never give enough? It is the dynamics of research too – the role of power made doubly complicated by the race and space relations of Cape Town (Fieldwork journal, 14 October 2011).

In the end this tension was one that had to be engaged and lived with, rather than transcended. Through the process of research I dealt with the overwhelming nature of the choices I had made for this research by limiting my fieldwork days to two or three a week, as they were emotionally very challenging. I also kept a fieldwork journal throughout the process, which further helped me remain aware of my assumptions in my endeavour to understand my participants on their own terms.

In the Cape Town context, most researchers and 'experts' gain access to communities affected by violence through the institutional setting of the victim support group, which is based within a certain kind of power dynamic and requirement of speech, set up through the therapeutic discourse of the reconciliation industry (Cuellar 2005). In my case, I was lucky to have Wanda as a co-researcher and translator, which meant I was introduced by (and able to interview alongside) an insider who shared a similar history and

class position with the respondents. This was important, as it helped me ‘dis-identify’ from the reconciliation and non-governmental organisation (NGO) industry, despite my relative position of racial and educational privilege. However, this was not an easy process, as the path of least resistance and most hope was to identify me as a memory activist, who was there to help people gain access to memory benefits of reparation, integration, pensions and land claims. The way in which respondents saw me as being in a position of connection and power, and their hopes and expectations for this research, were a constant source of contestation and ethical dilemma for me. The process of speaking about these expectations versus the reality of what I could offer was tricky and important and is engaged with in depth in the section below.

### 3.3.2 The Drama of Researching Memories of Violence

Participant action research refers to research where the respondents and the researcher are together engaged in the process and outcome of the research. It was in the process of negotiating with respondents the outcomes of the research, in relation to their hopes and the reality of what a PhD dissertation can offer that this research took on a participant action research flavour. This section describes this research drama, the roles within it, and the expectations and discussions around those expectations.

The story of the woman who was interviewed a number of times for this research provides an example of the dynamics and playing out of the drama of the research. We met Athel at the first group interview at Zulu’s place. Standard Kuwan Zulu was a comrade under Yamile in Nyanga Bush, and today he is a community leader in Philippi. He holds community meetings in a room which used to be a shop connected to his home. Zulu is involved in helping members of his community gain access to Khulumani and SVACOM and the group interviewees met in this room referred to as Zulu’s place. I had expected to be conducting a follow-up group interview with a few of the squatter leaders and comrades in Philippi, but instead about thirty unfamiliar faces poured in, mostly women. I introduced my project broadly, saying I was collecting the histories of squatter struggle in Crossroads for a PhD

study, and they proceeded, one by one, to tell me very short versions of their histories, with an emphasis on pain and a desire for me to help them get their names on a list for reparation. They put forward well-rehearsed and shared stories of pain and suffering, highlighting how painful it was for them to have to tell these stories over and over, without receiving any rewards. No matter how much I tried in response to move the stories away from violence, pain and suffering towards everyday life in the squatter camps, they nevertheless stuck to their practice of telling their pain and wounds. Every time a respondent expressed that they were pleased I was there to help them get access to the government funds meant for them, I would reiterate that while I see that they are suffering, there is nothing I can do about it, that I am a student and this is a study for knowledge and understanding. Sometimes this would result in an enlightening discussion about their experiences and interpretations of reparation. However, it would also result in respondents hearing me, but nevertheless professing hope that I may somehow be able to indirectly help them through writing their stories of pain.

In the end I felt I was taking part in a broader drama of transitional justice and post-conflict South Africa, which required further understanding and unpacking. I therefore welcomed this methodological shift towards including those claiming 'victim' statuses in relation to past struggles as an important identity subjectivity engaged by Crossroads memory community. I attempted to observe the reconciliation drama I was immersed in and cast as the channel or vessel people hoped would connect them to reparation as an industry of payment for pain. However, I continued to assert the reality of my role, ensuring that people did not tell their stories to me with false expectations and hopes. Despite these assertions, respondents continued to hope that my record of their suffering could perhaps be read by the right people, and that perhaps it would help in their quest to receive the reparation they had witnessed others receive.

Our interactions with Athel stand out as a particularly telling and extreme example of the nature of the drama of reparation and trauma in the context of poverty in South Africa. Athel had had previous experiences with interviews, researchers and victim organisations. Despite getting very emotional and

telling us that speaking to us makes her sick afterwards, she kept coming back to group interviews and seeking us out. She was with us in the first group interview, and in the second she gave us a more detailed life history. She introduced her history:

As someone who is not well in health today I don't feel well, I am very thankful for Kim's presence here, it is important that we share our testimonies, but the reality of the matter is that we are victims today, with Kim addressing us that she will write a book about our stories, we hope that even if it's the next generation they will receive something, people will read and act (Athel, Interview, 2 December 2011).

In the quote above, Athel clearly expresses her desire and claim to victim status, asserting 'we are victims', and her hope that 'they will receive something' through 'sharing' their 'testimonies' of victimhood with me, that the result may be that other 'people will read and act' on their behalf. Athel continued with her personal life story, discussing the 'suffering we went through in Crossroads' and her experiences as part of the Women's League:

We were with the UDF and the Woman's League and I was a member ... we were very and highly frustrated by the fact that we didn't receive, my house was a storeroom to hide arms as well as holding meetings for comrades, I myself was part of the group ... (Athel, Interview, 2 December 2011).

As she gets to the point in the story where she discusses hiding arms for comrades, she breaks down in heavy, heaving sobs and is inconsolable. Eventually, we have no choice but to close the meeting, with Athel still removed into a shell of emotion; unreachable. We end with a song and a prayer, based on advice I had been given by a friend and psychologist who had originally worked at the Trauma Centre<sup>5</sup> and was well-versed in listening to the stories of Crossroads survivors of past violence. Despite the upset her interview caused for her, Athel kept on returning to us and popping into places we visited in Philippi when she saw my car. Then I got a text message, 'hi kim I am athel plz come 4 us on Friday here in philippi I have 3 old they want 2 share story with u athel'. When I picked up Wanda, we started preparing ourselves for the interview with Athel. We said to one another,

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<sup>5</sup> The Trauma Centre was set up in 1993 as a non-governmental organisation aiming to provide psychological, social and medical care for survivors of political violence (Colvin 2000).

‘We know what to expect, but we’ll keep an open mind’. This is how I recorded the meeting of the 3 December 2011 in my fieldwork notes:

So we arrive and Athel is looking strong and ready for us in her ‘ANC attire’ as Wanda calls it (meaning her Rasta-looking hat). She wants to tell her story again and as usual she demonstrates her connection and knowledge of researchers and Khulumani, what she has done for researchers, how they have hurt her. She speaks about how after her last meeting she was very sick, but now she is back again, and I think, why? If you are better, why are you back here for more? She tells the same story again, gets to the exact same point in the story about weapons hidden for comrades and breaks down in the same way again. She seems almost possessed – Athel leaves the room and something else takes over and she becomes consumed in her pain and switches off to everything around her. She starts gathering things, her bag, my bag, she didn’t do that the last time, gathering my packet of food and bunching the plastic in her hands, she lies down, drinks water. I’m thinking, fuck, she’s just better and now re-traumatised again, what do we do? (Fieldwork journal, 2 December 2011)

At this point in the interview I try unsuccessfully to channel my scant knowledge of trauma psychology to help Athel. Theoretically, trauma is understood as un-integrated memory, therefore the kind of trauma therapy practiced in the Trauma Centre and explained by a friend who used to work there is aimed at helping people speak through their traumatic memory in order to integrate into narrative memory<sup>6</sup>. However, during the process of the interview, the link between displaying trauma to memory activists and the hope of reparation became clearer:

I tell her she has a remarkable history, more than most have to deal with, that she’s strong, but she won’t take in or respond to anything. I wish I was a psychologist, I think to myself. I am up close and I say to her, ‘Athel, what can I do to help you?’ This she responds to, and while I mean, right now, what can I do to help you right now to move through the pain, her interpretation is quite different. She stops crying, looks me straight in the eyes and says, ‘help us, members of Khulumani to get reparation’. I catch Wanda’s expression; he looks like he wants to laugh. Okay, I think to myself, your pain and your depression is what gives you access to reparation, or at least you hope it will. If you are poor, with no access to resources and believe that through displaying your pain you could get access to resources, then your pain and your trauma is a valued commodity in an imagined economy of trauma. But is the trauma real? Is there real trauma here? The sad part is, I think there is, and I am still worried about Athel because I think that her pain and trauma are nurtured and fed through this performance of pain in the hope of reparation (Fieldwork journal, 2 December 2011).

Athel’s story is an extreme case-in-point, demonstrating how respondents tell their histories of violence through the lens of ‘victimhood’ and trauma, in the hope that they may be recognised as victims and gain access to economic

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<sup>6</sup> This understanding of trauma and trauma therapy was explained to me in an informal interview with Dr Donald Skinner, a trauma psychologist who used to work at the Trauma Centre in Cape Town.

pay-outs in the form of reparation. 'Trauma' was therefore mobilised as a resource within a context of continued poverty, as respondents presented themselves to me through the memory lens of 'victimhood'. The construction of victims and trauma in the national memory discourse of past violence and the related proscription of how to deal with the effects of past violence in the present is a powerful hegemonic force in South Africa. This discourse travels into the memories of ordinary South Africans and it impacts both on their experiences of post-apartheid South Africa and on how they make sense of those experiences. However, their experiences in turn impact on their engagement with the hegemonic discourse.

Athel's story further demonstrates the ethical challenges that came with the way in which I was positioned by my research participants as a conduit through which they hoped to gain access to memory benefits. In this context it was crucial for me to continually re-assert what I was able to do as a PhD researcher. I would acknowledge the pain and suffering people expressed, but assert that I was a PhD student and this was a project of understanding only; that it would not result in any benefits from government, and that people were welcome to decline the interview with this knowledge that they would not gain anything from it. Despite these assertions, however, respondents often remained hopeful that perhaps the research would make some difference for them, as described by Fundiswa below. Fundiswa is a member of SVACOM who I met at one of the bi-monthly meetings. She was a young teenager during the violence of Crossroads and now lives in Philippi. This quote was spoken in the context of a group interview she had organised at her friend's crèche in Philippi, where she had collected a variety of key members of the community to come and tell me their memories and their challenges, engaging in national memory processes:

But I would like to encourage people about Kim's interviews, to encourage them not to give up hope. No promises, but what Kim is writing will be read by the world and it could be a start of something that can meet their wishes – inform others to come and benefit from the sharing your testimony. I myself am part of this history and the government could have opportunity to read and be touched and want to do something, the teargas affected lots of people (Fundiswa, Group Interview, 23 November 2011).

The act of giving me their interviews, telling me their history and having it recorded, is, for respondents, a form of resistance to their exclusion. This was powerfully demonstrated by Manxiwa who was a member of the committee in Nyanga Bush and a comrade of violent resistance against the apartheid state. In the quote below, Manxiwa explains what he hopes will happen as a result of my recording their stories:

If they read in the book or they see it, many will be interested to come and ask where are these people that were left behind when the struggle was accomplished, because our future is burning if are not prepared to talk and open our mouth about what has happened to us and what is happening to us now (Manxiwa, Interview, 11 August 2011).

Manxiwa believes that, through talking about their role in the struggle, they might be acknowledged, which might, in turn, affect their future. Furthermore, in speaking about their histories, respondents hope it will have an effect on their children; that their children may come to know and value the roles they played in the struggle. This is expressed by Commander Zet and is connected to the desire that many of the comrade veterans held to be recognised as legitimate veterans of the liberation struggle: ‘Our hope is that even families who have lost their loved ones – they will know my father or my children didn’t die for nothing, died for liberation’ (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

In continuing to speak, and to speak to me about their experiences of squatter struggle, respondents believe they are doing something to counter their exclusion and de-legitimisation from the national narrative. Manxiwa asserts that, for him, the most important thing is for my writing to show the role that they played in the struggle and also to ask the question of why African people fought amongst themselves:

The most important thing for whoever is going to read this book, or whatever it’s going to be, is to know exactly what has happened, what was happening, what did we do? That is why it needs to be told exactly the way it was. Secondly, the conflict of the Witdoeke, the only part that I want to clarify here, I want to bring it under your attention, why did people, African people, fight amongst themselves, I want to bring that to the scene, why? (Manxiwa, Interview, 11 August 2011).

Through these discussions of what was possible and what was not, the role of this thesis and the way it could benefit respondents became clearer. I would not be able to help respondents access the benefits connected to victim and

veteran identities, but I could provide a retelling of their history which would challenge the way in which they have been excluded from national memory, and I could provide a critical voice of this exclusion. The findings and discussion chapters of this thesis attempted to fulfil these dual aims, expressed as ‘most important’ by Manxiwa, of telling the role played by squatters and analysing the reasons for violence in Crossroads, in order to provide a political interpretation of it in the context of the anti-apartheid struggle. This counter-narrative takes the form of re-legitimising the role they played, and actively challenging the memory of past struggle and their place in it.

In this research process, I attempted to walk, expose and engage with the tight-rope experienced by respondents of the value and validity of their own memories in relation to national memory. I was thrust into an environment carved out by national memory that pre-determined what it meant to be a veteran and victim and connected these identities to financial benefits of reparations for victims and special pensions and demobilisation for veterans. Therefore, respondents hoped that I could help connect their stories to these broader research benefits and presented themselves in terms of these identities. However, the members of Crossroads memory community have struggled to be included in these memory identities and, therefore, are also critical of them. As actors within post-apartheid memory fields and as historical actors with their own lived memories of the past, they walk a tight-rope between attempting to gain inclusion and challenging the terms of inclusion. From this space, the counter-memories and counter-hegemonic assertions could emerge, challenging dominant discourse, rather than just trying to gain inclusion into it. Together, we negotiated a role for me to play as researcher, which was possible in terms of my status as a PhD student and would be of benefit for my research respondents. While it doesn’t connect respondents to financial resources or inclusion into memory identities, it does critique dominant memory and provide both a counter-memory and the beginnings of a counter hegemonic engagement of the meaning of their histories of violence, in terms of their current struggles.

### 3.4 Analysis and Presentation of Data

All interviews were recorded and transcribed and the analysis was applied to the transcribed document. During the fieldwork, interview and transcription process, I kept a diary record of first impressions, hunches and thoughts. A narrative analysis was applied to the interview texts, with the aim of identifying how respondents construct their experiences of past violence, transition and present South Africa through narrative. Furthermore, a political discourse analysis was applied to the narrative analyses to unpack the politics of the relationship between national memory discourse and respondents narratives of their lived memories of violence.

The broader topic of this research addresses the nature and politics of the relationship between national memory discourse and lived memory for Crossroads memory community through the central question: How and why do respondents bring their lived memories into conversation with national memory discourse? This question is unfolded, layered and deepened through three sets of sub-questions that speak to and build on one another. The first of these is:

- 1) How do respondents experience and engage (with) national memory discourse? How does national memory discourse affect local memory actors? What forms of discursive agency emerge in respondents' engagement with national memory discourse?

The answers to this set of questions are presented in chapter four, which also sets the scene for the rest of the empirical chapters. Respondents attempt to engage national memory discourse through the memory identities of veteran and victim; however, they are caught in a memory bind as these memory identities are connected to memory discourses that exclude their historical experiences. Memory identities are linked to memory benefits and, therefore, there is a lot at stake in laying claim to these identities, which at the same time require a denial of the lived experience of their history. In many ways, attempting to tell their histories through these 'keyhole' memory identities is not in the interests of respondents. However, another memory agency emerges alongside respondents' attempts to gain inclusion, which draws from their counter-hegemonic lived memory. Chapter four demonstrates this

memory dilemma and the two forms of memory agency that emerge in respondents' engagement of national memory. In doing so, it sets the scene for the next two sets of questions, which unfold the counter-narratives and the politics of these narratives, in relation to national memory discourse:

- 2) How do members of Crossroads memory community construct their counter-narratives of violence in terms of their experiences of apartheid, violence, resistance and the transition to the present?
- 3) How do respondents' lived counter-memories engage (with) the hegemony of national memory discourse? In what ways do respondents' memory narratives work to support or subvert the hegemonic assumptions of national memory discourse?

Question two aimed to unfold the alternative histories of violence, the transition and the present held by respondents. The two questions in the third set asked whether respondents' expressions of their past, in relation to their present, work hegemonically to support the status quo, or counter-hegemonically to challenge the ways in which they have been marginalised from memory and their continued experience of oppression, despite a transition from apartheid.

In terms of question two, data was analysed using a narrative analysis. Narrative, as discussed in the theoretical section of this thesis, is the unit of personal memory analysed in terms of the broader question of how respondents make sense of their histories of resistance and transition, despite their continued position of oppression. The question of how and why popular memories are constructed, in the ways that they are, speaks to the ways in which public, dominant narratives of the past come into relationship with counter-hegemonic lived memory, but both occupy personal memory and draw from past symbols as well as present political concerns. Therefore, in analysing and presenting my narrative data, these relationships will provide the analytical framework through which I aim to show both how and why the personal memories of my particular case study take the forms that they do, in relationship with a broader public field of memory in post-apartheid South Africa.

I conducted this narrative analysis in relation to the national narrative story of apartheid and resistance, transition and democracy. I broke this down into two periods: narratives of past violence and respondents' responses to violence, and then narratives of the transition in terms of the present. I framed this analysis through Bruner's concept of the narrative breach, demonstrating what the breach is for respondents, and how they construct their responses to this breach. While the first narrative presented contains a beginning, middle and end, the second is in mid-narrative and, therefore, there is some confusion and lack of clarity around the meaning and response to the recent narrative breach expressed. This, however, allows for a demonstration of the political confusions and contradictions occurring in South Africans' understanding of the present and a questioning of what things mean and how best to move forward.

In terms of the third set of questions, the data was analysed in terms of a discourse analysis. I drew on the theoretical understanding of the meaning of discourse as outlined by Laclau and Mouffe (1965) as a contingent structured totality resulting from the articulation of elements in a relational signifying chain. To analyse the politics of the relationship between national and local discourse, I relied on Laclau and Mouffe's distinction between dominant identity as fitting within the dominant discourse, and political subjectivity as identities that are excluded from and therefore hold the potential to contest the dominant discourse. I searched for ways in which respondents were aligning with dominant memory chains or disrupting these chains with challenges to the assumptions and identities which underpin hegemonic discourse. This approach was supplemented with Ian Parker's (1992, 1994) framework for discourse analysis. In a nutshell, the steps allow the researcher to identify the versions of the social world (discourses) being constructed in the text. This includes the particular ways of speaking about objects, the rights of speech given to subjects occurring in the text and the possibility and implications of alternative versions of the social world. Furthermore, Parker's framework for discourse analysis includes the political identification of how the versions of the social world function to support or subvert institutions and relations of power. In other words, the aim of the discourse analysis was to

identify the memory discourses occurring in respondents' narratives and to ask whether respondents' engagement with these memory narratives works to support or subvert its hegemony.

Following the relational analysis of the popular memory outlined in the theoretical chapter, this research aimed to analyse how these hegemonic memory discourses came into relationship with the local and lived memories of violence. In particular, I was interested in the ways in which respondents' memory narratives and versions of the past in the present came into relationship with the politics of the discourses and memory identities of reconciliation and the national liberation struggle discussed in chapter two. In analysing the relational politics of respondents' memory narratives, I addressed the analysis to the question of how the assumptions underpinning hegemonic memory discourse were being maintained or subverted and the implication for Crossroads memory community.

For both the discourse and narrative analysis I used Miles & Huberman's (1994) approach to the grounded theory method, which is both inductive and deductive. The analysis was guided by the broader aim of identifying constructions of past violence, resistance and transition, as well as how respondents constructed the meaning of the past in relation to national memory discourse. These aims guided the analysis as I focused on the data that spoke to these questions. I then applied an inductive, grounded approach of allowing the relevant codes and themes to emerge within this pre-identified, broad framework.

For Miles and Huberman 'coding is analysis' (1994:56) and, by the end of this process of coding, I had constructed an overlapping conceptual framework of the themes occurring in the data and their relationship to the assumptions of hegemonic national memory. Two sets of codes emerged, which spoke to one another in the analysis. The first set of codes summarised the themes in the narrative, in relation to the focus of the questions across the interviews. The second set of codes spoke to the analytical and political question of how these narrative themes spoke to the assumptions underpinning memory discourse and whether they supported or subverted

these assumptions. I developed a working framework for the organisation of the relevant units of data, in terms of these overlapping themes, and a model for how these themes relate to one another. In presenting these findings I discuss, describe and explain the narrative themes and their relationship to memory discourse, by using exemplars in the form of key quotes, which demonstrate the general codes.

This thesis has two key, related aims. On the one hand, it aims to tease out the politics of the memory dialogue between national and local memory. On the other hand, it attempts to provide a counter-narrative and counter-hegemonic discourse to national memory. In terms of providing a counter-narrative, this thesis tells a historical story that has been excluded, therefore time and space is devoted to the unfolding of this story; furthermore, it is from this story that a counter-hegemonic discourse can be constructed, and in the final analysis this thesis draws on the narratives and discussions of respondents to tease out a counter-hegemonic interpretation of the meaning of the history of Crossroads memory community.

The analysis of question sets two and three are presented in chapters five, six and seven. Chapter five looks at the construction of apartheid and resistance for respondents, and analyses how these challenge hegemonic assumptions of the national liberation struggle discourse. In particular, the demonisation of the comrades and the privileging of the military struggle in exile are challenged by this counter-narrative. In chapter six, the analysis looks at two dominant, narrative constructions of the transition and the present. The narrative of abandonment and betrayal are unfolded as examples of narratives of disillusionment, which are connected to dominant memory identities of victim and veteran. While these narratives of disillusionment challenge the hegemonic assumption of the reconciliation discourse – that violence and oppression are in the past – they seem to forget the empowering, lived memory, presented in the previous chapter and re-confirm assumptions of the national liberation struggle discourse and the nature of ANC leadership. In chapter seven, the analysis attempts to dig beneath these narratives of abandonment and betrayal, to show how the lived memory presented in chapter four continues to bubble up and challenge the politics of the national

liberation struggle discourse. Furthermore, the dialectical movement between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic constructions of the relationship between the ANC and the people is discussed. An alternative memory identity (or political subjectivity), which disrupts the hegemony of victim and veteran identities, is demonstrated and discussed. Finally, these findings are brought together, summarised and discussed in chapter eight.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Crossroads Memory Community: Engaging Identities of Veteranhood and Victimhood**

While this thesis aims to unfold a counter-memory to the memory discourse constructed in the post-transition era, a key issue it explores lies in the contradiction between past and present, and between lived memory and hegemonic memory. This chapter frames and presents this key memory issue from the point of view of the present, and the memory claims that Crossroads memory community attempt to make. This chapter addresses itself to the question of how respondents experience and engage with national memory discourse. It demonstrates what is at stake in this engagement, what issues emerge and how they are dealt with by respondents. In answering this question, the key argument presented in this chapter is that, by attempting to engage with national memory discourse, respondents experience a paradoxical memory bind as they endeavour to fit their memories to identities that, at the same time, deny their historical experience.

This chapter draws on an analysis of the meaning of Crossroads violence in national memory discourse, the history and purpose of Struggle Veterans' Action Committee (SVACOM), and interviews with respondents of crossroads memory community. It demonstrates how local actors attempt to lay claim to the dominant memory identities of 'veteran' and 'victim'. While these identities are connected to various benefits, they also imply a certain version of history which places respondents in a tricky position, as the dominant memory identities through which they make claims on this history at the same time imply their historical exclusion. This chapter outlines some of the contradictions that emerge in respondents' own narratives as they attempt to make sense of their historical experiences while walking this tight-rope of meaning. This memory paradox is one of the central findings of this research and also lays the ground for the historical narrative and discourse analysis in the empirical chapters that follow.

#### 4.1 Memory Identities, Discourses, and Activist Organisations

In post-apartheid South Africa the memory of the apartheid wars is a significant resource, functioning to legitimise and benefit certain players and marginalise and demonise others (Bozzoli 2004; Baines 2007). Memory activist organisations situated at the nexus between community memory and national memory discourse attempt to advocate on behalf of actors wanting to connect to the flows of benefits attached to national memory identities. This section demonstrates how identities of veteran and victim are made available as keyhole identities, in relation to experiences of past violence. The reason I call these ‘keyhole’ memory identities is that the metaphor brings to mind a door with a narrow keyhole, through which respondents’ memories of past violence on one side of the door must be knocked into the small shape of the keyhole, in order to gain access to the benefits lying on the other side. I will return to this metaphor in the final chapters of this thesis as it is a useful way to understand the workings of the politics of memory and the ways in which these are felt by Crossroads memory community.

Keyhole memory identities of veteran and victim are connected to material, political and symbolic benefits, so that being recognised as a legitimate member of either of these identities is connected to reward. However, the discourses in which these memory identities are embedded set up certain terms of inclusion and exclusion that represent a serious challenge for members of Crossroads memory community attempting to gain access to the resources and rewards connected to memory benefits.

##### 4.1.1. Memory Activist Organisations: The Case of SVACOM

There is a political struggle implied in making claims to memory identities and the benefits connected to them, nestled within national memory discourse. Those involved in histories of local violence attempt to gain access to the state and its transitional justice and post-conflict development programmes through memory activist organisations. Various organisations have emerged that advocate on behalf of actors within this realm of memory activism. Memory activist organisations that advocate on behalf of victims of

past violence provide a link between the funds set aside for this memory identity and the memory communities affected by apartheid violence. A key example of this kind of memory activist organisation is found in the social movement, Khulumani, which advocates on behalf of survivors of gross violations of human rights (Norval 2009). On its website, Khulumani claims that ‘in 2010, the Khulumani Support Group had 48 619 members listed in its membership database’ (Khulumani website [sa]). Khulumani asserts that its activities are geared towards the needs of its members. These include advocating on behalf of reparations for victims, as well as conducting memory work.

SVACOM formed part of the case study of this research, and is another example of a memory activist organisation. It was initially formed to advocate on behalf of those claiming veteran status, but has expanded to include those claiming victim status. The organisation was launched in 2008 by marginalised veterans of internal struggle to ‘unite the internal forces’ (their slogan) and to challenge the state to recognise the comrades of internal struggle as military veterans, in order that they gain access to the special pensions and reintegration programmes set up for those belonging to this category.

In SVACOM’s own words, they describe their history in a document entitled *Submission to government* (SVACOM 2010). The leaders of SVACOM come from the history of squatter struggle and the military formation within this movement, as well as from the struggles within ‘traditionally so-called coloured areas’ (SVACOM 2010). They locate their context in the 1980s formation of ‘strategic underground and Self-Defence Units’ and the United Democratic Front (UDF) ‘which visibly displayed the awesome power of the popular masses, standing together in unity of purpose’ (2010:2). Bringing the meaning of their history into conversation with the present, they assert:

Thus far this new ANC-led government has shown very little concrete appreciation and acknowledgement of the critical role performed by internally-based militants who forced the security forces to spread themselves thin on the ground, thus strengthening the hand of the political struggle. These internal paramilitary forces, often locally-based in the townships for maximum protection amongst the people, largely have been side-lined in favour of the ‘exiles’ who live off the cream of the land, devouring scarce state resources. We are now faced with some of the

challenges that were never addressed during the process of 'negotiations', such as 'reparations' that were manipulated; the integration of military structures and forces, and [military] benefits that excluded most of those who sacrificed their life for the liberation of our country (SVACOM 2010:2).

There is a strong discourse of exclusion and marginalisation and this is identified in terms of all those involved in the internal struggle against apartheid. The quote above sets up the issue of the recognition and favouring of combatants who fought in exile at the expense and exclusion of internal comrades.

In an interview with Faizel, he describes the initial motivations and process of forming SVACOM.

It started with Archie [a fellow former urban guerrilla] walking in here in 2008 and coming to this very table we are sitting at today and saying that he's been looking for his special pension for 14 years. He's been knocking on all the doors and I know him, we've done a lot of things together and there's no reason in my analysis why he shouldn't get a special pension. When Archie came to see me we chatted and went to go find some of the comrades who had been with us. We found them and most of them were in bad conditions, they had gone into drugs and alcoholism. Through that process we analysed the political structures and realised that this isn't what we fought for. Our people are still living in squalor, very little has really improved in the majority of people's lives, so it was on that basis we formed this organisation called SVACOM (Faizel, Interview, 25 July 2011).

Faizel continues his story about the formation of SVACOM, arguing that when they first started to challenge the ANC and the exclusion of comrades from special pensions and benefits, they were met with resistance:

We came out very strongly against the ANC, because before we launched we engaged them. 'Oh ja, you're just a bunch of stone throwers', that's what they went to the newspapers with. We went to the press and said MK and ANC is not accommodating us as veterans, and they responded that people should take no note of us as we are just a bunch of stone throwers. Then we went public with this thing, there was a lot of tension between us and the ANC. Initially it was just those of us militarily active inside the guerrilla war, but the organisation has grown beyond that, 45 000 members in the Western Cape. Even our objective has gone beyond looking at the Military Veterans Bill [now Act], we are now asking, how do we become a lobby group of veterans who understand what we fought for and want to implement what we fought for? (Faizel, Interview, 25 July 2011).

In his account of the formation and development of SVACOM, Faizel paints a story of how the organisation was formed to address the exclusion of comrades from veteran integration, recognition and benefits. Faizel points to the wide reach of the organisation, which initially was intended for veterans but has grown to include all those within the internal memory communities affected by violence.

In an interview with Commander Zet (25 July, 2011), the vice-chairperson, he affirms that SVACOM aims to speak on behalf of all those affected by violence. He argues that there were many different groups involved in the internal struggle; in the context of Crossroads this included United Women's Organisation (UWO) and UWCO (United Women's Congress), the civic organisation, CAYCO (Cape Youth Congress), and the various church groups who fought with the squatters against apartheid. He argues that since all of these people worked in the anti-apartheid struggle under the UDF, they should be entitled to the special pension set up for those who worked in the anti-apartheid struggle. Furthermore he argues that, since apartheid was declared a crime against humanity, the people who were affected by it deserve reparation.

Since forming, SVACOM has come to include two other categories of people to advocate on behalf of, each with its complementary connection to transitional justice benefits: the ANC 'activist' category, with access to special pension; and the category of 'victim' of gross violations of human rights under apartheid, with access to reparations. In the eyes of SVACOM, the internal veteran is also both an activist and a victim, and thus should have access to reintegration, special pension and reparation) In addition, SVACOM aims to challenge the exclusion of the lived experience of entire communities within Cape Town, and demonstrates how this exclusion from the construction of history is linked to their current exclusion from the 'fruits of liberation' in the present.

#### 4.1.2 Memory Discourses and Identities

SVACOM aims to assist members of Crossroads memory community lay claim to identities and benefits of veteranhood and victimhood. However a key challenge lies in the way in which these identities are embedded in national memory discourse, as well as how Crossroads violence has been remembered in national memory. In the context of post-apartheid South Africa, national memory identities are linked to various privileges and benefits, as well as exclusions and costs. The discourses of reconciliation and national liberation that helped birth the post-apartheid state and settlement

have had very real consequences for historical actors. These discourses set up particular memory stories on which actors have to draw to prove the legitimacy of their claims to memory identity. By telling one's history through the keyhole of these memory identities, the discourse offers the possibility of connecting impoverished actors to flows of symbolic, political and material resources. Reparation for victims, amnesty for perpetrators of political violence and demobilisation benefits and special pensions for veterans represent three concrete benefits of being recognised as a legitimate member of memory identity groups.

A central memory identity engaged through my case study of Crossroads, especially the comrade structures that emerged in the context of squatter struggle, was that of veteran. 'Veteran' as it is referred to in government discourse, is the term used to refer to those actively involved in the military violence of the apartheid wars. In academic and practitioner discourse the term 'ex-combatant' is commonly used (Van der Merwe & Smith 2006). As my case study focuses on a counter-narrative to the one implied in these terms, I use the term 'comrades' or 'comrade-veterans' to refer to those who were involved in local histories of violence and are trying to claim veteran status.

There is a sustained and continuous discourse of veteran recognition and reward in South Africa. Under current president Jacob Zuma, the emphasis, significance and celebration of veteranhood has been on the increase, with veteran identity and benefits becoming central to government discourse and practice. Recently a new Military Veteran's Act (No. 18 of 2011) was passed, and a new military veteran's organisation, the South African National Military Veterans Association (SANMVA) was formed in order to disseminate the gains offered by the Act (Military Veterans Act, 2011). In Zuma's 2009 presidential speech commemorating the national Day of Reconciliation, he asserted, 'Fellow South Africans, this year's National Reconciliation Day is dedicated to the forgotten heroes of this country's liberation, our military veterans'. He went on to outline the histories and problems faced by the military veterans of the liberation struggle and to put veterans clearly at the centre of reconciliation, by implying that, in order to

achieve reconciliation, we must remember the violent heroes of the struggle who until now have been neglected. A year later, the Day of Reconciliation marked the launch of the government's Department of Military Veterans, with a mandate to formalise support to veterans (Zuma 2010).

In a statement on the Military Veterans Bill (now Act) delivered by the Deputy Minister of Defence and Military Veterans, Thabang Makwetla on 18 November 2010 he argued that it represents: 'an ongoing effort to position the historical role that military veterans have played in the democratisation of our country in its appropriate station. At another level parts of our objective include the reconstruction of our history and heritage of our journey to freedom, democracy and peace-building in Africa and beyond' (Makwetla 2010). The Act therefore is intended to 'enhance the well-being and quality of life of military veterans through a steady realisation of socio-economic opportunities and recognition of their selfless efforts to bring about change' through providing 'a comprehensive delivery, machinery and system of benefits' (Makwetla 2010). However, in order to become a member of SANMVA and gain access to the benefits of recognition and material reward and support, you have to be able to prove that you belong to a 'recognised military veterans' association'. Therefore, being considered a legitimate military veteran means proving connection to legitimate military structures. This, for the most part, excludes comrade networks of internal struggle led from below, such as the Amabutho of Nyanga Bush or the comrades of KTC.

The exclusion of comrades from the national narrative forms part of what Baines (2007) calls the hegemonic narrative of national liberation, which privileges the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) of the ANC and the military struggle in exile. Belinda Bozzoli (2004) argues that it was through the reification of the official ANC narrative of the violent struggle that the memories of the comrades became excluded. She demonstrates this argument through the case of the memory of the internal war in the township of Alexandra, Johannesburg. She argues that the 'ANC sanctioned memory' presented to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) did not align with the conventional understanding of the unfolding of events (Bozzoli 2004: 257). Through prosecuting the 'comrades' in a separate and low-profile

case, not only were their counter-memories and stories marginalised, but they became the scapegoats for the violence perpetrated in the name of the liberation (Bozzoli 2004). Through this marginalisation of the memories of the ‘comrades’ the ANC appropriated the internal struggle as its own, while at the same time pushing the blame for community violence that accompanied this rebellion onto the comrades.

This process of criminalising the comrades has specific inflections for the Crossroads case. With regards to the memory of Crossroads, the TRC included an investigation of the violence of 1986. On the origins of the violence, it concluded that:

The commission finds that the origins of the conflict lay in historical rivalries and political differences between different groups and an increasing tendency to resolve such differences by violent means. However, these conflicts would not have resulted in the scale of violence and destruction without the permission, facilitation and endorsement of the security forces (TRC [sa]: 306).

While the TRC recognises the role played by police in the Witdoeke violence, and the underlying ‘political difference’, the focus of the TRC in Crossroads remains on the violence between Witdoeke and politicised comrades. Therefore, attention is not turned to the violence between the state and the comrades, or the comrades against the state. In national memory, the events in Crossroads are remembered as an example of tragic vigilante and inter-community violence, not as part of the internal apartheid war and the struggle between community resistance and the apartheid state. To use Foster et al’s (2005) conceptualisation, the violence of Crossroads is remembered in terms of its horizontal or lateral expressions, but not in terms of its bi-directional expressions of liberation violence against oppression. This remembering results in frustrating and painful implications for those who were involved in this violence, which will be demonstrated in the following section.

While the role of the TRC was to explain violence for the purposes of healing the tragedy of trauma, the role of ‘veteran discourse’ celebrates past violence in terms of the narrative of the liberation struggle. However, Crossroads comrades and their violence against the state are not recognised in the remembering of Crossroads violence; instead comrade violence is demonised

and scapegoated in the sense that Bozzoli discusses above. Through the TRC, Crossroads is remembered as an example of inter-community and vigilante violence. At the same time, through national liberation struggle discourse, the role of the comrades is delegitimised and criminalised.

While the discourse of the national liberation struggle deals with the demobilisation and recognition of veterans who fought in the apartheid wars, the discourse of reconciliation deals with the healing of individuals affected by the violence of these wars. When South Africa transitioned from apartheid to democracy, the new ANC government faced the challenge of how to deal with the legacies of past human rights violations. A central response to this challenge came in the form of the TRC, which also functioned to create a discourse, or a web of meaning, around how actors involved and affected by past violence should be conceptualised and responded to. Furthermore, in responding to the past, the role and future of the new nation was also legitimised in terms of a discourse of healing past wounds, forgiving past perpetrators and reconciling a divided nation (Mamdani 2001; Posel & Simpson 2002; Moon 2006; Moon 2008;). This was done through acknowledging individual victims of past violations of human rights, by listening to their stories of trauma and providing economic reparation for past pain.

The connection between trauma, victimhood and reparation was set up in the context of the TRC, where it was recommended that victims who gave testimony to the TRC should be paid reparation. Towards these ends, in 2003 the government agreed on a once-off payment of R30 000 (about \$3000) (Sarkin 2004). Therefore, through the discourse of reconciliation and the TRC, victimhood was linked to economic resources as individual pay-outs were recommended for those who had presented themselves as victims of apartheid violence. Another way in which victimhood has been linked to material benefits is through land claims of forced removal. In general, there is a discourse of dealing with past injustice in South Africa that links victim identity to traumatic memory to individual pay out.

The TRC also offered a space for perpetrators of past political violence to apologise to the victims of that violence and to gain amnesty for their politically motivated crimes. The conditions of amnesty in the TRC and the discourse of veteran demobilisation share a construction of the past that privileges political organisations over popular struggle. This has resulted in the symbolic exclusion of comrades, with dire effects on their lives. With the creation of the TRC and the amnesty clause, prisoners who had not been granted indemnity in the first instance could apply for amnesty. In applying for amnesty, actors had to demonstrate that their crimes were connected to a political organisation and that individuals were acting not of their own volition, but in relation to the assumed authority of the political or state organisation and instructions (Deegan 2001). As a result, the majority of comrades, who were acting on their own in the context of the enemy who was on their doorstep, could not easily align their stories to this narrative of the leadership and orders given by political organisations.

In sum, through the discourse of the national liberation struggle, a symbolic structure was created that functioned to recognise legitimate veterans and also to place the ANC liberation party and their military wing at the centre of memories of liberation violence. Entire histories of internal resistant violence were excluded from these benefits and recognitions and instead became scapegoats for the messy, dirty parts of comrade violence, constructed as a separate, unfortunate offshoot from the central national liberation struggle fought in exile. The violence and abuse experienced by black South Africans inside South Africa was constructed through the discourse of victimhood and individual victim reparation for human rights abuses. Identities of violence experienced by black South Africans inside South Africa, who were not part of formal military structures, fall through the gaps within these constructions of memory, as perpetrators of violence cannot claim either amnesty from the TRC nor demobilisation and special pensions from the ANC.

#### 4.2. Experiences and Effects of National Memory Discourse

Victimhood and veteranhood represent the two keyhole memory identity categories available, through which Crossroads memory community makes

claims on history, bringing their past into conversation with the memory politics of the present. These memory discourses are very problematic for members of Crossroads community who attempt to speak through them, while at the same time struggling with the ways in which their historical and present realities do not make sense in terms of these keyhole identities. In this section, I demonstrate the disconnection and injustice that occurs for local actors engaging with national memory discourse.

#### 4.2.1 Claiming, Blaming and Criminalising Comrades

The exclusion and scapegoating of comrades discussed by Bozzoli (2004) is born out in my research. This section illustrates how comrades of Crossroads memory community are excluded and demonised by representatives of national memory discourse. Respondents experience this as a symbolic claiming and blaming of the role they played. Through the discourse of veteranhood, nestled in the hegemonic narrative of national liberation, a dichotomy is presented. On the one side of this dichotomy there are the clean and neat structures of violence, with clear chains of command through MK in exile, representing pure political violence. On the other side, the comrades are presented as disconnected from neat leadership chains, acting of their own volition, and dirty in the sense that their violence was not purely political and included criminal and opportunistic violence.

This split functions to celebrate and sanitise the MK as clean, neat, ordered, legitimate violence and demonise the comrades as dirty, messy, out of control, illegitimate violence. This split was reflected back to me in a variety of instances when I asked representatives of the discourse of national liberation to explain the exclusion of comrade structures of violent resistance from veteran identity. For example, Gladstone Ntamo represents a former member of the squatter-comrades who became a member of the MK internal Self-Defence Unit (SDU) structure. He was a leader of the squatter-comrades of the radical KTC squatters, who joined forces with the Nyanga Bush squatters. However, in his own life narrative interview he tells a story of joining the MK unit, led by Tony Yengeni in Gugulethu township. Today Yengeni is a well-known and notorious politician and former MK veteran.

While Ntamo claims his veteran status from his link to Yengeni's unit, he contests squatter comrade claims to veteran status by putting forward the view that the leadership and instructions from above were clear. He argues that, if people acted from below in ways that were not following a clear neat leadership chain, they were not considered legitimate members and veterans of the anti-apartheid liberation struggle:

You know, as I said, we had leaders who led us, not everybody, but we had leaders who gave us clear message and I believe that if that message was from the leaders it was very clear to us. It might not be clear to those who were doing their own things, but those who were following the leaders ... so I'm saying it was not confusing, and people confuse themselves. People confuse themselves. For example, you can't be a commander if you are not a commander, you must be a commander only if you are instructed to be a commander ... So if you are a commander, your duty is to take all these messages and give instructions, the right instructions, you can't get instructions from me, or from this comrade, you must get instructions straight from the commanders, comrades who were then appointed to be commanders by the structures of MK, as I said that, even if comrades were inside the country, comrades from outside came in and trained some comrades, so for those comrades to train other comrades, but instructions are coming down now inside the country in a very clear way, you can't miss those instructions (Ntamo, Interview, 27 February 2012).

Ntamo's narrative reflects a legitimising and excluding mechanism set up through the transition, through the national narrative of the liberation struggle which privileges the MK in exile, and gives the history of the struggle a clear leader, with clear structures and clear orders to be followed or acted against.

This narrative was similarly expressed to me when I went to speak to the Director General of the Department of Military Veterans, Tshepe Motumi at the preparatory meetings for SANMVA. While waiting for him, I spoke to a former MK Commander called 'Moscow' about the internal struggle, to which he responded:

There were commanders who came into the country and set up SDUs, trained people. But they were very cautious because of the danger of spies, so they only chose people who had been tested and checked. It was a few people who were carefully chosen, a close structure easy to identify who belonged to it ('Moscow' [paraphrased] Interview, 31 August 2011).

And then, when I interviewed Director General Motumi, he described this same line of command, which means that internal veterans of struggle are easily identifiable by MK leadership. When I described my respondents and their attempt to gain legitimacy as veterans, he responded that they sounded like 'struggle veterans' rather than 'military veterans' and confirmed that it

was only military veterans who could be legitimately recognised, demobilised and included through the imagined orderly structures of MK leadership (Motumi, Interview, 31 August 2011).

For squatter-comrades, their position within the discourse of veteranhood has adverse symbolic, psychological, political and material effects. In terms of respondents' experience of this position, they assert a sense of their histories of resistance being demonised and painted as 'black-on-black' violence rather than anti-apartheid resistance. As Manxiwa of the Nyanga Bush leadership committee explains:

We have taken part in the struggle, but now our partaking in the struggle is covered by the fight of us against the Witdoeke ... this now is very negative, but people are just mixing it and covering our fight with the Witdoeke (Manxiwa, Interview, 10 August 2012).

Similar sentiments were expressed by Melford Yamile, who was the radical squatter leader of Nyanga Bush; who we were introduced to in chapter two with the quote from Cole (1978), when Yamile defiantly refused to accept the politics of reform and the negotiated terms of re-settlement to Khayelitsha offered by Bezuidenhout in 1985. In his interview, he lamented the way in which the struggle of Nyanga Bush has been remembered through the lens of horizontal violence only and how this 'dents the image' of the underground unit, the Amabutho, operating in these squatter spaces:

Once you touch the issue of Witdoeke it damages the image of the struggle, especially that of Amabutho, it dents the image of Amabutho, it makes as if we were fighting against each other, there was no political elements, no political views, no political influence in our fight with Witdoeke (Yamile, Interview, 11 August 2011).

Through the national narrative and its construction of violence in Crossroads, squatter violence is placed within the political versus criminal binary as 'black-on-black' or 'not political' violence, or it is criminalised through drawing attention to the dirtier aspects of internal struggle and its connection to drug dealer and gang networks.

Another comrade, who operated in Nyanga Bush and lives in Philippi today, Sindiswa Nunu, comments on the way in which this demonisation has geographical dimensions. While the units from the township of Gugulethu that are connected to Yengeni and MK military structures are privileged, the

comrades of Crossroads are criminalised and accused of being drug dealers, selling *dagga* (marijuana):

The people of Philippi say the people of Gugulethu treat them as foreigners in this place, say the struggle against apartheid belongs to the people of Gugulethu, not the people of Crossroads and Nyanga Bush, they consider the people who went there those who were selling *dagga* (Sindiswa, Interview, 9 August 2011).

The use of drug-dealer networks and the exchange of weapons for *dagga* is a common strategy discussed throughout oral histories of squatter struggle. However, the messy realities of internal struggle are used as a basis through which to criminalise and scapegoat the comrades of squatter struggles.

Comrades feel the frustration of being delegitimised, criminalised, symbolically unacknowledged and demonised while the role they played in the struggle is claimed by others. For example, the powerful symbol of the anti-apartheid struggle is the Gugulethu Seven, a famous story and memorialised event where seven comrades were lured into a trap and killed by apartheid police in Gugulethu. While some of the comrades came from the squatter movements and as a group were part of the comrade squatter networks, this famous struggle symbol has been claimed by the MK leaders of Gugulethu. At the 2000 unveiling of their memorial, MK leaders asserted that these seven comrades operated under the MK unit in the Western Cape. Charles, a former comrade and Amabutho member who served in Commander Zet's unit in Nyanga Bush, comments on the symbolic power of the Gugulethu Seven: 'Gugulethu Seven is the only thing that people speak about, is given most attention' (Charles, interview, 17 March 2012). In the quote below, Commander Zet expresses a frustration held by many squatter-comrades about the inaccurate claiming of the Gugulethu seven by the MK unit connected to Gugulethu:

Now the people of Gugulethu they behave as if everything that took place has been done by them, there's no need for you to lie about the struggle and the history, the history is very important it tells us where we come from and where we are going to. So we don't want someone to lie. So those seven comrades who have been brutally murdered, it's not because of Gugulethu (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

This sense of having their struggle claimed for the benefit of others is a dominant source of frustration across interviews with former comrades. Bongisile is a survivor of the Gugulethu Seven, as he was with the seven

comrades when the ambush occurred, but he managed to escape and subsequently fled to exile. He was an Amabutho member who served under Commander Zet in Nyanga Bush and he expressed his belief that: ‘Some of the people [are] claiming easy victory about us and they are tycoons today’ (Bongisile, Interview, 17 October 2011). Similarly, Wanda comments on his sadness that Commander Zet and all the comrades who operated with him are not recognised, but others benefit by using their victories:

‘What Zet is going through we are all going through ... It feels so sad that Zet does not get the recognition he deserves ... because the leaders of the ANC don’t want Zet to be known, they want to use his name to benefit themselves. It’s so sad.’ (Wanda, in Interview with Charles, 17 March 2012).

This symbolic claiming and blaming is not only ‘sad’, as Wanda expresses above, but it has material and political consequences. Many comrades who were arrested could not fulfil the requirements of proving their crimes were ‘politically motivated’ (acting on orders from a political organisation rather than of one’s own volition) and therefore were not released from prison and were unable to gain amnesty. For example, Wanda was arrested in 1986 for a hit on police, where a child was killed in the crossfire and he was sentenced to death row. He was not granted amnesty, he spent twenty years in prison and he was still under house arrest when the research was conducted. Other comrades resisted the imposed local power of ANC structures and individuals during the transition. Powerful community and comrade leaders who posed a threat to new local leaders were targeted as trouble-makers, set-up or attacked by newly installed local ANC leaders. For example, as an Amabutho leader, Commander Zet was targeted by local ANC members in the Western Cape<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, many comrades could not gain access to the demobilisation and benefits set aside for veterans as they could not claim legitimate veteran status.

In addition to being excluded from amnesty and demobilisation through not complying with the version of the liberation struggle constructed from above,

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<sup>7</sup> Another example of targeting internal trouble-makers during the transition was given in an informal discussion with a member of the Amabutho of Mandela Bay in the Eastern Cape. In this discussion he described being set up by ANC members who labelled him a trouble-maker.

comrades are further unable to successfully apply for special pensions for the role they played in the struggle. Sindiswa gives a ‘very hurting’ example of what happens when squatter-comrades apply for special pension and are denied because of how Crossroads is remembered in terms of the horizontal violence of the Witdoeke:

Let me give you a very, very hurting thing when it comes to the special pensions, when a person applies for the special pension then on that kind of person’s address appears as Philippi or Crossroads, then they say oh these are the people of the Witdoeke (Sindiswa, Interview, 9 August 2011).

Because of this memory issue, Manxiwa asserts below it is important not to confuse the horizontal violence of the Witdoeke with the struggle involvement of the Nyanga Bush residents:

If we do not explain exactly the difference between the fights of Witdoeke and the Nyanga Bush residents is that when we demand our special pension, for instance, the people that are making the decision must be able to clearly see that these are two things that must not get confused and think that we did not take part in the struggle because we are coming from Crossroads. That is why I so hope that we dig this down from the bottom we don’t take it up here, we need to give clarity to those that are alleging that we are not the freedom fighters (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

The issue of how Crossroads violence is remembered, and the role of comrades denied, is further compounded by the discourse of the national liberation that privileges ex-combatants from exile and the military struggle. A comrade, Lati, who was part of the committee structure of Nyanga Extension – which worked together with Nyanga Bush – asserts that, because they do not have an Special Pension (SP) number, such as are given to members of the liberation wings of the ANC and APLA, they cannot access special pensions for veterans:

While we did our application for the special pension, all of us got the response that says we didn’t qualify ... There are a lot of obstacles that are made so we cannot access this money, because where do I get a number from an army, I was never in an army, how do I get a number from an army? ... This money is prepared for people in the MK and APLA. There is nothing that is said about the people who never went to exile. We weren’t there, we were here. We are the people that become Khayelitsha and Philippi, the people from Crossroads. Nobody knows about our contribution and recognises it (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

Lati’s quote demonstrates a number of key points. He asserts that, in order to gain special pension, one’s needs an SP number which can only be given if you were part of a formal military structure. Furthermore, he connects this exclusion and confusion to the lack of knowledge about the contribution of

the people of Crossroads to anti-apartheid resistance, and a lack of understanding about the history of the people who came from Crossroads who reside in the townships of Philippi and Khayelitsha today.

Due to the adverse ways in which squatter histories of struggle have been included in national memory as inter-community or criminal violence, rather than empowered resistance, when they apply for veteran compensation and inclusion into the veteran identity, their applications are denied. These quotes demonstrate the connection between the symbolic significance of exclusion and its connection to material exclusion. The way in which violence is remembered and forgotten impacts on the material and political claims that squatter-comrades can make on the material resources set aside for veterans of struggle. Respondents, frustrated with their failed attempt to gain recognition, all emphasise the issues with the national memory discourse, which denies and misunderstands the nature of violence they participated in, with dire material, political and emotional consequences for these local actors.

#### 4.2.2 Material Reward for Past Suffering: Victim Experiences of Hope and Despair

For Crossroads memory community, the discourse of veteranhood impacts on them negatively, as they are adversely included and demonised by it. Analysing how the discourse of reconciliation and victimhood impact on respondents, similar negative and painful experiences are expressed. The members of Crossroads memory community suffered and survived an extreme amount of injustice and violence during the internal apartheid wars. These actors hold onto and retell their memories of pain and suffering through police arrest, abuse and deportation, as well as the war, violence and dislocation of the forced removal of 1986. The suffering and loss faced, as a result of this past, is connected to the national memory discourse of reconciliation and reparation, as it travels down into respondents' awareness. The meaning of past violence for respondents is often connected to their desire to present themselves as victims, in order to gain access to socio-economic benefits. Furthermore, most of the people who come out of this

history of violence continue to suffer poverty and destitution in the present. Therefore, the connection of the psychological to the socio-economic provides a hope that they may be able to connect to reparation or land claims money through memory activist organisations, which may provide material ‘reward’ in the context of destitution. This expression of past pain is provided by one of the women in the group, who asserted: ‘Reparation could at least be a prize for everything we have gone through’ (Group Interview, Zulu’s place, 28 October 2011).

In one of the group interviews, Zulu describes why people are attempting to gain access to reparations. Respondents have seen others receiving R30 000 because they testified about their past experiences of human rights abuses at the TRC. He explains in the quote below that, because the people of Crossroads went through the same thing as those who have received reparation, and because they hear of memory activist organisations advocating on behalf of victims, they too want to try and get access to these funds:

The Truth Commission had few people that got paid an amount of R30 000 that they could get; we would wish it could also happen to us. The same people who were repaired by the Truth Commission, it’s the same thing that we went through. This is why they wanted to get closer to the Khulumani program, but Khulumani is also saying to them there is money allocated for the people who went through this situation, but the only thing that is difficult for them to understand is that the money cannot be divided for everybody and Khulumani is finding a very huge challenge to get through to dividing that money for everyone so that they all get repaired (Zulu, Group Interview, Zulu’s place, 28 October 2011).

Zulu describes how the discourse of reconciliation and reparation for victimhood travelled down from the media to respondents, who feel that they too have stories of pain and therefore should get R30 000. Furthermore, the memory activist organisation is perceived as the channel through which to access this economy of trauma and reparation.

The issue, however, is that it is often painful and draining for people to tell their experiences of past pain. Psychologically, they re-live this pain and are plunged back into their traumatic experiences of the past, a process that is described as ‘reviving’ old wounds. Furthermore, people spend what little they have on making photocopies, paying for membership fees or transport costs to meetings, in the hope that they may get access to financial reward.

When this does not happen people are negatively impacted in terms of their psychological well-being, their material circumstances and their ontological condition. This process is discussed in the quote below where Virginia\* from the group interview describes the ‘pain’ of reliving the past to ‘become victims’, but not receiving reparation:

It gets very much to me when these issues are spoken about, because we’ve lost brothers and sisters and our own kids during that fight, we were running over dead bodies, looking at our houses getting burned and our belongings burning inside those shacks, it was a very painful experience and when this issue is spoken about the pain comes back and nothing has happened – we received nothing – we were not compensated, not repaired. We were told of becoming those victims and attending the Khulumani meetings and we were in and out of those, but nothing happened in reality and we were told that we should have gone to the TRC but we never went to the TRC (Virginia\*, Group Interview Dlamini’s home, 24 January 2012).

Going through the process is painful, but respondents do not receive reparation because they did not appear before the TRC. In the quote below, a woman from a group interview at Zulu’s place, Ethel Ntsophongawale, further unpacks this process through a description of the violence of hope and disappointment and the loss people feel ontologically and materially when they do not receive financial compensation, despite their efforts. Furthermore, she expresses the competition that arises as individuals are pitted against each other, where some gain access and others don’t and that this is connected to power and leadership:

I apologise, we’ve been long in this road, I feel so painful we are now losing energy and we’ve been trying in every way of doing things, I just want to give you a few words. I am coming to this point of hope, we’ve been promised that our hopes are being raised. We contribute huge amounts of money assisting in the hope that something will come out of it; nothing succeeds in all those efforts. A lot of people have withdrawn from contributing to these efforts because of disappointment and the people who were trying to lead and help us, when we hear that there is money coming out, there is a lot of money that comes out of the government to the people here, but this money is not distributed to the right people, it is kept by those leaders who go and get the money and then they give to the few and leave the majority behind (Ethel, Group Interview Zulu’s Place, 4 November).

When reparation is not received, it creates a new kind of victimisation in the ontology of hope and despair. There is a sense that the ontology of hope and despair in the face of desperation adds insult to injury, as respondents express their victimhood as being exacerbated by this drama. Therefore, the connection between past pain and present healing, in the form of the

possibility of financial reparation or socio-economic assistance is itself experienced as traumatic.

The connection between past psychological pain and present material reward is a problematic one, requiring respondents to re-live that pain for pay-out, but without a pay-out guaranteed. They are reduced to the pain of their past, a pain that might really need psychological address. But, because the structural realities of continued oppression are more pressing, reparation comes to replace and fill in for economic transformation. This, in turn, has dire consequences for respondents who are caught in the drama of reparation, the hope of cash for pain, and the despair when nothing comes of their efforts. When they do not get access to reparation money, despite the attempt to mobilise their resources of time, money and pain, this is experienced as victimisation at the hands of the reparation industry. Furthermore, they find themselves pitted against and in competition with each other for limited, individual 'rewards' of reparation. This is the way in which the discourse of reconciliation, in terms of how it connects victimhood to reparation, plays out and impacts on the lives and psyches of respondents. While in theory reparation is a noble idea, because of the extreme poverty and lack of structural change in South Africa, and because of the individualism that reparation implies, it comes to play a problematic role in the lives of respondents.

#### 4.3 Memory Agency: Mobilising Memories as Resource or Weapon

While the previous section dealt with the question of how national memory discourse impacts on and affects Crossroads memory community, this section looks at the kinds of agency that emerge in respondents' engagement with these discourses. A useful way to conceptualise the hegemonic discourse of national memory is as a web of meaning that tells us how the past should be remembered, who should be remembered and in what ways they should be remembered (Parker 1994; Laclau & Mouffe 2001). Some memory identities and stories, such as the MK soldier-veteran, are legitimised by this memory web, others, such as the squatter-comrades, are delegitimised. However, members of the Crossroads memory community are not completely excluded

from the memory web. Rather, they are adversely incorporated in a way that places them in a contradictory position in relation to memory discourse. This memory bind results in two forms of antagonistic narrative agency. One form of narrative agency, found in respondents' engagement with memory discourse, attempts to gain inclusion into the memory web, thus supporting its underlying assumptions. The other, however, acts more subversively to challenge these underlying assumptions. Because these two forms of agency appear together for respondents, they represent a contradictory consciousness, which both supports and subverts hegemonic memory (Gramsci 1971). These two forms of agency and the contradictory consciousness that emerges through respondents' engagements with national memory represent another key finding of this research.

The most common form of narrative agency acts as a kind of glue, attempting to add actors' memories into the pre-created memory web, to demonstrate veteran or victim status in terms of the requirements of the web. This agency mobilises memory as a resource through which respondents try to gain inclusion into the national narrative and identities of veteran and victim. However, attempts to gain inclusion into national memory come with costs, as demonstrated earlier. Veterans must deny parts of their history and buy into a version of history that excludes them. Victims re-play and re-live the pain of their past in the hope of reparation but suffer despair and loss when these financial 'prizes' for suffering do not materialise.

On the other hand, there are ways in which respondents mobilise their lived memory as a weapon to cut through the underlying assumptions of the web. Instead, they subvert the terms on which these identities are created, as these are not in line with the ontological memories and lived experiences of respondents. This section demonstrates how respondents claiming both veteran and victim status challenge the assumptions of this discourse and call on the spectre of their ontological memories of squatter struggles, which do not fit so snugly within national memory discourse, and the keyholes it provides.

#### 4.3.1 'Making Our Own Means': Creativity versus Criminality

While respondents attempting to gain veteran status want to legitimise the role they played, in order to gain access to veteran benefits, there are two forms of narrative agency that emerge in these attempts. On the one hand, they support the discourse of national liberation, and the privileged role of the ANC and MK; on the other hand, they ask that they, too, are recognised as legitimate veterans. An example of this is found in a quote from Faizel, when he describes the role of SVACOM:

We are not doing this in exclusion of MK, we are saying that they played a critical role, but also give us recognition for the role we played. We did not just come and make the country ungovernable, it was a specific call from Oliver Tambo in 1983 to make the country ungovernable. We take responsibility for the several states of emergency, because they were not called because of sanctions and not because of MK camps in Angola, it was because of what we did, we made the streets on fire in the Western Cape and engaged with apartheid military and police structures that led to the state of emergency. So we are saying let us take the three legs and together we claim responsibility, politically those in exile, the MK as the external threat and us internally. So it was this engagement at these three fronts which brought apartheid to its knees (Faizel, Interview, 25 July 2011).

In the quote above, Faizel does not challenge the role, significance and leadership of the ANC and MK in exile. Instead, he argues for an inclusive approach, where internal comrades may be recognised as part of the veteran structure.

Another way in which respondents attempt to gain inclusion into the discourse is by asserting that the role they played was political and not criminal. For example, in the quote below, Lati contests the construction of the violence in Crossroads as un-political. He names a well-known policeman from Crossroads, and remembers that Barnard was chasing the comrades during the violence of 1986. Lati presents an argument here, generally held by members of the Crossroads memory community, that this violence was political and was influenced by the apartheid state because of the role played by squatter-comrades in anti-apartheid struggle:

Some people think that the fight in Crossroads was not a political war, but I say it was a political war, why did Barnard get involved if Barnard was also alleged as the police that was chasing to catch the comrades? How did this happen if there were not political influences? (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

The re-legitimation of the role played by squatters and the struggle for their inclusion in veteran identity are examples of the use of personal and collective memories of violence as a resource through which to argue and struggle for their inclusion. The agency of inclusion says: we were legitimate veterans of struggle, who were involved in legitimate political violence against the apartheid regime. However, by attempting to gain inclusion into the national narrative, they are also supporting two underlying hegemonic assumptions that deny their own historical experience. The first is the taken-for-granted legitimacy and leadership of MK and the ANC as the national liberation party. The second is the neat distinction between criminal and political.

While the quotes above argue for recognition of the role played by the squatter-comrades in the liberation struggle and support the underlying assumptions of the discourse of national liberation, the quotes below represent the contradictory lived memory that challenges these assumptions. Comrade veterans remember that, despite the assumed legitimacy of the ANC and MK, they were, in fact, acting alone to fend off the enemy. They ask the question of MK: while we were fighting, where were you? Furthermore, they challenge the construction of leadership from above, which positions MK members as leaders of internal units that were leading the violent struggle in the Western Cape. It is by proving connection to these units and the neat lines of leadership from above, that comrades may be included into the national narrative. However, the quotes below challenge this version of struggle history and, consequently, the very basis on which inclusion is granted or denied. For example, Manxiwa poses the question below to the MK members who have come from exile. He asks them what they were doing in exile while the internal forces were waging the war against the state inside South Africa:

We've got a short question currently, the question we ask is that we as internal forces, the people that we are fighting with inside the country, we were throwing stones at the troops of the apartheid system, what were they doing where they were? What fight did they raise against the system when we were throwing stones and getting shot at? (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

Similarly, in the interview extracts below, Charles Kanku who was a comrade and member of the Amabutho of Nyanga Bush, asks what MK members were

doing when comrades were dying. However, his quote, and the discussion that follows it, goes further to argue that the very basis on which the internal struggle has been demonised and criminalised denies what was necessary, in a context where there was no help from MK soldiers, despite what the national narratives and MK supporters say today. The clean lines of communication narrative are in stark contrast to the realities of the creativity required to ‘make your own means’ of resistance. Charles challenges the view that MK soldiers were in charge of the internal struggle, by arguing that they were not around when people were fighting and dying, and that the very nature of this internal struggle came out of the lack of help from MK leadership structures. Below I present the discussion which emerged as I checked that I had understood Charles’s comments correctly in terms of the common themes of ‘making their own means’ which emerged across interviews:

Charles: You know Kim this is a big question to us, even to today I have this question, if those guys were here, what were they doing? People were dying day by day. You know what I heard after that, I heard that the time of 1986, I hear Tony Yengeni was here ... And also where did he get his bullets, weapons and hand grenades? The other people who played a big role were the drug dealers. We went to them, because what happens, someone goes with a weapon for a parcel of drugs, you see we start to look for ourselves. You see the drug dealers, they didn’t worry much about the struggle, but you see what they do, when they get firearms whatever, hand grenade, they contribute, so they played a big role, really, we got a lot of weapons from them, because if someone got a R1 he takes it to them to get three or four parcels of *dagga*, and they call us and we come and fetch it.

Kim: and this part of the struggle, this creative, ‘making your own means’ to be in the struggle. This is the thing that is not recognised?

Commander Zet: we made our means to get the R4, there was no single weapon we got from the MK, so what were those guys busy doing?

Charles: that’s what I’m saying, that’s what I’m saying, that is still my concern. If there were MK here, why did we so suffer to get the weapons to fight? We have to make our own means to get something [weapons]. That is still my question. (Charles and Commander Zet, Interview, 17 March 2012)

Charles is questioning the way in which the realities of internal struggle are ignored and replaced with a view that it was neatly led from above, despite the fact that the memories of those involved tell a very different story. He continues to assert that he would like the truth of the internal struggle to come out, to challenge the claiming of the Gugulethu Seven and to tell people the messy version of the internal struggle, where anti-apartheid resistance is combined with drug and gang networks. Similarly, in the quote from Yamile,

below, he expresses this counter-narrative by comparing the role played by the squatters with the role of people in exile. He argues that, in order to be involved in the anti-apartheid struggle, they had to find a way to get weapons without help from the MK leadership structures:

We feel, I feel, I will show you one day I've got bullets here in my body, they did not face the barrel, they were scared, they would go through a process of training trying to motivate them, trying to encourage them, trying to instil the war mentality in their minds. We did not need that, we were encouraged enough, we took it upon ourselves to stand up, to get weapons. I had to go out to the *boers* and take weapons from them in their own residence and then I would bring those weapons. We had to sell *dagga*, go to the Eastern Cape and bring *dagga* in so to be able to exchange *dagga*, and the coloured people from Elsie's River, we created a relationship with coloured people, we would go there during the night, they are looking for *dagga* and we would get their weapons (Yamile, Interview, 11 August 2011).

In this quote, Yamile subverts the narrative from above; which presents the MK as the leaders of internal struggle, paints clear and disciplined chains of command and relegates anything dirty to the realms of criminal offshoot outside of the liberation struggle. In contrast, this counter-narrative severs the dichotomy of criminal versus political, by demonstrating how the criminal and political were intertwined within the context of the everyday challenges faced by those fighting on the ground. For these comrades, criminality, gang networks and drug dealers were a crucial part of resistance, in a context where there was no help from above and they were responding to an immediate threat with whatever they had at their disposal. When respondents attempt to tell their own history through the hegemonic dichotomy, they are faced with the paradox of trying to legitimise their memories of struggle, while not colluding in the denial and silencing of the complex, lived realities of internal violence. The dichotomy of the discourse of veteranhood denies rather than unpacks the nature of violence in the internal struggle. As chapter five will further demonstrate, the violence of Crossroads and the comrades was complex and grey, and constructions of legitimate past violence versus illegitimate past violence work against the task of understanding the complexity of past violence in popular struggle.

#### 4.3.2 'We Struggled for Freedom and We Suffer with Freedom': Reconciliation versus Continued Violence

Analysing respondents' engagement with the discourse of reconciliation, a similar contradictory consciousness emerges that both supports and subverts the hegemonic assumptions of this discourse. As the previous section demonstrated, respondents attempt to lay claim to victim status by telling their stories of past pain and conforming to the assumption that this pain was caused by the violence of the past. They re-live experiences of the violence and forced removal of 1986, with the hope that these stories may connect them to reparation. When I first arrived in the group meeting setting, respondents would tell me pre-packaged stories of pain and suffering that all sounded very similar. Each story would take about ten minutes and would emphasise the experience of 1986, the trauma they suffered and the belongings they lost. However, once they were satisfied that I had captured their names and their past trauma, and I had explained and re-explained that I could not help them access reparation, but I could help them by reporting on the struggles they faced in attempting to access reparation, then a different issue emerged. This issue challenged the underlying assumption of reconciliation discourse that the pain of victims is caused by the violence of the past.

Challenging the assumption that the pain victims experience is because of the violence of the past, there is a sense that the past would, in fact, be less painful if the present were different. Thus, the violence that is constructed as more painful is that which is found in the present context. The concept of trauma can often serve a depoliticising function, when the structural oppression of the past is reduced to the individual pain experienced by victims of individual perpetrators of violence. By contrast, respondents are able to re-politicise the concept of trauma, by situating it firmly in the present. Respondent's counter-narratives of trauma subvert the temporal assumptions of reconciliation and traditional trauma discourse. While traditional trauma theory locates trauma in the temporal moment at which the event happened, respondents claim that events are made more or less painful in relation to their outcome in the present. Therefore, the degree of traumatisation is linked to the present outcome of the transition to democracy, rather than the moment of its happening. Through the logic of the

present, past events are narrated as tragic and traumatic pain, rather than necessary pain. If the transition had resulted in a different present, however, the violence of the past would be seen as a necessary sacrifice.

Describing the violence of the past, Gladstone, who was a young boy in Crossroads and looked up to his father who was a squatter comrade, asserts that ‘there was a lot of sense behind the violence of the past where people were fighting for freedom and rights, liberation from the apartheid system’ (Gladstone, Group Interview Beauty’s crèche, 23 November 2011). While the violence of the past was painful, the issue for people is that they cannot put it behind them and say: that was in the past, and today we are free. The continued violence and injustice of the present for the Crossroads memory community means that they cannot let go of the pain of the past, because things have not transformed and their suffering has not abated in the present. This is expressed by two women in two different group interviews in the quotes below:

These things coming up because even today, the suffering we went through then we are still going through today. For instance today I am surviving through selling sweets and *vetkoek*. That is why I’m saying, this situation is getting more painful because you reverse and go back to where you came from when you thought you were through that period but you go back and suffer even today (Babalwa, Group Interview Beauty’s crèche, 24 January 2012).

I came to live in Crossroads, they used to say, *amandla awethu* and we used to go throw stones at the business cars, we were fighting for our land. I become stressed when I talk about this, people would say no work, we don’t go to work, we will starve because we were not working because we were fighting against the system, if you went to work your arm could be cut for joining workers, a lot of people died during that, my friends and relatives died, they were fighting for this liberation, so we could enjoy this freedom, but even today we were not free yet. (Tandiwe\*, Group interview Zulu’s place, 21 October 2011).

The temporal relationship between past and present pain expressed in these quotes can be summarised as follows: the pain of the past is traumatic in the context of the present where people continue to live violence filled lives despite the transition to peace. If respondents could say that what happened in the past is truly in the past, they could feel free from pain. However, the pain of the violence of the past was experienced in vain and, therefore, becomes traumatic in the present, because of its outcome of the lack of change and the experience of freedom as continued violence and oppression.

Another way in which both veteran and victim identities are subverted is in challenging the individualism implied in these discourses. The benefits set aside for veterans and victims are at the level of individuals. Apartheid attacked an entire population with structural violence and black South Africans rose up in united defiance against this violence. However, through the national liberation struggle and reconciliation discourse, violence is individualised and individual victims and veterans are re-reimbursed and recognised. This is continually challenged by respondents who bring back the collective nature of their struggle. Respondents often use the collective pronoun 'we' rather than 'I' when speaking about histories of violence: 'We are twins all chased away by those, so we become one, and my wish is that we do this all together' (Bongani\*, Group Interview Zulu's place, 21 October 2011).

Crossroads memory community emphasises the collective experience of struggle and violence; as a result, the selective nature of reparation seems out of synch with the nature of collective suffering and collective resistance experience from below:

These people are very selective now that the benefits are coming in, people are very selective, but when people were fighting they were not selective, but now they are very selective now that everybody's getting the benefits of taking part in the struggle (Gladstone, Group Interview Beauty's crèche, 23 November 2011).

These quotes represent a critique of the individualisation of the structural oppression of apartheid in the discourse of trauma and reconciliation. In the previous section, respondents highlighted the effects of this individualisation on their experiences of a scramble for individual benefits, where people who once fought and suffered together in unity are now pitted up against each other. Respondents desire inclusion into the discourse of victimhood because of the hope that it may connect them to reparation; therefore they align their stories to the assumptions of this discourse. However, when pushed, a counter-narrative emerges about the nature of the present in relation to the past, which challenges two key assumptions of the discourse of reconciliation. Instead of emphasising the violence of the past, it is the violence and oppression of the present that makes the violence of the past meaningless and therefore traumatic. Furthermore, while they comply with

the individualism of the discourse of reconciliation, their memories remind them of the significance of their collective struggle and identity. This memory is key to challenging the hegemonic memory of the present, and will be further fleshed out in chapter seven, in terms of an alternative memory identity that emerges from respondents' counter-narratives, the identity of 'the people' and the memory of 'people's power'.

#### 4.4 Conclusion: The Paradox of Adverse Inclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the memory bind of national memory discourse, how this impacts on respondents and the forms of agency that emerge in respondents' attempts to engage national memory. Because memory identities of veteran and victim are connected to memory benefits, respondents attempt to tell their own histories through these keyhole identities. However, this impacts negatively on the members of Crossroads memory community as they are forced to deny their own memories of empowerment, creativity and collectivism. Those claiming veteran status are de-legitimised, demonised and criminalised and those claiming victim status are pitted against each other in the reparation drama, which leaves them psychologically, emotionally and financially drained.

Respondents demonstrate two different kinds of agency when engaging national memory discourse. The first is the agency of inclusion, which mobilises memory, in order to gain inclusion into memory identities. This agency supports the assumptions of national memory and implies a denial of the lived experience of respondents. By contrast, another agency emerges from this lived experience, which challenges national memory discourse. The discourse of the national liberation struggle is challenged through a remembering of the empowerment and creativity of the squatter struggles and challenging the assumed legitimacy and leadership of the ANC in exile, as well as the criminal versus political split. The discourse of reconciliation is challenged through an emphasis on the violence and oppression of the present, and the collective nature of the struggle.

While this chapter outlines the contours of these two different memory agencies, the rest of this thesis unfolds the memory narratives of the past, in

order to flesh out and locate these arguments within the historical narratives of past and present. Therefore, the chapter has presented the first layer of findings and a summary of the contradictory consciousness and memory dialogue, which will be traced through respondents' narratives of past and present. Being firmly located in the issues and the contradictions that emerge from the dialogue between local memory and national memory for respondents, we will now dive deeper into their historical narratives, in order to flesh out the lived memory that forms the basis on which a counter-hegemonic challenge to national memory arises. While respondents challenge the assumptions of national memory, they also demonstrate and express a great deal of confusion in terms of their narratives of the present (demonstrated in chapter six). Therefore, the analysis that follows provides the source out of which it is possible to make sense of the contradictory consciousness and to construct a counter-memory narrative.

## Chapter Five

### **Squatter Counter-Narratives of Violence: Awareness, Empowerment and Organic Resistance**

In chapter four, we saw how some of the key memory issues for respondents relate to how memory benefits are connected to memory identities, nestled within particular versions of histories of violence. In this chapter, we delve more deeply into the history of squatter resistance and violence, as narrated by those who were involved and affected by it. The chapter therefore provides a counter-narrative to the dominant memory narrative, but also provides the detail of the lived experience of the past, as it was meaningful for respondents. This lived historical background will further offer a basis through which chapters seven and eight attempt to tease out counter-hegemonic versions of the past that come to challenge dominant interpretations of the present.

This chapter answers the question of how respondents construct their experiences of apartheid, violence and resistance, and how these constructions challenge the meaning of Crossroads violence within national memory discourse. Chapter four demonstrated how national memory discourse constructs the violence of Crossroads – in terms of the discourse of the national liberation struggle – as an example of tragic inter-community violence, and demonises the violence of the comrades as opportunistic, dirty and disconnected from the national liberation struggle. The findings presented in chapter five show that, in contrast to the dominant remembering of Crossroads through themes of the tragedy of inter-community violence, the suffering of victims and the demonisation of comrades, respondents' stories emphasise themes of empowerment, lived resistance, unity and defiance. The aim of this chapter is not to deny the forms of horizontal violence that were part of Crossroads violence, but to re-orientate and re-prioritise memory in ways that are more in line with the lived memories of Crossroads memory community. The key tragedy emphasised by respondents is not the horizontal violence, which did exist, but the way in which the lived resistance,

empowerment and unity of the people is denied and ‘covered over’ by the story of the Witdoeke as a story of inter-community violence.

The narratives presented in this chapter drew specifically from the case of Nyanga Bush, the radical satellite squatter groups within Crossroads; but also radiates out to connect this story to the rest of the Crossroads complex. It begins by presenting three short stories from the life histories of three key respondents who formed part of Nyanga Bush squatter resistance: the squatter leader, the comrade leader, and the United Women’s Organisation (UWO) member. Together they flesh out the experience of what it was like for members of Crossroads memory community to choose to join together in squatter movements against the oppression of the pass laws. The chapter then pulls out some of the key themes emerging within these stories, in relation to a broader analysis of the life histories of Crossroads memory community, to present a common narrative structure occurring around the narrative breach of ‘opening one’s eyes’ to the realities of apartheid and the experience of squatter resistance as an empowering response to this awakening. Finally, the chapter reflects on the place of ‘horizontal’ violence in memories of empowerment.

While the chapter offers an alternative narrative to the narrative of tragic inter-community violence, I argue that this alternative narrative opens up, rather than closes down, the possibility of dealing with the scars of multiple forms of violence, by re-prioritising the experiences of empowerment and freedom held in the lived memory of respondents’ narratives of the past.

### 5.1 Three Stories of Nyanga Bush

In this section, three stories are presented from life history interviews of three respondents to paint a picture of different positions and experiences of Nyanga Bush in the context of oppression, resistance and violence in Crossroads. The squatter movement of Nyanga Bush was formed in 1981 as new squatter groups came together in land adjacent to Crossroads, firstly in Emavundleni (Nyanga Extension) and then a few yards away in Esgangeni (Nyanga Bush). The local government was eager to squash this new wave of squatters in Crossroads and responded with a major raid, where 2 000

squatters were arrested, separated and deported to either the Transkei or Ciskei homelands (called the Eastern Cape after 1994) (Cole 1987). The Transkei group were radicalised by this experience and returned to Cape Town under the leadership of Melford Yamile as a cohesive squatter community. The section below draws from interviews with Melford Yamile to unfold the journey he took and his own experience of the formation and leadership of Nyanga Bush.

#### 5.1.1 Melford Yamile: Squatter Leader of Nyanga Bush

Melford Yamile became the powerful leader of the radical group of Nyanga Bush squatters. Yamile's life story begins like that of most of the people he came to lead in this illegal squatter settlement. Born on 10 October 1947 in the rural Transkei he finished primary school education and then started to work. At the age of 21 he migrated to the city of Cape Town, hoping to create a better life for himself than was available in the Eastern Cape. However, Yamile and his fellow 'home-boys' (the term given to men who share a background of growing up in the rural homelands) came from the Transkei to find work without a pass. Being illegal and at the mercy of the brutal apartheid police, they suffered violence, arrest, fines and deportation. In addition to harassment by the state, Africans from what is now referred to as the Eastern Cape found themselves at the bottom of a hierarchy, reflected in their pass books. They were discriminated against, not only by the racist state apparatus of the law and the police, but also within a system of divide and rule by the 'Capeborns', Africans who were born in Cape Town and had a legal right to reside there.

When Yamile arrived in Cape Town, he found accommodation in the Langa hostels (Zone 27, room 830) and worked in a scrap yard. His first experiences of Cape Town highlight common experiences of migrants from the Transkei at that time, including being harassed and arrested by police, as well as being told by 'Capeborn' Africans that he did not have legal rights and therefore did not belong in Cape Town. In 1970 he returned to the Transkei/Eastern Cape for initiation. Initiation, a process of becoming recognised as a man, involves a group of initiates and their teachers removing

themselves to 'the bush' for a period of spiritual training, circumcision, healing and transformation. On their return, initiates re-integrate into their families, transformed in status from boys to men.

Using a common phrase occurring across the interviews to denote a process of becoming enlightened to the anti-apartheid struggle, Yamile narrates that, when he returned from initiation school to Cape Town, his 'eyes became opened' to the struggle. While he had begun to notice injustices in his period of work at the scrapyard before initiation, it was only after he returned that he really came to understand them in the context of a broader anti-apartheid struggle. This understanding went hand in hand with his attendance at community meetings in Langa and secret meetings with underground activists. While political organisations were banned in South Africa, an underground movement of recruitment and politicisation influenced Yamile. Two key members of this politicising movement were Oscar Mpheta (founding member of Nyanga Bush Residents Association, which campaigned for decent housing, facilities and transport) and Christmas Tinto (chief volunteer of the Langa branch of the ANC and deputy president of the UDF for the Western Cape).

Yamile explains how the injustice of the *dompas* and issues of citizenship and belonging in Cape Town were central to his recruitment and involvement with comrades in the underground. In his own life he rebelled against this injustice, and his leadership of Nyanga Bush came out of his lived experience of the injustice of the pass system, alongside the political education he gained through Tinto's leadership and the meetings he attended. In 1977 and 1978 he experienced the forced removal of the illegal squatter camps in Modderdam and Unibel. Furthermore, from the 1980s the Langa hostels that housed migrants from the Eastern Cape were converted into family accommodation for Africans born in the Western Cape, further displacing migrants who had no rights to residence and nowhere to live in the Western Cape. As a result, Yamile explains, people would meet and sleep in the bush-covered sand dunes in the area next to Langa. They set up camp in Ntumba Bush, where they were supported by the Red Cross and the Roman Catholic Church, as well as the political-religious figure of Father Sidney Lockett. The bush

dwellers did what they could with the black tents provided by the church as temporary shelters. They had to put them up every night and hide them when they went to work, as their existence was illegal and under constant threat from the police.

Remembering the forced removals to the Transkei, Yamile says, ‘one day the police surrounded the place. We were taken into their vans, sent to Pollsmoor prison and then deported to the Eastern Cape’ (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011). This mass deportation is an infamous event in the lives and histories of this group of squatters and was re-told by many respondents who were either part of those rounded up, or had family and friends deported. However, these bush dwellers did not want to return to the Eastern Cape and devised a plan to trick and confuse the state agents by swapping passes and home towns and saying, ‘the only home we know is Cape Town’. Yamile explains, ‘They left us in a hall and didn’t do anything as they discovered we did not know our home towns, then they were confused’ (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011). With help from the Roman Catholic Church and the Transkei government they managed to organise buses back to Cape Town, and the whole experience served to instate a new political identity of ‘refugee’, symbolised in the grey blankets that they were given by the organisations who helped them, as Yamile explains:

When we came back we were calling ourselves refugees, and you know those grey blankets, we identified each other by those grey blankets, if you saw someone with those grey blankets you would say that was one of us. Those blankets were given to people who didn’t have homes. If you have a blanket like me – I know you, you’re on the line with me, yes (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011).

The grey blankets symbolised refugee status; those without a sense of home, but now with a sense of belonging to one another as refugees. In Yamile’s narrative, this story of deportation and return serves to cement a political identity around the idea of being refugees; the process of return provided a further opportunity to create and cement this identity of resistance and the meaning of the place that would be created on return. Yamile and another comrade, Lennox Mlangeni, who would later be shot and killed by police, went through the buses mobilising people and advising them on when it was

safe to sing freedom songs and when they should be silent. In the quote below, Yamile explains the process of organising on the bus, which led to the creation of Nyanga Bush and the decision to stand united against the police as an illegal community of squatter-refugees in an assertion of their right to reside in Cape Town.

So the two of us were mobilising, going to each and every bus and warning people 'when you get to the town don't sing the freedom songs, on the bus it's fine, but if the *boer* hears we are singing these songs, they would arrest us'. We had an agreement that if we arrive on Friday then on Sunday we would have a meeting with all those who came from the Eastern Cape. We gathered there and then we arranged that we must go back where we were before, to Nyanga Bush. Then we went back to Nyanga Bush ... Red Cross came again and gave us food, and Father Luckett gave us black plastic and we were going to cut trees and make our houses, we did not have money to buy zinc or sheets. The municipality inspectors would come and demolish our places and then we would rebuild once again. They would come in the morning and demolish and then in the afternoon we would rebuild again ... I remember those days. Then we decided to build a big space for everybody to live together. Then on the 25 January 1982 we decided that if inspectors are coming we are not going to run away this time, we are going to stay. We will sit there, we did not demolish our houses, they must come and demolish our houses themselves, and then on the 26th they arrived, we made sticks to beat them (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011).

When Yamile's group came back to the Western Cape with the help of the Transkei government, they chose to return to the bush rather than to the townships and they did this against the request of the original leadership of the Nyanga Bush squatters. As soon as they returned they suffered numerous raids and arrests. These sand dune squatters, as they were now called, were described by the Chief Commissioner of Co-operation and Development, Timo Bezuidenhout, as 'a hard core of about three hundred squatters who ignore everything we say and keep coming back' (quoted in Cole 1987:76). Furthermore, in their struggle against the state to remain on the land, this determined group of squatters actively sought connections with progressive anti-apartheid organisations. The meaning of Nyanga Bush, the nature of Yamile's leadership and the resistance posed by the squatters is summarised by Yamile below:

Nyanga Bush was a sort of camp, a bush we were camping in, that's how I can describe it. Our basic objective of being in Nyanga Bush, we stood for our rights ... That's where I got appointed to lead a community was Nyanga Bush, because of the knowledge I acquired from those comrades, like Christmas Tinto, from the knowledge I had from them, people realised my potential ... In Nyanga Bush we had a variety of means to build and reconstruct as a community and leadership,

opening the eyes of the people as to what it means to be a part of the struggle. It went on and continued with the complications of arrest, assault, police burning our houses, but those were the challenges we had to face in order to achieve our goals (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011).

Nyanga Bush was one of the radical squatter communities of Crossroads, formed in the early 1980s within the context and history of the squatter resistance of Crossroads from 1975. However, the state was less prepared to negotiate with this group of squatters and removed them as soon as they set down roots. This was, however, unsuccessful and served only to radicalise the Nyanga Bush squatters in their determination to be given a space to reside in the Western Cape. In Yamile's life story and in the quote above, we see how this squatter community was fashioned out of the state's attempt to remove the squatter leaders. Yamile rose as a squatter leader because of his political knowledge and becoming a member of the group of squatters he led is defined in terms of having one's eyes opened. From the beginning, Yamile and the Nyanga Bush squatters were connected to the anti-apartheid movement through a radical network of activists working underground in the Western Cape. This connection was deepened in 1983, with the formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and in 1984, when Yamile was invited to Holland and London to speak to groups about the struggle in South Africa. In London he met ANC president in exile, Oliver Tambo, and received further support and encouragement to continue the work of Nyanga Bush. When asked how it felt to meet Tambo, he said:

I felt relieved, so excited, I was feeling very excited. They asked me about South Africa, what were we doing and what was going on? That meeting was in the middle of the night. I got the blessings and the courage to go forward. We must not turn back in fighting the struggle (Yamile, Interview, 11 August 2011).

While Yamile received support and encouragement from the ANC leadership and other anti-apartheid groups in exile, he understood his role in these meetings as one of teaching the ANC leadership about what the anti-apartheid struggle was like on the ground. For him, as for other squatter-comrades, this struggle was fought in the white heat of everyday realities of squatter existence in the Western Cape. On returning, he did not tell the people he was leading about his visit, because the ANC was banned and mentioning the organisation was dangerous. He continued to encourage the squatters to stand united in their fight for land against the apartheid

government and their attempts to remove the squatters. Yamile's narrative exemplifies a process of coming to collective resistance in the everyday process of struggling for land. This was a lived resistance to the everyday oppression of the pass system and it connected up with the broader politicisation of the movement. While the ANC did not act as leader of the squatters; it was certainly interested in the popular resistance unfolding inside the country and Yamile's visit was organised in order to provide information about this struggle from below to the liberation movement and to encourage Yamile and the squatters to continue with their struggle. However, the impetus and unfolding of this struggle came from the lived experience of the squatters, and was not led by the liberation movement, despite what the national memory narrative assumes in the context of the present.

#### 5.1.2 Commander Zet: Comrade Leader of the Amabutho

Commander Zet, as he is known by his combat name, was born in 1956 in Lady Frere, Transkei and became the leader of the militant comrade network of Nyanga Bush. While his narrative of coming to understand and resist everyday experiences of oppression is similar to Yamile's, Zet focuses on his lived experience of physical violence and physical resistance in the construction of coming to consciousness. Just as the collective formation and defiance of the squatter movement is constructed by Yamile as empowering in the face of oppression, so too is Commander Zet's experience of direct physical violence as a response to oppressive violence. Commander Zet narrates his first empowering experience of physical resistance as occurring on the mines in Johannesburg in the 1970's. While this was a form of everyday resistance to everyday oppression, for commander Zet it was not yet situated in a broader political consciousness. His eyes were 'not yet opened' to the nature of apartheid, as he says: 'I had never even heard about apartheid'. He describes this experience of oppressive racism and his decision to fight back as follows:

There was a white man, his name was Connie Burger, but we called him Mahlalela, meaning somebody who doesn't work, who loves to stay at home all the time ... and that man, he hated black people in the mines, he liked to hit people. That man,

he made me take the decision to train martial arts, because I didn't want to be hit by anyone (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

Commander Zet decided to attend martial arts training in order to defend himself against the violence of his white boss. One day Mahlalela hit Zet and blamed him for something that went wrong with the work on the mines. Despite warnings from friends, Zet responded to this by confronting his white boss after work for unfair treatment. This confrontation turned violent but Zet did not hold back and he won the fight against Mahlalela. In response to his uncanny physical resistance in the face of white power and racism, he was treated like a hero by his friends, who asserted 'the elephant has been killed by an ant':

I said, I'm not scared of no one, I'm not scared, I respect ... Killer [a friend] gives me a cool drink and a pie, and all the people are waiting, they said 'the elephant has been killed by this ant'. They said I am an ant. (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012)

When Commander Zet says 'I am an ant', he is referring to his place in a system that assumes that he is very small and insignificant, like an ant, in relation to the white man, who is very big and significant. This quote represents the way in which this relationship of inequality was challenged as he decided to go against this assumption and prove it wrong. After the fight, Commander Zet was approached by an old man, who thought that he was fighting for political, rather than personal, reasons. Seeing that Zet was a potential candidate for the anti-apartheid consciousness developing throughout the country, this old man began to educate him on the broader politics of racial oppression in South Africa. Zet remembers this as the beginnings of his political education and awakening consciousness:

Now, to be honest with you, it was the first time for me to understand that we are living under whites ... He said to me, he told me about the situation we live in South Africa, and the people who live in South Africa. I never even heard about apartheid, I only heard about the clan of Matanzima ... He told me about land being deprived, and then we are forced to work on the mines ... Now to see, okay, he even told me about the rules, the Group Areas Act, the forced removal. But that's our land, because it's our land you have to consult us, but they just remove us. (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

After gaining this political education from an underground activist who witnessed Commander Zet's bravery in the face of white power, Zet left the mines and came to Cape Town in the early 1980s with two friends. He was directed to Nyanga Bush, where he came across Yamile's group of comrade-squatters, and listened to them talking about apartheid and resistance. He was interested and impressed by the level of their commitment to their cause. He remembers attending one of their political 'workshops' run by Yamile and Oscar Mpetha, where he learnt more about the oppression of black South Africans. He describes the amazing experience of resistance and empowerment that left him in a state of disbelief:

And then you know I was very interested because these people they came from Lady Frere (in the Eastern Cape) and what surprised me was that they said 'This is our land' ... I can say now it was a workshop, it was a workshop ... If [President] Botha asks you for the pass, firstly he must give you the pass, then after that he must come ask you for the pass, he must not just come and ask you for the pass when you were not given the pass (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February, 2012).

Although the political training was loosely linked to the ANC through Oscar Mpetha, the workshop was not in the name of the ANC, but rather in the name of the citizens of the country: 'We are not belonging to any political organisation, we said we are the citizens of this country, we are created from God, the land, educated by the ... and also we belong to God' (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012). As argued in chapter four, the focus of resistance was necessarily centred on challenging the apartheid state in terms of the lived experience of the oppression of squatters, rather than on the meaning and politics of the ANC as a national liberation organisation. Commander Zet felt inspired by the group who were saying the same thing that the old man had recently taught him and standing in unity against the forces of apartheid and their determination to remove the squatters from the land.

Now, people said you had to say this, they said now, we are behind you, if you are arrested, we are there ... said that whatever happened to us, he'll be with us, arrested he will be there, arrested, we must not change our way ... Then tomorrow I heard the inspector, they were there destroying the shack, that tent, when they destroying, the people are building. No, it's like I'm clipping a stone, you hear the thing from Yamile. When they say, the people that are building, what they say they will die for their rights, they are doing it ... White people were very important at the time, now for them to take land forcefully and chuck people away from their land was something else, it knocks us out, completely. And at this time, I had not

taken any decisions because I had seen this and I liked it, and it became more interesting (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

Inspired by these revolutionary squatters, Commander Zet became part of the Nyanga Bush movement under Yamile, and continued his karate training with the youth of the squatter group. The squatters of Nyanga Bush suffered extreme repression from the state in its attempt to remove and discourage these squatters from settling. However, the more the state pushed against the squatters, the more they pushed back and, in response to a particularly violent raid in 1982, their militancy and resistance became increasingly violent, leading to the transformation of militant youth into a secret underground military structure operating in Nyanga Bush. Commander Zet came to lead these militant youth in combat against the apartheid forces.

Within the context of the squatter movement and anti-apartheid politics evolving in Nyanga Bush, a paramilitary formation developed with the defensive aim of protecting the activists within the squatter groups and the offensive aim of challenging the apartheid forces. The Amabutho, as they were referred to by squatter-comrades, were connected to other underground military structures operating in similarly resistant spaces in the Western Cape. In the interview conducted with Yamile and Commander Zet on the formation of Amabutho, Yamile describes the rise of the comrade-militants in Nyanga Bush. Below, Yamile demonstrates how the formation of the Amabutho came out of the violence of the state against the squatters and the need for immediate protection and response to this violence. Three important points emerge in this quote, regarding the rise and reason for the Amabutho: the formation of the Amabutho through karate and through the youth political structures in the squatter groups; the existence of this military structure among other community structures, such as youth and women organisations; and the general political environment of resistance and protest developing within these squatter communities.

On the 28th January 1982, women carrying babies were harassed and attacked and I was shot in my shoulder. After this Zet came to the fore with other comrades, Thobile, Sikane, Killer, Phakamisa, Mabanti, there were a lot of them but some are dead now. We got together with this militant youth and discussed ideas, this is how we are settling here, this is how we are living here, and everyone must contribute his part to these aims. We said to these young people, 'If you come to live here in Nyanga Bush camp, the *boers* will come and demolish your shack, so it will be for

you to take whatever you've got, to take your stick and stand next to your house and say nobody is going to take my house, this is my house. It is for you to decide', we told them, 'you need to stand for what you believe in, stand for your homestead and protect it with whatever means, a gun a stick, whatever you have in order for you to protect. That is for you, that is how you are going to be living in Nyanga Bush'. Some other men couldn't take it so they left. In the process Vido, the herbalist, Zet, Kanku and Killer, they operated a clan for karate, and they used this place to train people in martial arts. I also used to go and watch and I joined in and took some lessons from these young lions and listened to what they were talking about when they were training. As young people of this calibre they also had an organisation of their own within the community. 1983 we lived in those very complicated situations, 82 and 83 ... During the course of this time the police van was always there and arresting us, as there were *toyi-toyis*, people were *toyi-toying* for different issues against the government or the police (Yamile, Interview, 8 August 2011).

Yamile demonstrates how the formation of the Amabutho came out of the violence of the state against the squatters and the need for immediate protection and response to this violence, in conjunction with the karate training of militant youth to become warriors and a broader context of political unrest, protest and *toyi-toying* (a protest dance activists would often perform). While Yamile, as a squatter leader, provides a holistic view of the Amabutho, Commander Zet discusses the organic way in which comrades would be recruited through karate training into the Amabutho structures.

We know that we grow from the martial arts, which has its own rules, there must be discipline, but [if you are doing marital arts] we are not saying you are the comrade, but it happens by itself, because when we come out of the training, we see the inspector comes and arrests us and asks, 'where is the pass?', and then our fathers are staying alone, not with our mother, so what is happening in fact, is where this thing came from ... Kim, maybe me, someone I meet them because of martial arts, I am so reluctant to tell them what I'm busy doing, maybe they will be against it, you know they will not see the way I see, so now I look, I take what I see to them and when I say, 'You know what, these things are not supposed to be happening to us', and they say 'Ja!' I say, 'Okay this is the right one, the way to approach another person is you have to now ask them, 'Is this right? Is it right to call us "kaffir"? It's not right.' [Charles adds: You look at their response]. You ask, 'Can we fight against them?' It's where now people say, 'If I can get something to fight' ... and then I see them they can fight, and then I tell them about these things (Commander Zet, Charles's Interview, 17 March 2012).

Commander Zet provides a descriptive account of how karate training came together with direct experiences of oppression to mould and produce warrior comrades aware of the injustice and prepared to fight against it. Because of the need for secrecy, Zet had to approach potential recruits with care, testing to see how they responded to questions of injustice and then initiating them into the secret, military role of the Amabutho in the anti-apartheid struggle. He describes the process as happening 'by itself', in an organic fashion,

where youths would experience direct oppression, which would easily lead into a discussion around the nature of apartheid as unjust and the need to fight against it. From this point, Zet could draw the youths into the Amabutho if they demonstrated a will and desire to fight the system.

### 5.1.3 The Narrative of a UWO Member and the Womens' Experiences of Crossroads.

Angelina was born in the Eastern Cape and came to Cape Town in 1976 where she stayed illegally in the Nyanga East hostels. In the passage below she describes her experience of police brutality and the decision to become part of a squatter movement. She emphasises the connection between police brutality and the decision to establish a squatter camp as a means of responding to state violence. However, the violence continued in the squatter camp, and it was particularly hard for women, who also had the responsibility of childcare:

Women were very abused by the police who would come with canes and when we tried to run away from them they would shoot us with rubber bullets and teargas. Once the teargas got to us, they would catch us ... This happened until the point where we decided to establish our own squatter camp, in the bush called Nyanga Bush. Even then things were not well. There were women and men there who had already taken up the struggle, they would go and come back and seek meetings with us. Those were people that educated us about the struggle and the process of the struggle, they would take us to meetings and we would come back at night. During the day we would look for jobs for ourselves and then in the process we would be caught by the police and leaving our little babies behind in the squatter camp we would sleep in the police station and then the same day we are released we would be harassed again and arrested again. It was very, very bad. If we left, when we came back our shelters would be demolished, we were chased by the dogs of the police, they would bite us (Angelina, Interview, 10 November 2011).

In the context of setting up a squatter movement against the brutality of the state, Angelina remembers how the people of Nyanga Bush joined forces with the UDF and with the civic structures developing in the formal townships:

There was this community organisation called the civic and the women who were organising us and teaching us politically. The civics from the established townships were coming to help us and train with the struggle. As we were refugees and they were living in established areas, they would always come and motivate us, give us strength to move forward with our struggle. We joined the UDF and we were really involved with the struggle. And when the police arrived we wouldn't run away we would stand against the police. And we established our houses (Angelina, Interview, 10 November 2011).

In the quote below, Angelina emphasises the role of women and the energy of women in the squatter struggles. She links the everyday struggles for survival and a 'normal life together' with a broader struggle for freedom and the counter-violent structures and forces of the comrades:

UWO intended for people to live well together, people shouldn't be suffering, but should have places to live a normal life together with everybody ... We the women fought very hard for this freedom, we were hiding weapons used to fight and white people would come and bribe us to provide information, but we would never tell that information ... Once a woman makes a scream, everybody will be lifted, everybody will gain strength to stand for what the woman has called for. If a woman takes a stand, her words carry a lot of weight (Angelina, Interview, 10 November 2011).

Angelina remembers the painful experience of 1986, where 'conflict was created between black people'. However, she locates this conflict within a broader fight between the 'comrades' of the struggle and the white police. Finally she emphasises the loss due to the violence of 1986, where many women lost husbands and children:

There is one day I will never forget, a whole night shootout and we did not know where to go. They were burning down our shelters, they were killing people and conflict was created between black people amongst themselves. There was a group with white people called the 'Witdoeke'; and we were called the 'comrades' of the struggle. They would say, 'Kill the comrades' and policemen would say, 'Kill the comrades'. They would shoot something to light up and when it falls down and burns all the shacks, by then it was dust and smoke and the whole place was burning. A lot of people died there, our children died there, our husbands died there. Most women who were there do not have husbands today. We scattered around the churches and the police were still harassing us (Angelina, Interview, 10 November 2011).

Angelina's story is similar to the stories of many of the women of Crossroads, who played a significant role within squatter resistance and community struggle. UWO was an important and powerful community organisation within Nyanga Bush. Their powerful presence in the anti-apartheid struggle is exemplified by the often-quoted phrase in interviews: 'strike a woman, you strike a rock'<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Wathint'abafazi, wathint'imbokodo! (Now you have touched the women, you have struck a rock!) The phrase has its origins in the events of the 9 August 1956, where 20 000 women staged a march on the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest against the proposed amendments to the pass laws.

The connection between the comrade-militants and ‘the women’ as a category was two-fold, both in the sense of the women as political activists, and in the sense of women as part of a community embroiled in violence and participating in this violence, whether they actively and consciously chose to or not. Throughout the interviews there are degrees of participation of women in the violence and with the Amabutho. Very few women were fully fledged members of Amabutho; the two militant women who were interviewed were not in this inner military core, but were part of the comrades and were involved in violent offensive action. Other women were community and anti-apartheid activists and offered their services (or at times were forced to help comrades) with providing medical attention, food and shelter, or with hiding guns on behalf of comrades, or distracting police so that comrades could escape and hide. One of the stories I heard from a few squatter-comrades of Nyanga Bush was about the ways in which women would use their bodies as weapons of defence and distraction. This is described by Yamile in the quote below:

Once Nyanga Bush was surrounded and we saw there was no way out for us, we would suggest that the women should go forward and they would pull up their dresses and show their bodies to turn down or turn off the police. That is one of the tools we used to fight against the system. That is how we got settled at Nyanga Bush because of the way we were treated, by then it was only police vans, hippos with big guns there (Yamile, Interview, 11 August 2011).

While some women were consciously aware of the anti-apartheid struggle and chose to be involved and help the comrades, others were less aware but equally affected by this violence on their doorstep and in their homes. For example, in the group interview at Zulu’s place, Sazola speaks about the women and the comrades:

On the 17 May 1986 I was selling [something] when a loudspeaker was spoken saying, ‘We are not sleeping tonight’ and as I was a single mother living with my three kids, my partner, the father of my children was very wanted by the police, the police would come at three in the morning looking for him. Every three in the morning the police would arrive and look for him, when I ask them, ‘Why are you looking for him?’ they will say I must open the door, then they will look inside and I will say, ‘Did you find him?’ and they will say ‘No, we did not find him’. He was not sleeping at home by then – we already knew he was wanted by the police because somebody warned us that my husband and my son shouldn’t sleep at home because the police were looking for us. I went to a neighbour and asked for a place to sleep (Sazola, Group Interview at Zulu’s place, 28 October 2012).

Similarly, in the same group interview, Ethel speaks of her experience of police harassment as they searched for ‘comrades’ and the confusion about who the police were searching for:

The police would say, ‘Bring the comrades, you are hiding them’. They would come to your house and search – it not very nice, they will tell you to bring out your weapons and the comrades. We did not know where the comrades were, and our kids were getting shot at by the police, we don’t know if it was those kids who were killed by police who were comrades? (Ethel, Group Interview at Zulu’s place, 28 October 2011)

These stories demonstrate that there were layers of experience of violence and resistance in Nyanga Bush. Nyanga Bush was a struggle against everyday oppression and control over movement. In Angelina’s words, it was a struggle to ‘live a normal life’. However it was also a powerful statement against the violence of the state, as the squatters stood together in defiance and unity for a better life. This liberating and empowering experience of resistance was cut through with confusion, pain and suffering as well as horizontal and vigilante violence.

## 5.2. Narratives of Empowerment and Lived Resistance

This section analyses the construction of violence within the context of squatter experiences of oppression, resistance and violence as expressed in broad strokes in the three contextualising personal stories above. It begins with an analysis of the expressions of apartheid as violence, and the experience of forming squatting communities as a response to this violence. This narrative is punctuated by the narrative breach of coming to awareness about the nature and injustice of apartheid. To recap, a narrative breach is what defines a narrative, in the sense that it is something unexpected that happens and changes the course of the story (Bruner 1991). The shock of the violence of the lived experiences of oppression and the violence of the police in Cape Town cause a shift for respondents in their narratives, as they come to decide to stand against this violence.

The narrative analysis demonstrates how respondents’ responses to the narrative breach represent an example of what Fanon (1986) conceptualises as the ontological experience of freedom from slavehood that occurs through

the process of deciding to sacrifice physical life for social life. While squatters lives were hopelessly and painfully embroiled in violence, squatter movements represented a form of agency within violence. As the quotes below indicate squatters assert choosing a 'little bit of freedom' that they were 'prepared to die' for. This analysis cradles a broader understanding of experiences and responses to violence in terms of a choice towards freedom but never away from violence. It also shows the way in which the choice to match violence with defiance, and with violence, was an empowering one in this context. However, as Bourgeois (2004) argues, no one survives violence, and in the context of Crossroads, there were many painful and confusing cases of violence turned in on the self and on the community. The analysis attempts to think through the different forces motivating the expressions of horizontal and vigilante violence.

#### 5.2.1 'Opening One's Eyes': Coming to Awareness

Oppression is violence and this is exemplified in the case of apartheid in terms of the organisation of space and the control of African movement through pass laws (Bulhan 1985). In the narratives of squatters, they express the brutality of apartheid as violence. This is most commonly experienced in relation to the pass system. The squatter narratives from Crossroads complex analysed in this research share an experience of coming from the rural Eastern Cape to the Western Cape and this experience is told across narratives as one of shocking pain and violence. Throughout squatter narratives, the rural Eastern Cape is imagined as a place of poverty and hardship, but also of simplicity and innocence. It is a place that is connected to tradition and family; to authentic and rural ways of life. By contrast, the city is seen as a place of danger, hostility, violence and crime.

The most vicious expressions of apartheid, which are emphasised in narratives of pain and hardship, relate to the experience of the apartheid police. Africans without a pass facing the brutalities of the police in the Western Cape engaged in different survival strategies in response to this violence. They could return to the Eastern Cape, but for many this was not a viable option and they chose to find a way to survive in Cape Town. Many

living illegally in the Nyanga hostels chose to sleep in the bushes at night to evade the raids by police and their dogs. However, these attempts to evade the police were not always successful and, sooner or later, they would be caught and arrested. Emily, who came to settle with the squatters of Nyanga Bush, speaks about memories of police violence and describes her time sleeping in mountains and the bush ‘running like wild animals chased by dogs’:

Coming from a squatter camp in Hout Bay we were living in bad conditions there. We were sleeping in a mountain, we were being arrested, beaten up, locked up by the police and dogs were allowed to bite us. If I can show you on my right leg I have got this wound, a dog bit me. We were running like wild animals chased by dogs (Emily, Group Interview Zulu’s place, 4 November 2011).

Respondents express the shock of arriving in Cape Town to the loud calls, ‘Uqubo’, meaning, ‘It’s red’, which alerted black South Africans that the police were raiding. In the quote below, Andile\*, who was part of a group interview, retells his experience of arriving in Cape Town and sleeping in the bushes. However, he describes this as an impossible strategy, leading to his decision to join Crossroads squatters. Furthermore, he links this decision to the after-effects of the Soweto riots, and a general emerging sentiment that ‘we cannot tolerate this’:

The life you lived in Langa when you arrived, you had to be very careful because you did not have a pass here, and the *boers* were very strong in arresting people without passes. So during the night you will have black plastic bags to cover yourself not to sleep in the hostels, but in the bush, the mess from the bush, so you need to cover your blanket with black plastic. In the morning you will find *boers* sitting there with dogs, allowed to catch you. *Boers* laughing on top of the stairs as dogs bite you. Then after the 1976 riots we thought we cannot tolerate this, it’s better to live in Crossroads and join others who don’t have passes, live where everybody has no pass (Andile\*, Group Interview Zulu’s place, 28 October 2011).

The narratives of migration are punctuated by a sense of shock at the extent of pain and hardship experienced by the squatters when they arrived. Furthermore, this experience is often constructed by those who joined the resistance of squatter movements as a process of having one’s ‘eyes opened’. This process represents the narrative breach within squatter narratives of the past and the resultant shift in awareness and response to apartheid violence. While experiences of the Eastern Cape are told through the trope of innocence, the shock of the violence of the Western Cape is told through the trope of coming to awareness about the nature of apartheid. Furthermore, this

process is described as a realisation that apartheid was unjust and it went hand in hand with becoming a squatter and resisting the forced removal strategies and violence of the state.

The survival strategy of joining a squatter movement was experienced by many respondents as qualitatively different from the strategy of evasion discussed in the quotes above. As we saw in Yamile's life history, Nyanga Bush represented a visible uniting of illegal squatters in defiant resistance to the pass system that made their existence within South Africa illegal. The empowerment and humanisation that accompanied the decision to be part of these squatter movements is demonstrated in the quote from Lati below, where he discusses another form of indirect violence of the pass laws on African families. Women were particularly targeted by the pass laws and, in the Western Cape, the Coloured Labour Preference policy prevented African women from being in Cape Town for the purposes of looking for work. Therefore, most African women were illegal and also became a strong force within the squatter movement. Squatter movements represented spaces that resisted the apartheid regime's attempts to separate African families, as Lati explains below:

That is why we decided to live in the bush and build our own shacks in the bush so that we could live with our families. The hostels we used to live in were made for contracted people, so our wives would be chased away if we went to work. We decided we must leave these hostels and live in the bush with them... We used to live that kind of life, it was a prison kind of life, because once you get separated from your wife that means that you are in prison. Our going to camp in those squatter camps, we were fighting a struggle, so that we can be liberated from apartheid (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

The experience of the violence of the apartheid system was linked to the realisation that this system was unjust. Many of the squatters growing up in the rural homelands, now called the Eastern Cape, were socialised into believing the ideology of apartheid and superiority of whites as natural. As one of my respondents asserted, 'We were taught that white people were Gods'. In a similar sense to Gramsci's (1971) understanding of hegemony and Fanon's (1986) understanding of the introjected oppressor, these South Africans were socialised into believing in a worldview at odds with their position in society.

The process of coming to a position of squatter resistance and violent resistance was, therefore, tied in with a process of ‘opening one’s eyes’ to the reality of their lived experience and ridding themselves of the hegemonic worldview that they were inferior and deserved to be treated as such. This process of politicisation was tied to the shock and the loss of innocence as they became wiser to the nature and injustice of apartheid discrimination. This is demonstrated in the quote below, where Wanda describes what it means for ‘your eyes to open’:

When you say your eyes are open, it’s when you started to realise and get political ideas, you’re getting ill-treated by a white person or *baas*, it’s when you start to see that this person is ill-treating you because you are black, but before that you just think this white person has superior power to ill-treat you, because he’s a boss and you call him boss or madam or even a boy of your age will be young boss and this means that you respect him as a better type of person than yourself (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

Wanda demonstrates how part of the loss of innocence came in challenging a taken-for-granted assumption held by rural black South Africans that white people were superior; were ‘gods’ to black people. It began with the personal and painful shock of experiencing the oppression and racism of the apartheid system, especially at the hands of white bosses and policemen, and it followed with a process of lived resistance, combined with the politicisation of coming to understand the realities of the system under which one was living, and one’s responsibility to challenge it. Furthermore, this organic process of coming to consciousness through the lived experience of oppression and resistance was brought together, nurtured and encouraged through the creation of the UDF and the general spread of popular resistance throughout South Africa in the 1980s. The connection to the UDF is remembered by Lati in the quote below:

We continued with our meetings in the formation of the UDF, from the start when they went to launch UDF at Mitchell’s Plain I was there. When we saw Allan Boesak speaking in that meeting, we thought the new world was coming for us. He was very young and highly intellectual. The police were surrounding the area and they wanted to arrest us ... He was saying now is the time, the time that the people of South Africa must be liberated. Everybody wanted to get in, we were sacrificing and the spirit of liberation was revived. We walked barefoot to get there (Lati, Interview, 12 August 2011).

In the quote above, Lati remembers the significance of the formation of the UDF and the sense that ‘now is the time’ for liberation. Furthermore, he

emphasises the importance of ‘sacrifice’ and this is a theme that is expressed throughout the narrative. Many comrades, for instance, assert their willingness to sacrifice with their blood and with their lives for liberation. Furthermore, the decision to settle in Nyanga Bush was a decision of force in response to unjust force, as Lati says: ‘We did not ask permission to live in that area, because we live there by force, not by their permission, we live there by our own means’ (Lati, Interview, 12 August 2011). Related to the theme of physical sacrifice is social freedom, as the two are connected in the narratives of squatter resistance.

### 5.2.2 ‘A Little Bit of Freedom’: The Ontological Experience of Lived Resistance

Fanon (1963, 1986) explains how the willingness to sacrifice physical life is connected to a process of politicisation and the demystification of violence. When the oppressed discovers that his oppressor can be killed, this shakes his psychological and physical world to the core. The omnipotence of the oppressor is de-mystified, he is psychologically ejected from the self, and the self-confidence of the slave is restored. The fear of physical death is replaced with a desire for social and historical life, even if the result is physical death. The slave realises that there are many kinds of death, and in choosing physical life, he sacrifices social life and decides that it is social life and freedom that is more important and this ushers in revolutionary struggle. This willingness to sacrifice physical life for social life is a powerful and significant part of the meaning of resistance for comrades and squatters. For Manxiwa, this decision to fight, and to sacrifice physical for social life is expressed in the assertion that the ‘only one thing helped us there, we had to fight’ (Manxiwa, Interview, 10 August 2011). Manxiwa further explains the attitude of the squatters who had had enough and were prepared to die ‘We were very rude and restless; we did not care what they did with us ... But you tell yourself that if you are going to die, so it will be’.

While respondents emphasise the sacrifices they made in their struggle, they also demonstrate what they gained through their sacrifice. Unity, freedom

and people's power represent three key experiences highlighted in this process of resisting state repression. For example, NomaIndia, who is the sister of Angelina, and who was also involved in the women's resistance in Crossroads, emphasises the power of squatter unity, arguing, 'We had to fight and there was one word, unity we were together doing it all of us' (NomaIndia, Interview, 10 November 2011). For many of the squatters of Crossroads, their defiant choice to resist the apartheid forces and their attempts at removal was a choice within a context of violence, for a 'little bit of freedom'. In Yamile's and Zet's stories, there was a sense of pride in remembering what these squatters were able to do in such an oppressive context, and in doing so, how they could feel strong and united, despite the weight of the system and its brutal treatment of the squatters. Bongisile expresses similar romantic memories of Nyanga bush, describing it as 'a little bit of freedom', comparing the awareness of the open eyes of Nyanga Bush with the metaphor of his previous experience of looking with 'a narrow eye':

In Nyanga Bush was a little bit of freedom, it was so welcoming. For the first time I found my mother and father the whole day, for the first time we were not being chased by the police. For me it was a great experience. It was the first time I learnt about politics, because there were a lot of people coming from all over the place to meet there for one purpose. So for me it was the first time to understand about discrimination, and it gave me a better interpretation of discrimination, to not look with a narrow eye. Although it was nice, we stayed there without basic services – water, sanitation, roads and it was the first time I stayed in a tent. But my mother and father were both there, there was no rush, it was a beautiful experience, and we did progress from tents to build shacks. There was an agreement that we could build our shacks (Bongisile, Interview, 17 October 2011).

In the presence of a hostile state the satellite camps of Crossroads were described as liberated zones, where squatters set up their own systems of rule, law and order, to create alternative state structures. Lati and Manxiwa describe the alternative structures of law and order that developed in Nyanga Bush and Nyanga Extension satellite camps. Lati remembers how squatters 'lived by their own means', where, in the context of a hostile state, they set up their own courts of law and protection structures.

The expressions of 'our own means' and 'making our own means' re-occur across these counter-narratives. I chose it for part of the title of this thesis, as it represents the forgotten empowerment and creativity of the lived resistance of the squatters. In chapter four it comes up in discussions with comrades,

who use it to refer to the creative ‘making their own means’ required to gain weapons. Here, Lati uses it to refer to the creative, self-empowered and unified way in which squatters created and governed squatter spaces. In the quotes below, Manxiwa speaks about the reasons for people’s courts in the squatter camps and then Lati remembers how they took control of municipal activities in a context of living in a space that was separated from the influence and control of the state:

In the courts we were taking the cases of things that took place in the location, so the police were not involved. That is because we as the people decided that we needed to look after each other so that there should not be people that jeopardise other people’s lives in our own residents (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

And we dug a big hole where we would take all our rubbish, our residency was clean and that was done by ourselves. Because the municipality did not clean in our areas and services were not delivered to us as the people of squatter camps (Lati, Interview, 12 August 2011).

This empowered and creative defiance occurred, however, within a context of violence that continued to impact on the lives of the squatters. These spaces were a mixture of the power and pride of squatters against injustice, as well as the continued suffering, which in many ways was heightened by having to live in dire conditions. A less romantic picture of these squatter spaces is provided by Margaret\* below, who came to reside in Nyanga Bush by necessity, but who does not construct this experience in terms of a narrative of resistance, but rather in terms of a narrative of powerlessness:

The places we lived were not a normal place that a human being can live, because there were no toilets there because people can go there and just relieve themselves then you come and build your shack over that whole mess up that was there, that is personally not healthy for yourself, not healthy for your children, not healthy for those of you who are pregnant, and the kids you bring to that place. We tolerated that dirty situation because we do not have any other option. Although there were days of joy, Saturday and Sunday, you knew that happy as you were on Sunday, in the early hours of Monday you always expected the police would arrive, so there’s no way we could say we enjoyed these spaces. We also had organisations we belonged to, organisations advising us, saying if the situation turns this way you need to be a unity and stand amongst yourselves (Margaret\*, Group Interview Zulu’s Place, 28 October 2011).

In the quote above, a woman remembers Nyanga Extension as a place that was barely liveable but tolerated out of necessity. She remembers being advised to stand in unity when the ‘situation turns’, but this is not remembered in the same empowering light as is expressed in the narratives of some of the more active members of squatter movements. Within this context

of anti-apartheid struggle, both resistance and repression within these spaces became increasingly violent.

### 5.2.3 'A Mixed Fight': Incorporating the Multiple Layers and Directions of Violence

In the context of the internal anti-apartheid struggle, scholars have shown that, in amongst internal resistance to the apartheid state, brutal forms of horizontal and vigilante violence emerged (Haysom 1986; Cole 1987). In Johannesburg and KwaZulu-Natal these often took the form of violence between migrants based in hostels and the comrade youths based in townships. In the case of Crossroads the violence was loosely along the lines of comrades against conservative elders, but also of one squatter group aligning itself with the police against the comrade-aligned squatter groups. It is through these histories of horizontal violence that the comrades have been demonised and that the memory of Crossroads is characterised as an example of vigilante, inter-community violence, rather than empowered, lived resistance. This section engages the relationship between the 'black' and 'white' of oppression and resistance, as well as what Primo Levi (1989) calls the 'grey zone', as the way in which the oppressed compete with each other for survival within hierarchies constructed by the oppressor.

The anti-apartheid struggle was an inescapably violent process on a number of different levels. There was no choice as to whether or not to engage in violence; as a squatter, it was on your doorstep and it left its mark on you. This violence has severe implications for those who suffered and struggled in the thick of the squatter movements. To quote Bourgeois again, 'those who confront violence with resistance – whether it be cultural or political – do not escape unscathed from the terror and oppression they rise up against' (2004:433). This section attempts, therefore, to provide a complex and layered understanding of the nature, experience and effects of violence through respondents' constructions, but also to argue that at each level of understanding it is crucial to keep a broader political picture in view at the same time.

In the context of the internal anti-apartheid struggle, comrades were immersed in ontologies of constant fear. Wanda remembers being in a constant state of anxiety, that ‘if you lose your guts you die’. In the quote below he uses the term ‘bloodmonster’ to describe the nature of the violent masculinity inhabited by comrades:

A bloodmonster is somebody not scared of being killed or killing. It’s not necessarily that they don’t have human being feelings, not necessarily that you don’t love, but you are so deep into this, it becomes your daily life, your life-style, not necessarily that you are enjoying this, but if you lose your guts you might die (Wanda, Interview, 30 January 2012).

The literature on militarised masculinity, which was part of comrade culture, emphasises this importance of bravery and fearlessness and the forms of horizontal violence that were part of this culture (Campbell 1992). Furthermore, studies demonstrate that the militarised masculinity instilled in comrades of the past continues to impact on the lives and psyches of former township combatants in the context of the present (Langa & Eagle 2008).

Combining with these ontologies of fearlessness and militarised identities of violence, the comrades also enacted a role of community discipline. This role had two effects. On the one hand, it resulted in the opportunistic use of discipline and violence by some comrades. On the other hand, it resulted in some community members turning against the comrades and becoming co-opted by police as vigilante forces. Yamile asserts that, within the context of the squatter movement, there were many whose ‘heart[s] were not strong enough’ for the anti-apartheid struggle (Yamile, Interview, 23 February 2012). Therefore, the risk of betrayal was great and the need to ensure that everyone was on the same side was important.

There are two different kinds of enemies in the narratives of comrades, the kind that was known and the kind that was unknown. The kind that was known were the police and the apartheid state; the kind that was not were the ‘sell-outs’ or betrayers who turned against the anti-apartheid movement to provide information to the apartheid state (also called informers or *impimpis*). However, the lines between enemy and ally were often messy and confusing. The environment of violence within the squatter movements and the risks that anti-apartheid activists faced led to a great deal of confusion and suspicion as

well as created spaces for people to abuse this suspicion for their own purposes. As a result, it was often difficult to know where the threat came from, who was on whose side, and whose side you should be on. The comrades themselves became the enemy to some community members, who felt victimised and terrorised by their practices.

Comrades engaged in forms of inter-community disciplining and the intimidation of community members, who did not align their actions with the anti-apartheid movement. In a context where many people did not understand the nature of apartheid and the importance of uniting with the anti-apartheid struggle, they were forced to do so through methods of punishment such as having to drink washing powder (Omo) or fish oil:

The elders were supporting the government to go to Site C in Khayelitsha, these were the people when we say 'No Work' [the consumer boycott] they would go to work and we'll give them Omo to drink. The elders, who had young people with them, were not able to read the situation, they had already succumbed to the system, saying no you can't fight against a system established by white people, who were regarded as very powerful, very intellectual, so that was like something of a norm that white people were supposed to be superior to black people (Bongisile, Interview, 31 October 2012).

The comrades adopted methods of non-compromise as a means through which to further the anti-apartheid struggle by force, intimidation and violence. The actions of some comrades were often opportunistic and motivated by personal, rather than political, aims. As a result, the politics of non-compromise would at times become infused with opportunistic and selfish motives, thus confusing community members further. While sitting in the car at Zolani Centre, Wanda describes the fights in KTC as mixed:

The fights that took place here were very mixed – it was not a straight type of fight ... it was a fight against the system and inside that fight against the system it was a fight against each other' (Wanda, Interview, 30 January 2012).

Violence, however, was also a form of power and both Wanda and Bongisile spoke to the opportunistic forms of violence that took place amongst both the home-guard and the comrade structure. The name 'comrade-*tsotsi*' (comrade-criminal) was used to describe some of the actions of the comrades that seemed more criminal and self-serving than in-line with the politics of liberation (Sitas 1992). Below, Wanda speaks about comrades and the different motives behind becoming a comrade. He mentions the term

‘comrade-*tsotsi*’ and explains that this related to these different personal motives which fed into broader struggle politics within the context of squatter struggles:

Amongst the comrades were different missions, some are there just to be popular, others are there to get a certain woman in the area, others to protect their *dagga* they were selling, others to be seen as active in the community as human rights activists, others were really human rights activists. So ... the comrades had their bad issues (Wanda, Interview, 30 January 2012).

In an environment where many did not understand or agree with the anti-apartheid struggle, these methods were also used as arguments against comrades and became the means through which Ngxobongwana was able to mobilise Witdoeke (conservative elders) against comrades. These ‘elders’ believed that it was comrades who were the enemy. Another form of ‘grey zone’ violence that occurred throughout the anti-apartheid movement, and in Crossroads, was the vigilante violence, often of elder against younger comrades, with support from the police (Cole 1987; Lodge 1991). The politics of the anti-apartheid movement in Crossroads unfolded within the power struggles of squatter leaders over land and resources. Furthermore, each squatter leader had its own military force in the policing structures (home-guards) of men who were loyal to the politics of their leader. As a result, threats came from many sides and alliances shifted.

Comrades were an important structure of violent resistance in Crossroads, Nyanga Bush and throughout the anti-apartheid movement. Their violence developed within a broader culture of anti-apartheid struggle; however it also crossed into various ‘grey zones’ as indicated by the term ‘comrade-*tsotsi*’. While the aim of this chapter was to emphasise the dominant narratives of empowerment, unity and lived resistance of the squatters, this is not to deny the reality that Crossroads was also the site of horizontal and vigilante violence. On the contrary, as Wanda’s following quote demonstrates, the denial of violence in the ‘grey zone’ comes out of the demonisation of comrades and their desire and need to prove their legitimacy: ‘Comrades want to cover up the bottom of their negativity and come up and politicise everything, to be seen as heroes. We may be heroes but not everyone sees us as heroes’ (Wanda, Interview, 13 February 2012). The issue with demonising

the violence of the comrades and forgetting their empowering process of lived resistance against oppression is that there is no space in this conceptualisation for comrades to come to terms with the scars of the layers of violence of the past. All their energy goes into attempting to prove their legitimacy within the context of a memory discourse, which demonises and criminalises their histories of resistance.

### 5.3 Conclusion: Counter-Memories of the Violence of Crossroads

This chapter aims to analyse how respondents narrate their counter-memories of oppression, lived resistance and violence, and the way in which this narration challenges how Crossroads has been remembered in national memory discourse. The issue of the demonisation and criminalisation of comrades is a complex one. On the one hand, forms of horizontal violence and opportunistic violence were part of the popular struggle inside South Africa; on the other hand, this struggle was about so much more for those who participated in it. The counter-narrative of squatters emphasises the *so much more* of their history, and this is done in terms of the unity, empowerment and lived resistance they experience. While the national narrative remembers Crossroads violence as tragic inter-community violence, the real tragedy for those involved in this violence is the forgetting of their empowered lived resistance and what it meant for them.

While it is important to understand and remember the ‘grey zone’ of violence, and take seriously the scars held by those who ‘survived’ violence, in his analysis of the horizontal violence of the oppressed, Pierre Bourdieu asserts that this violence must be understood: ‘in the last analysis’ as ‘the product of the ‘inert violence’ of economic structures and social mechanisms relayed by the active violence of people (1997: 233). Similarly Bourgois asserts that, in studying violence and especially in the context of a liberation struggle, it is important to move beyond the tendency to either romanticise or sanitise the violence of the oppressed, but rather to clarify how it is connected to ‘chains of causality that link structural, political, and symbolic violence in the production of everyday violence that buttresses unequal power relations and distorts efforts at resistance’ (Bourgois, 2004:30).

Following these two theorists of violence, in the final analysis of the Witdoeke violence of 1986, respondents assert that the underlying cause was apartheid and oppression, as well as the threat caused by the lived defiance of the squatters. The apartheid state desired and depended on the control of the black masses; when the squatters defied this control and created ungovernable and impenetrable spaces, this represented a great threat to the control and therefore the power of the apartheid state. Furthermore, the squatter spaces provided hide-outs for comrades operating throughout Cape Town as the police could not enter these wild, violent and haphazard spaces<sup>9</sup>. To lose sight of this is to do grave injustice to the memory of squatter experiences of apartheid and resistance.

While there are many influencing factors that came together to motivate the violence in Crossroads, it is important for the leaders, comrades and community members of the radical squatter communities that their role in the struggle is remembered as the key reason for their removal. Part of the reason for the removal was to do with Ngxobongwana's desire for power, land and resources (Cole 1987). According to the respondents cited below, however, this was only made possible through his promise to the police that he would help them remove the threat to their power. When asked about the reasons for the violence in 1986, Lati emphasises the threat that the comrades of Nyanga Bush presented to the control of the apartheid state, and how this coincided with Ngxobongwana's desire for land – in order to secure his leadership, he offered up the comrades to the police.

Ngxobongwana was promised that he would be given a space to build houses for his people. Nobongwana was given money and in order to get this money he needed to have something to offer the police, the police are hearing people saying 'Qubo! Qubo! Qubo!' they say 'Attack! Attack! Attack!', those were the comrades, when they attack they will use that term 'Qubo!' This terminology was confusing to the police and they did not know who these people were, and then Ngxobongwana said that these people that are saying this are behind these leaders, so we need to attack. Give me some land for my houses to be built, and then I will help you identify now these 'qubo qubo' so we will be able to catch them (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

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<sup>9</sup> The role of squatter space as hiding place was expressed in many interviews with respondents from Crossroads memory community, and also confirmed by members of the Mandela Bay Amabutho of the Eastern Cape who came to listen to a presentation of my research at a conference on the Legacies of the Apartheid Wars at Rhodes University, 2013.

Similarly, Thobile\* who belonged to the squatter groups of the satellite communities gave parallel reasons for the fights of 1986:

This fight erupted ... [because] it was alleged that Yamile was keeping Amabutho and comrades under his umbrella. That was the cause, because it was alleged that we were assisting, keeping comrades. And the issue for police was that a police was killed behind our area. We were attacked and taken to churches, the churches were easily attacked (Thobile\*, Group interview Zulu's place, 21 October 2011).

The respondents above argue strongly that the violence of the Witdoeke was caused by the threat of the comrades to the police and the desire to demolish the political and threatening squatter spaces. In the end, while many forces contributed to the outcome of violence between comrades and Witdoeke, as Cole and many of my research participants/respondents argue, the underlying reason was because of the power of the anti-apartheid movement and the threat that the comrades posed to the power of the state and the power of Ngxobonwana's leadership.

While it is important to remember and address the effects of the violence in 'the grey zone', from the perspective of respondents narratives, this violence must be read in relation to the significance and power of squatter resistance and comrade violence against the state. To remember Crossroads violence as tragic inter-community violence which traumatised and made homeless families and individuals does not do justice to the memory of empowerment of lived resistance that the squatter movements represented and that was also at the heart of why the squatters were removed. To remember the violence of Crossroads cannot only be about the acknowledgment of the pain and tragedy of inter-community violence, as this denies the role played by the violence of apartheid, on the one hand, and, on the other hand the role played by the unity and resistance of the squatters and their comrades, who sacrificed their physical life for social life and 'a little bit of freedom'.

## Chapter Six

### Narratives of Dependency: Betrayal, Abandonment and Re-Mystification

We thought that the release of Mandela was going to add to a bloodshed war in this land so that the liberation would come through bloodshed. But he was so peaceful that he calmed us down, and told us not to fight with spears, but to settle in peace and make sure that the country is liberated peacefully, that is what Mandela taught us. We are happy with the fact that Mandela came up with the solution of peaceful liberation and taught us that if we fight with guns and explosives, these buildings are going to fall apart and then after we've achieved liberation we will have to rebuild these buildings and it will be a waste of time. But we thought that when we were fighting for his release that he was going to make a difference, a change. But I still feel that white people aren't treating African people well even today. There are those [white] individuals who are still separating the nation, who if you ask them for directions, they will just keep their mouth shut and say nothing. This makes you as a person looking for directions feel overwhelmed and you don't know what to do, because you thought that you are all together now, but there are still those elements that show that they are very white to be included with black people. ... We feel oppressed and our hearts are bleeding inside, it's very painful, and we've found ourselves in a very confusing situation, where we feel there are barriers we cannot go through, that is the feeling that I've got (George, Group interview, Zulu's place, 21 October 2011).

The quote above is from one of my respondents, a member of Crossroads memory community, George Xaatcha. He expresses a common sentiment about the lived experience of the transition to democracy from the perspective of those who were involved in the squatter resistance movement from below. George remembers believing that liberation would come from violence, bloodshed and war. However, when Mandela was released and came to act as the leader of the ANC and the popular movement, he convinced the resistance from below to 'settle'. While George remembers agreeing with and following the instructions of the ANC liberation party (embodied in the figure of Nelson Mandela) in the hope that things would indeed change, he now expresses a deep sadness and confusion that this did not happen. Not only does racial privilege and overt racism against black people continue for George, but so does a general experience of oppression that leaves him and his compatriots 'bleeding inside' and 'very confused'. This quote was expressed in the context of a group interview in Philippi with about thirty members of Crossroads memory community who had congregated to share what they present as a common historical experience. At the end of the quote, George asserts that 'we' feel that there are

insurmountable 'barriers' in place and there is a sense of exclusion from the liberation that they were convinced to 'settle' for, despite continued oppression.

This chapter addresses itself to the question of how respondents construct their lived experiences of transition and present day South Africa, and how these constructions engage with (support or subvert) national memory discourse. Findings demonstrate that, in general, Crossroads memory community constructs this period through the two disillusionment narratives of the betrayed fighter and the abandoned sufferer, which are connected to the memory identities of veteran and victim. These narratives of disillusionment demonstrate the double agency or contradictory consciousness discussed in chapter four. Respondents construct this period of transition and the present in ways which both challenge and support the hegemonic assumptions of national memory. Narratives of disillusionment present a challenge to the discourse of reconciliation and especially the underlying assumption that violence and oppression are in the past. However, the analysis demonstrates that they also subtly re-enforce the underlying assumption of the national liberation struggle discourse that takes for granted the role of the ANC as leader of the liberation struggle. Furthermore, memory identities of veteran and victim are re-enforced through these narratives, which at the same time imply a forgetting of the empowerment and unity expressed in chapter five.

This chapter begins with three stories of Crossroads memory communities' experiences of transition, in relation to the present. These stories demonstrate the lived experiences of exclusion, betrayal and abandonment, which are key themes emphasised in respondents' narratives. Narratives of the transition and the present indicate a second narrative breach, where respondents express a mental state of expecting one thing but receiving something different. These dashed expectations were set up for respondents in the transitional era and remain unfulfilled in the post-transition. This sense of disillusionment is experienced, narrated and interpreted through two common and shared narratives of betrayal and abandonment. While chapter five emphasises empowerment narratives of squatter resistance, this chapter emphasises

dependency narratives in relation to the ANC government. This connection to the ANC government is demonstrated as a key assumption underpinning these narratives, which supports the hegemony of national memory. Furthermore, these narratives express a sense of deep confusion with the conditions of the present, which are analysed as a re-mystification and new master-slave relationship in the context of the present.

### 6.1 Stories of Transition

The ANC liberation party came to represent the mass movement towards the end of the 1980s, and the masses put their trust and faith in the words and power of the ANC. This relationship was dynamic, as the ANC acted as a mythological and ideological force; however the mass movement often acted under its own steam, from below. In the case of the squatters, we saw in chapter five how the resistance and violence emerged out of the lived experience of squatters, but was supported and encouraged by the figure of the ANC liberation party. However, during the transition this relationship changed as the ANC was in in peace negotiations with the National Party and was required to settle and control the threat of violence and resistance of the masses from spreading throughout South Africa. While this force and threat had contributed to getting the ANC to the negotiation table, the ANC was now placed in the position of controlling the force it claimed to speak on behalf of. Furthermore, the party required the support of this mass base, in order to legitimise its power as the future ruling party. Therefore, a relationship of suppression and promises was set up during the transition, and respondents remember this time and the events that impacted on their own lives in this dual process of suppressing and giving hope to masses – in order to legitimise and consolidate the power of the liberation party and the transition to democracy.

In the context of today it seems that, for this memory community, nothing much has changed and nothing has come from settling and waiting for the ANC to deliver the promised liberation. The way in which ordinary members of the popular struggle lost out in the politics of the negotiation was discussed in chapter two (Deegan 2001; Terreblanche 2003; MacDonald 2006). The

stories of respondents flesh out this analysis, through providing a sense of the lived experience of this ‘losing out’ at the liberation table. However, since the ANC managed to gain the support of the masses, it is often towards the ANC that the blame is directed for continued experiences of oppression despite ‘so-called liberation’.

The three stories of transition presented in this chapter represent narratives of abandonment and betrayal. Beatrice’s story fleshes out the experience of re-settling in Khayelitsha, the violence of the transition – which continued into the early 1990’s – and the sense that nothing much has changed in the context of the present. In a similar vein to the story told by George in the opening quote, the story of abandonment and neglect is one of settling down under the power of the ANC and its charismatic leaders, of expectation that things will change, and of feeling abandoned because things have not changed. The story of abandonment speaks to a general experience for respondents of violence during the transition, as well as a sense that freedom has not yet arrived, as they continue to live violent lives of material hardship. This experience forms the basis on which many construct a narrative of being neglected by government.

Beatrice’s story is followed by two stories of betrayal. Zet and Wanda describe their experiences of criminalisation and exclusion, which are common to many squatter-comrades who were not granted amnesty for ‘crimes’ committed during the struggle, nor were they demobilised and integrated as legitimate veterans of violence. The criminalisation and targeting of these comrades is interpreted in relation to the threat they posed to the power and control of the ANC.

#### 6.1.1 Beatrice’s Story of Violence during the Transition and Post-Apartheid Abandonment

After the squatters were violently removed from their homes in Crossroads in 1986, many were settled in Khayelitsha. However, violence continued in this township space as comrades struggled against the police, the *kitskonstables* (members of the community employed as a special police force with little training), and the state appointed councillors (Cole 1987). Furthermore,

between 1990 and 1992, political violence in the form of taxi wars erupted throughout the country. Jackie Dugard describes the ‘taxi wars’ of the Cape Peninsula as ‘one of the most intransigent and most politically motivated of the wars’ during this period (2001:6). On the surface, the war was between two rival taxi organisations over routes. However, attacks on residents of Nyanga and Khayelitsha suggested that there was more to this violence than commercial competition (Dugard 2001:6). After three prominent community leaders, Mapongwana, Zola Ntsoni and Mziwonke Jack, were assassinated in the taxi violence, ‘accusations of police involvement and allegations that a ‘third force’ was ‘worsening the conflict caused by the taxi feud in an attempt to provoke “war” to destabilize the community’ (South cited in Dugard 2001: 8).

Those who were not actively involved in comrade violence were, nevertheless, affected by and involved in the wars that were confronting their communities during the time of transition. Beatrice’s story demonstrates the experience and involvement of local actors in Khayelitsha in the violence during the transition, as well as the lack of change experienced by people in the present. While Beatrice was not actively targeted, criminalised and excluded, she felt the impact of the violence during the transition. Her narrative emphasises the lack of transformation and the continuation of violence in the lives of the Crossroads memory community, despite the advent of democracy. This emphasis on the continuation of suffering characterises the narrative of abandonment and neglect. The blame for this abandonment is placed on the ANC government, but it is a passiveness that comes from the lack of a sense of responsibility at the hands of leaders, rather than an active action of betrayal, as we will see in the stories of Commander Zet and Wanda which follow.

Like many of the squatters, Beatrice was born in the Eastern Cape in 1941, and travelled to Cape Town in 1975 where she eventually found a place in Emavundleni in 1985. After the violence and forced removal of 1986, she remembers being moved to Khayelitsha, where she was given a number. ‘There were no houses, only toilets’, she says. Gillian Cook (1992) writes about the overcrowding, poverty, unemployment and poor quality of housing

in Khayelitsha at the time. She cites that in 1990 it was estimated that 450 000 people were living on less than a third of the land originally planned to house 600 000. Of these, 14% were in formal housing, 54% in serviced shacks and 32% in un-serviced shacks (Cook, 1992:127). In Site B, where Beatrice was relocated, residents were provided with cement stands of 25 square meters, with an outside toilet for each site of 78–90 square metres and a tap shared by every two sites. People built shacks on the cement floors provided, dividing them into two or three bedrooms and a kitchen comprising a table and paraffin stove or wood fire, with a rental of R15 per site (Cook 1992:128).

Beatrice describes the fights that continued during the transition and her role in them as a health worker and comrade:

I remember a day in 1989, it was raining that day. I don't know what happened between the *boers* and the comrades, a fight broke out and we didn't sleep, we wouldn't sleep on the bed, we would sleep on the floor because of the bullets, especially because my house was a corner house. There was a particular day I was sleeping and heard noises outside, when I got out I looked on the opposite side and I saw that the sky was red with fire and smoke, the whole section was burning, it was the comrades ... One night I heard a knock at the door and it was Zet and the others. I opened quickly. The *boers* were around, so we had to keep my room dark, they were injured, had rubber bullets in their body. There was a table and I covered it with a blanket and lit a light under the table so the *boers* wouldn't see, then I addressed their wounds with a blade and Eno [an effervescent used for heartburn]. If someone shot you with a rubber bullet, I make a cut where the bullet is and then pour Eno in and the poison comes out. After they were shot they couldn't run to the clinic because the *boers* would be waiting for them. As a health worker I had all the material with me as I knew people were being injured, so they knew I was here they would come to me (Beatrice, Interview, 16 January 2012).

After Beatrice has described how the violence and the anti-apartheid struggle continued in the context of the Khayelitsha township, I ask her: 'When you think back on that history in the context of today, how does it make you feel?' She responds:

The struggle fights came to an end once our people and their people had died. A lot of comrades were killed. When I think about it, I feel very small ... There isn't that much that has changed, it is a little bit better, but not a change, no one asks for pass any more and you are not chased by dogs and you are not arrested ... There is nothing much that has changed, we the people are still today in a struggle, we are in poverty and hunger although there is a lot of money and they are playing with money, using it for their own (Beatrice, Interview, 16 January 2012).

In thinking about her past in relation to her present, Beatrice argues that in terms of hunger and poverty, she feels as if 'nothing much has changed'

except that they are no longer harassed under the pass laws. Continuing along this line, I ask what people were fighting for, to which she responds, like many other respondents, 'They were fighting for freedom'. When I ask if she feels free today, she answers, 'Not yet, freedom is not achieved, it frustrates me to see how we still suffer and there is no evidence of change I can show you and this frustrates me'. Beatrice's story demonstrates how the struggle and violence continued in Khayelitsha and, during the transition negotiations and the call for peace, violence remained prevalent in South African townships. It further demonstrates how respondents feel that not much has changed for them in the context of the present and that the freedom they believe they fought and struggled for has not yet arrived. Beatrice concludes her reflections by asserting that, despite the poverty and continued structural violence experienced by many of the Crossroads memory community, she believes that there is a lot of money that 'they' are playing with and 'using for their own'. Beatrice is referring to the ANC government and the large amounts of money available for the 'play' of the government, while the majority suffers.

#### 6.1.2 Wanda's Story of Criminalisation

Squatter-comrades involved in resistant violence hoped and expected that the shift in power would bring liberation and change as the ANC came to represent the struggle of the masses. However, for many comrades this period was an incredibly confusing and painful time, as power struggles unfolded in the movement and in the midst of increasing violence. Wanda's and Commander Zet's stories demonstrate the experience of the criminalisation of the comrades during the period of transition. One is set in prison and another within the middle of Khayelitsha's violence during the transition. Both powerfully demonstrate the nature and experience of the exclusion of squatter-comrades during the transition.

Wanda was arrested in 1987 for murder and attempted murder, after getting instructions from Commander Zet to do a hit on a shop in Southfield, where police were playing pool, and to disarm them. A child was killed in the crossfire and Wanda was shot, captured and sentenced to death. The last

hanging was in February 1989 and then, Wanda says, 'In 1990 they started to speak of political prisoners and engage with human rights lawyers meeting us on death row' (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011). In 1991 his sentence was converted to an imprisonment term and he was welcomed by comrades and lawyers who came to visit him, wearing ANC t-shirts, and informed him he would be released. Wanda remembers this time in the quote below:

In May 1992, I will never forget that day, my children were ten and eleven, and we've been speaking about going home since Pretoria and now it is 1992. You haven't been long in prison, you were sentenced to death, but you are out of death row now, 60 years imposed, but you know they were bluffing. And now come people to measure you, but 'please be careful' they say, 'if *boers* come with a truck to take you home, say no'. And these people came with t-shirts because the ANC is no longer banned. They show courage and say, 'Don't worry, you are out of prison'. Can you imagine? Now you are sitting every day, you are itching, you are itching. I got a visit from people very empowered, the ANC sent people to visit us and they leave us with something, and I just send family a letter to say I am coming out of prison (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

However the process of releasing political prisoners came to an end before Wanda was released and the remaining political prisoners were told to apply for indemnity and to the TRC, but they were turned down with many others, and had to serve out their term. There were a number of stages to the release of political prisoners in South Africa. The indemnity acts of 1990 and 1992 dealt with the release of political prisoners as a prerequisite to peace negotiations. The issue of negotiating the release and amnesty was a contentious and political one. First the ANC and National Party (NP) governments had to agree on what constituted a political crime, and, towards these ends, it was decided in 1990 that an act would be defined in terms of its political motivation and nature (if it was a politically motivated act committed with the approval of a political organisation), its context (part of an uprising or disturbance) and the nature of the act (rape, for example, could never be defined as a political act) (Sarkin 2004). In 1992, it was announced that more than nine thousand applications for release had been received and many tensions continued to exist around this process, which was slow, with many applications considered to be borderline (Sarkin 2004:41). The two parties tussled over the release of certain key and contentious prisoners. While many remained in prison, with the nature of their crimes under contestation, in November 1991 the parties agreed to commence with the

negotiations towards a peace settlement (Savage 2000). Below, Wanda describes this as compromising people:

It's what we call compromising people, what Ntamo did to his congregation, they compromised us to the apartheid system, when the apartheid government realised there were loopholes ... Once the NP had taken all their people out so the people still remaining were people coming from KTC, and the ANC could do nothing because it was agreed upon that we will compromise to this point and then we will allow you to get out of prison to this point and after that no more, because it was not only the two of us, there were many of us that were left behind (Wanda, Interview, 13 February, 2012).

With the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and the amnesty clause, prisoners who had not been granted indemnity in the first instance could apply for amnesty. However in their applications, they had to demonstrate that their crimes were connected to a political organisation and that individuals were acting not of their own volition, but in relation to the assumed authority of the political or state organisation and instructions (Deegan 2001). As a result, the majority of comrades, who were acting on their own in the context of fighting the enemy on their doorstep, could not easily align their stories to this narrative of leadership and orders given by political organisations. Wanda reflects on the painful process of hoping and preparing oneself for freedom, but then being left behind. He was convinced he would be released and, with his new education, he thought he was going places. Instead, his life in prison became harder when he was not released with other political prisoners, as prison authorities now considered him to be a common-law criminal:

We had our dreams, one day I want to drive a car, when the country is free, you know, I will be driving a company car. Those are our dreams and we need to study hard and we need to study economic studies so we fit into a society when we come out and we were hoping that there would be no one amongst us carrying records when we came out. All the records would be set aside. But time went on ... and our hopes get vanished day by day. And now you have to adjust yourself into – I must look at my life and be proud of who I am and forget about what the politician thinks. Once you've been discriminated against by your political organisation, then the pressure comes with that because [before that] the prison authorities were scared to do anything to you ... Once you've been deprived to enjoy in the gospel you've been preaching to them that we need to change our mind-sets, then they become discriminative to you that 'Ag, you lie, you are nothing but a common-law criminal'... I can say this now but at the time it was a very abusive statement (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

In the quote above, Wanda speaks about his lived experience of being denied amnesty and the effect it had on him. He speaks about the dreams and

expectations he had about liberation and the energy he poured into preparing himself to be included, appreciated and to ‘fit into society’ when liberation came. However, these dreams and hopes ‘vanished day by day’, as nothing came from liberation. In fact, something did come from liberation in Wanda’s quote but it is more painful than what came before it; so painful that Wanda says that while he can speak about this now, ‘then it was a very abusive statement’. Here he is implying that the memory is a very painful one and one that is hard to face. This is the memory of being ‘discriminated against by your political organisation’ and for Wanda it turned him from a preacher of liberation to a common-law criminal as the guards and fellow prisoners who had listened to his proclamations of liberation now accused him of lying, saying ‘you are nothing but a common-law criminal’. When I ask about the TRC, and why he thinks his application was denied, Wanda responds:

Kim, honestly speaking I think I accepted that I was promised to be released, reading newspapers and listening to others, so when you are not approved by the TRC then you were left confused, you don’t understand, but as time went on, you learn through the media that no, man, this body was just a statue, it has no meaning and really I think the majority of South Africans think that that was just a puppet structure (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

Being denied again by the TRC when he applied for amnesty, Wanda remembers feeling confused. But he asserts that as time went on he has developed an understanding along with others, that the TRC was a ‘puppet structure’. The term ‘puppet’ refers back to an understanding developed during the anti-apartheid struggle as the ‘puppets’ of the apartheid system referring to those whose ‘strings’ are pulled by those in power and who do and say what those in power tell them to. Wanda’s view of the TRC was that there was a pre-written script and that only those who fell in line with this script and followed the tune of the power it supported would be well-received and rewarded by this process. At the time of this fieldwork, Wanda was still under house arrest. He was released from prison in 2007 and from house arrest in 2013. When he reflects on the transition to peace and his experience of being excluded and left in prison, he expresses feelings of confusion, hurt, anger and betrayal. Today, he continues trying to understand what went wrong and to make the best life for himself and his family, despite the unjust hand he feels he has been dealt in post-apartheid South Africa.

### 6.1.3 Commader Zet and the Story of Disarmament

While Wanda was in prison, Commander Zet was commanding the Amabutho forces, in the thick of violence in Khayelitsha. During the transition to peace there was an extreme disconnect between ANC leaders undergoing negotiations towards peace and comrades struggling against apartheid in the townships. This was especially palpable in the ANC's call to disarm at precisely the time when comrades felt most under threat from the intense violence of the early 1990s and the targeting of political leaders of the mass movement.

During the period of disarmament, Khayelitsha resembled a war zone, as taxi violence combined with a continuing violent struggle between comrades of Amabutho, led by Commander Zet against agents of apartheid. These agents of apartheid included the forces of 'apartheid war lords' such as Mali Hosa, the mayor of Khayelitsha who was aligned with apartheid police<sup>10</sup>. Furthermore, a number of prominent leaders of the mass movement in Khayelitsha, such as Michael Mapongwana, were being targeted and killed at the same time that negotiations towards peace were unfolding. When ANC leadership structures in the Western Cape attempted to enforce disarmament in 1992, it was in the midst of violent chaos and the threat of targeted executions.

Disarmament was experienced by Zet and his forces as acting against the realities and requirements of the internal struggle. There were a number of comrades operating with Zet in Khayelitsha during the transition who continue to work alongside him in the Struggle Veterans' Action Committee (SVACOM) today. They remember the disarmament as an illogical and illegitimate action of the ANC, with grave consequences. For example, Twoboy Jack, who was a sniper within the Amabutho structure commanded by Zet, constructs the disarmament as an illogical mistake in a context where the internal forces are the 'ones who are protecting' the community. Commander Zet remembers telling the ANC members that, 'Today you

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<sup>10</sup> From an interview with Max Ntanyana, Director of the Khayelitsha Museum and former Khayelitsha comrade (Max, Interview, 11 October 2011).

disarm us, but the enemy will be aware of this'. Furthermore, two other members of Commander Zet's unit, Boy-boy and Zakuthini construct the disarmament as not only illogical but also illegitimate. They had never before taken orders from the ANC. They saw these ANC members as their allies, but not as their leaders. Boy-boy describes the emotional experience of what he believes to be an illegitimate disarmament:

We started to see, okay, there were some other people now who called themselves 'the regional office of the ANC' and they would now come at times and stop us, and even want to disarm us, and we hated it ... you know we were just being told to give in our ammunition and we hated it big time ... The one thing that we hated was for a person to come and want to disarm us when he didn't arm us in the first place (Boy-boy, Interview, July 2007).

Soon after the traumatic and seemingly illegitimate experience of disarmament, members of the internal forces were assassinated. Furthermore, Wanda remembers hearing through the information networks in prison that ANC comrades were unhappy with Zet's power and defiance of their leadership and were planning to kill him. He remembers warning Zet that his life was in danger: 'I said to Zet, be careful they are going to kill you, because I heard they were planning to kill you, the information has been circulating in prison' (Wanda in Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February 2012).

Soon after the attempt to disarm the Amabutho, local ANC members decided to get rid of the threat that Commander Zet posed to their power. When they came for Zet, his mother thought that it was the police and she stood up to confront them and was caught by a bullet meant for Zet. With a deep sense of pain, anger and confusion, Commander Zet relives the memory of an attempt on his life that resulted in the death of his mother:

The decision was taken, I must be killed. That day I feel drowsy. My mother asked me what has happened. I heard: 'Bo! Zet, you are going to shit today'. They started to fire dadadadadadadada ... When they fired, I said to them, 'Don't stand up, don't even move, lay down'. They fired ... Yes, they fired. Unfortunately, my mom was thinking it was the stability unit, because the stability unit kicked the door three times. She said, 'I'm tired, for a long time, killing my son, killing me'. She stood up, got her in the stomach, lying down ... You know, the guy ... he said, 'We finished them'. Jesus, I feel like I can cry (Commander Zet, Interview, July 2007).

Zet and Wanda both represent cases of the violent demonisation, exclusion and targeting of comrades during the transition. In the quote below, Zet

interprets the meaning of his experiences of betrayal in the transition period in terms of the power struggle from within the liberation movement that took place during the transition. Zet's quote begins with a reflection on why he believes two leaders of the internal forces in Khayelitsha died during the transition. He asserts that they should have been in the leadership of the ANC, and then he connects their deaths with the attempt on his life, as he, too, was popular amongst the people of Khayelitsha:

Brave men Solomon Tshuku and Mike Mapongwana, they should be the first premier and the first chairman of the ANC Youth League ... That is why I don't have a mother, they label me a criminal, but people refuse and don't allow, they will never say that, because they know me, so they order I must be killed ... Wanda was the one who told me about the friction in prison, the friction in the organisation, the struggle has been simply hijacked by identifying those who are in the forefront, killing them [*Wanda interjects*: eliminating them] and putting threat to those who are still alive, to make them feel inferior (Commander Zet, Interview, February 2012).

Zet asserts that during the transition friction existed within the ANC around who would lay claim and take power from the memory of the struggle. According to his interpretation, which was backed up in many other interviews with comrade-veterans, people who were identified in the forefront of the popular struggle in Khayelitsha were either criminalised, killed off or intimidated and co-opted in order to ensure the memory of popular struggle could be claimed and used to solidify power for those who were being prepped to be the leadership of the ANC in the Western Cape.

These stories demonstrate how the period of transition was not only about negotiation with the apartheid regime, but also about a power struggle that took place between the leadership of the ANC coming from exile and those who had been waging a struggle from below. Furthermore, these two processes were linked. On the one hand, the National Party knew that they could no longer control the fury and fire of the black masses, and by entering into negotiations with the ANC, the ANC was expected to implement this control (Callinicos 1994). Therefore, these power struggles represent the lack of control that the ANC had over the masses and the ANC's brutal strategies of demobilising mass power, in order to bring the masses under their control and maintain their side of the negotiation bargaining.

Gladstone Ntamo explains, from his point of view, the desire of the ANC to bring the comrades under the control of the ANC. In contrast to the narratives of betrayal and abandonment, Ntamo expresses a narrative of success, where the decision to kill Commander Zet and criminalise comrades is explained (and legitimised), using the discourse of the national liberation struggle:

I know very well that Comrade Zet's mother was killed by our comrade and also, when MK suspended the armed struggle, all of us were supposed to obey those instructions, but on the other hand we heard that Comrade Zet and others continued to attack and now if you talk to the commanders of Umkhonto weSizwe, that was out of the instructions, all the attacks and other activities that took part after that order was wrong. I believe that Zet was arrested sometime and the ANC distanced itself, I know the reason why, now later he was labelled as if he is a criminal because he acted without instructions from the ANC/MK (Ntamo, Interview, 27 February 2012).

Ntamo agrees with Commander Zet's accusation that ANC members attempted to kill him during the transition, but legitimises this by saying that Zet did not obey the instructions to stop fighting that came from the commanders of the ANC in exile (Umkhonto weSizwe). Furthermore, once Commander Zet was arrested in 1992, the ANC distanced itself from him as they did from Wanda through labelling him a common criminal.

In general, these stories tell us about the lived experience of the process of transition from those who were involved in the struggle against apartheid from below. This time is narrated by many as a time of continued violence, where the decision to lay down arms was confusing and dangerous. Furthermore, the way in which the ANC came to claim leadership of the struggle resulted in the lived experience of local struggles for power in township contexts. MK members came from exile and were not immediately recognised as leaders of the internal struggle, while comrades were not recognised as legitimate members of the armed forces. Furthermore, the process of releasing political prisoners and integrating combatants into security structures seemed to rely on a certain version of events, which did not ring true for the lived experience of many who had engaged in violent resistance within comrade structures. As a result, they were excluded from these processes. The transition was experienced as confusing and painful; a process where comrades were betrayed and excluded.

## 6.2 Narratives of Disillusionment: Betrayal and Abandonment

Across interviews with respondents a general feeling of disillusionment is expressed as a sense of dashed expectation and confusion around the way things unfolded in relation to what was hoped for and expected. Disillusionment refers to a process of having one's illusions shattered, or having one's eyes opened to a painful reality. These narratives of disillusionment indicate a second breach in respondents' stories with a similar experience of enlightenment, which occurred in the first narrative breach, discussed in chapter five.

In chapter five the narrative of the past is a somewhat closed narrative in the sense that there is a beginning, middle and end to the story: apartheid, awareness, resistance. In the narratives of disillusionment, however, respondents are in mid-narrative and the story is yet to come to completion. This incomplete nature of the narrative of disillusionment, set in the present, is emphasised by George in the opening quote, when he highlights the sense of 'confusion'; people feeling that something is wrong. Respondents are in the process of coming to a new awareness and awakening in the present; however, they are still in the process of making sense of this confusion and coming to an understanding of what has gone wrong for them. Furthermore, this new awakening is in relationship to the past, thus, as respondents attempt to make meaning of their present, so too does their past narrative become relevant in different ways. This section outlines the narratives of betrayal and abandonment emphasised in constructions of the transition to post-apartheid South Africa, as well as the sense of confusion that is expressed.

Disillusionment narratives expressed by respondents have two different forms of expression. Squatter-comrades who represented a threat and a certain kind of violent power experienced and express narratives of betrayal, as they were actively criminalised and excluded in the context of a power struggle during the transition. Furthermore, narratives of betrayal are connected to veteran identities in the sense that it is those respondents attempting to claim veteran status who feel betrayed by those who do not

acknowledge the role they played. Those who were not actively betrayed and criminalised express a narrative of abandonment or neglect, as a sense that the ANC government has neglected its responsibility to bring about a promised freedom from geographical, economic and social oppression and, as a result, respondents continue to suffer violent lives. While the narrative of betrayal is expressed by comrade-veterans, the narrative of abandonment is a general narrative expressed by Crossroads memory community. The narrative of abandonment connects to the memory identity of victim, in the sense that respondents feel the government should take responsibility for their suffering as victims of the past and victims of the present.

Both expressions of betrayal and abandonment are directed at the ANC government and imply a connection to the ANC government, which, respondents believe, has responsibility to Crossroads memory community. In other words there is a relationship of connection, dependency and expectation that the ANC (as ‘their party’) is responsible for the acknowledgement and care of Crossroads memory community. This assumption of a social pact that connects the ANC to Crossroads memory community is a key feature of the narratives of transition, as it is this created pact that is breached in the narratives of disillusionment. Both narratives of betrayal and abandonment share a sense of dashed expectations, both are constructed in relation to the ANC government, and both overlap and speak to one another.

### 6.2.1 The Narrative of Betrayal

Despite their experiences of popular struggle demonstrated in chapter five, where squatter empowerment developed through a process of lived resistance and awakening that developed organically from below, the place of the ANC as leader of this struggle attains almost mythical qualities. Despite the independent nature of the squatter struggle, Commander Zet re-affirms a sense of parental dependency to the ANC: ‘The ANC must apologise for throwing its own son in the dustbin’ (Commander Zet, Interview, 13 February, 2012). In the context of this unfolding liberation, respondents have become increasingly disillusioned with the realities they find themselves in; however they remain hooked into a mythical legitimisation of the ANC as

their leader. In the context of continued oppression despite 'our' ANC in government, respondents construct this state of affairs through a discourse of betrayal, which asserts that the lack of acknowledgement by the ANC of the role played by squatter-comrades amounts to a betrayal. Bongisile expresses these sentiments: 'So that is why I feel betrayed and the ANC did nothing about that ... they did not acknowledge the effort posed by other people' (Bongisile, Interview, 31 October 2011).

The narrative of betrayal is similar to the narrative of abandonment, in the sense that it paints a picture of an unfulfilled relationship to the ANC government. However, the narrative of betrayal is more active and more individualised than the narrative of abandonment and neglect, as specific individuals who were involved in resistant violence feel that they have been betrayed, as they have been excluded from recognition and acknowledgment. The role played by comrade-veterans in the struggle and the criminalisation and lack of recognition in relation to this role is key to their expressions of betrayal. The assumed role of the ANC to recognise those who fought for liberation is experienced as unfulfilled, therefore leading to accusations of betrayal. The personal stories of betrayal during the transition feed into a shared narrative of betrayal, which respondents use to give meaning to their present realities in relation to their past experiences of violence.

There is a strong sense from comrade-veterans that the role that they played was not acknowledged and not recognised in the context of the present. For example, when I ask Yamile how he feels when he thinks back to the meetings he attended in London, he responds:

In today's life, I would say that what I did, and the travelling, it was like playing. The reason I say that, is that there was no acknowledgment or recognition for us as the people who were internally in the struggle, no one is recognising or acknowledging, no one is saying anything about our part, our role in the struggle. That is why I am saying we were just playing. What we did is not counted or valued by politicians as playing a role against apartheid (Yamile, Interview, 11 August 2011).

In the context of the present, his past takes on new meaning for Yamile. While at the time he believed what he was doing was important, today it is as if they were 'just playing'. Furthermore, the pain of the present is not only about material exclusion from demobilisation benefits and special pensions,

but about symbolic exclusion from memory and narrative. This exclusion means that many comrade-veterans connect their expressions of betrayal with feeling used and exploited, that the role they played in the struggle is now benefitting others. Betrayal is also expressed through a painful sense of being used for the benefit of ANC leaders. Wanda expresses this sense below:

There are a lot of people who have been left behind, and they feel that the struggle they took part in, today it means nothing, it means that they were used, it means that they were a bunch of fools who did not know what they were doing and it's painful to share that information (Wanda, Interview, 13 February 2012).

The betrayal experienced by comrades and the impact that it has on the meaning of their sacrifices in the material and political realities of the present is further compounded by the emotional significance and anguish attached to this for respondents. They express a deep sense of pain, anger and humiliation that has psychological as well as physical manifestations for comrades. This betrayal trauma is suffered by respondents as a result of the unfolding of the politics of the present and their sense of rejection. In the quotes below, some of the physical expressions of betrayal trauma are expressed, as well as the dangers posed for the physical and psychological health of those at the receiving end of betrayal. In the follow up interview I conducted with Yamile and Commander Zet, Yamile spoke about his expectations during and after the transition, that, 'we would be invited and asked who the people under our supervision were. I thought it would proceed in that fashion' (Yamile, Interview, 23 February 2012). Zet then highlighted the emotional pain and the physical risks surrounding what Yamile had just said, asserting, 'Kim , if you listen, Yamile could be having a stroke; if not [given] a chance to express himself, he might land up having a stroke in this situation' (Commander Zet in Yamile, Interview, 23 February 2012).

Zet is correct in highlighting the psychological toll that the politics of transition have taken on Yamile, who suffers in the present and prefers to retreat into alcoholism, as he has no hope that things will change. It was a significant occurrence and flagged as such by Wanda and Zet that Yamile was sober for the interviews we conducted. Similarly, Zet has his own physical manifestation of the frustration of the present, where he is unable to contain his rage, which turns his eyes red:

That is burning, really, that is burning us, it is burning us, you know, you can see, you know I used to wearing this [his dark glasses], you know, when I think about this, I become angry, and my eye change this, now I don't want people to realise, or notice that I'm angry, I decided to use this, because if I'm angry, you will notice the way my eyes fume, and the way I walk, you will see (Comrade Zet, Interview, July, 2007).

The betrayal experienced by comrade-veterans results in deep feelings of anger. As a result of this anger and frustration, Commander Zet would wear dark glasses to hide the way his eyes 'fumed', meaning the way they turned red with anger when he confronted the leadership of the ANC. In general, this quote demonstrates how the anger experienced is embodied and impacts on comrade-veterans in a deep sense, affecting the way they walk and even their eyes. Lati further expresses the emotions connected to the experience of betrayal, claiming a physical sensation of 'feeling his stomach blowing up' when he thinks about this betrayal.

It seems as if even if you went upside-down fighting for the struggle, fighting for the liberation of this country, but this meant nothing for these people, oh it is terrible that these people are pointing at themselves, saying they themselves coming from exile, they are the only people that have fought for the liberation of this country, it is very painful that when we see that kind of information ... I feel my stomach is blowing (up) when these things are being spoken about, makes me wish I did not participate in the struggle because it is useless now it is rubbish to me (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

Lati expresses a sense that the struggle waged from below has been claimed by those who come from exile and that the recognition of exiles is at the expense of the recognition of internal resistance. This links to a sense of feeling used, and to the experiences of having their struggle claimed for the recognition and legitimacy of the liberation movement, discussed in chapter four. This claiming and criminalising the comrade struggle has implications that are material as well as symbolic and psychological. These quotes demonstrate strongly that comrades experience their exclusion and criminalisation in memory with a great deal of trauma and that it is dangerous for their physical and mental health.

The narrative of betrayal represents an expression of the experience of post-apartheid South Africa as one where comrades have been compromised and betrayed through the process of transition. As a result, they feel sidelined and rejected by their leaders, and humiliated in the context of their social networks and family members, who see their role as meaningless and wasted.

Through the narrative of betrayal, comrades feel the sacrifices they made for liberation are meaningless, in a context where they have been excluded from liberation and freedom by those who they believed were their friends in the struggle against apartheid. The contestation over leadership and meaning of the anti-apartheid struggle, which functioned to draw a line between who was included and excluded, was further entrenched in the construction of the ANC's national narrative of struggle during the transition. These personal stories and shared narratives of betrayal represent the painful and confusing lived experience of finding oneself on the wrong side of the line of struggle memory.

### 6.2.2 Narratives of Abandonment

While the narrative of betrayal focuses on the comrades of violence and ties into a belief that those who were part of combatant structures should be recognised and rewarded for their role in liberation, the narrative of abandonment and neglect speaks to entire communities who remain poor and have not yet witnessed the freedom they hoped for. While the betrayed comrade-veteran expects recognition and reward, the abandoned suffering community expects freedom and transformation. Comrade-veterans also express narratives of abandonment and move in these instances to a more collective expression of suffering and the dashed expectations. However, expressions of abandonment are also individualised, in the sense that it is individuals who are asking for help, and this is often expressed through victim claims for reparation; however the focus of suffering is on the present, rather than the past.

Through the narrative of abandonment and neglect, the transition to democracy is constructed as a time when change was expected for these sufferers of the apartheid past; they narrate this time as a period in which they hoped that the suffering of the past would end, but, instead, it is met with a reality of increased and extended suffering. Respondents are left feeling abandoned by a government who they put their trust in, 'settled down' for, and believed would finally offer them freedom from oppression. As such, it puts the entire life narrative into context, connecting the telling of the past to

the conditions of the present. The narrative says: We suffered and struggled, then freedom came and we hoped it would change, but life is still as bad as before; we expected change, but it did not come and we are left feeling abandoned and even worse off than before.

In the quotes below we see the construction of the narrative breach in the experiences of hope and disappointment born out of the dashed expectations of the transition to democracy and the coming to power of the ANC. The sense that the government is not fulfilling its responsibility for the suffering of the poor is expressed by one of the women who shared in the group interview at Zulu's place, Emma Tyelentombi, in the quote below:

The government is not taking care of us, we are old women and the government is not taking care of us, nothing we receive from the government is real. Some have passed on and others will follow, and even our kids might not benefit, they are dying out there (Emma, Group interview, Zulu's place, 21 October 2011).

The narrative of abandonment of Crossroads memory community is expressed in relation to the government, which is 'not taking care of us' and is being irresponsible at the expense of those who suffer. While respondents hoped and expected that suffering, marginalisation and violence would end with the new government, this has not occurred.

In the quote below, Sindi, who was a resistant youth of Crossroads and is a member of SVACOM today, expresses respondents' commonly held hope for democracy and the belief that, socio-economically, their lives would change, especially in terms of land and housing. However, like many respondents, she describes her disappointment that the change they hoped for did not take place. Furthermore, for Sindi this is compounded by the fact that she cannot find work and therefore has no means through which to change her current situation:

I came back here in 1993. The day I had to vote for my freedom I never slept, I thought everything will be alright, when I get my freedom, I will get money, I will stay in a better house, and I voted. I'm still waiting today, I did have big thoughts, I am so disappointed, so, so, so disappointed, that's why I don't vote anymore. Why must I vote? The vote doesn't mean nothing to me. I'm not working, doing nothing, just sitting at home (Sindi, Interview, 9 August 2011).

Today Sindi rents a room in a house in Nyanga township. She is trained as a nurse but cannot find work. At the end of many interviews respondents

express their dire economic situation, and their desperation and inability to find work. For example, in one of the group interview held at Beauty's crèche, Ntombentle Ngaleka asserts: 'There is no life I would say, even RDP<sup>11</sup> houses were just holes with no rooms, so no life that you can say is better than it used to be. I am not working; I don't have a source of income' (Ntombentle, Group interview, Beauty's crèche, 15 November 2011). People express grave socio-economic realities of continued and deepening poverty and desperation, summed up eloquently by Ntombentle's phrase, 'there is no life'. This is constructed in terms of abandonment, in the sense that the blame for this 'no life' is placed on the ANC. Respondents assert that 'the ANC doesn't care about us', and that this reality is very different from what they expected when they voted in 1994. This is expressed by Sindi below, where she continues to argue that she hoped that, because the ANC consists of mostly black leaders, they would care about the plight of black citizens, but she laments that things seem even worse than before the ANC came to power.

South Africa's future is dark. Sometimes God will tell me I don't know what I want. I thought that if a black man [sits] at that table, he will feel the pain, but I think even the white government was better, because the way they do things now, it's too much crime, no jobs, at least the old government there was jobs, not that much crime. For me the future of South Africa is dark, dark, dark, dark (Sindi, Interview, 9 August 2011).

As a result of this disappointment, the narrative of abandonment is constructed and emphasised in the quotes below, where respondents highlight their feelings of being forgotten and deceived by a government that they expected would be different, as Dumisa\* asserts: 'The government has deceived us and our own government is the most oppressive government, that is my view' (Dumisa, Group interview, Beauty's crèche, 29 November, 2011).

While, on the one hand, allegiance and connection is confirmed through the term 'our', on the other hand it is contested through the word 'deception'. This experience of abandonment and continued oppression at the hands of a

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<sup>11</sup> RDP houses refer to the low cost housing created through the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) put in place in 1994, and then abandoned and replaced by GEAR (Growth, Employment and Re-distribution Programme).

government that respondents believe to be ‘our own government’ is expressed as a painful reality. There is an expectation of a two-way relationship between the ANC and the squatters; an unwritten bargain that has been put forward and breached. On the squatters’ side, their end of the bargain was two-fold: firstly they suffered under oppression and resisted oppression in ways that brought freedom; secondly they acknowledged the government as ‘our own’, thereby handing over the baton of leader and saviour of the oppressed to the ANC. In return, it was expected that the lives and oppression of the squatters would change when the ANC came to power. In Sindi’s words, it was expected that when ‘a black man [sits] at that table, he will feel the pain’. However, this unwritten promise has not been fulfilled, leaving respondents feeling further oppressed and hopeless about a future which is ‘dark, dark, dark’.

The narrative of abandonment is articulated through a sense of unfulfilled promises. These unfulfilled promises are often connected to socio-economic experiences of continued poverty, but also to experiences of continued structural oppression and violence. In one of the group interviews at Beauty’s crèche, Felix emphasised the sense of sitting and waiting for something to change. Furthermore, he connects this feeling of the lack of change to the lack of employment and describes this in terms of the emotion of pain and a condition of violence. Respondents make sense of their continued suffering at the hands of a new oppressive government, and the conditions of continued violence and abandonment as they wait for a promised change that does not come.

... that is my pain as I am sitting here and that I’m still going through as I’m sitting here because I never had a time when I could say I had a good job, working appropriately as a person. I never had rights as an employee like a white ... with me I’m not working, young people even my kids come back, don’t find jobs and they tell me when they are looking for work they are told to go and ask Mandela for work. That’s a description of violence today ... I don’t see any difference because even today the government is promising people but not fulfilling those promises, we are told to wait and we are only waiting, nothing happened. The reason I’m dissatisfied with government today, the promises they make, they don’t fulfil (Felix, Group interview, Beauty’s crèche, 23 November 2011).

These quotes demonstrate the narrative of abandonment mobilised by respondents to construct their experiences of transition and post-apartheid South Africa. They express a sense that something is deeply and

unexpectedly wrong with the present state of affairs. Firstly, despite believing that things would be different when the ANC came to power as ‘their government’, they express a sense that some deception has happened. This is the second narrative breach – of transition without change. Secondly, this unexpected turn of events, where something should have changed, but did not, is experienced in terms of the emotions of pain and confusion. Furthermore, in his discussion of poverty and the lack of work, Felix asserts, ‘That’s an expression of violence today’. A significant challenge to the discourse of reconciliation is levelled in these quotes in terms of the question of whether or not a transition out of violence has, in fact, occurred. From these quotes and the lived experiences of respondents, they argue against the hegemonic assertion that South Africa transitioned from violence to peace. These respondents instead express continuations of violent lives in the current era.

### 6.2.3 A Sense of Re-Mystification

Alongside a sense of betrayal and abandonment, respondents express a sense of confusion, which can be interpreted as a re-mystification of the nature of violence in the post-apartheid context. The narratives of empowerment and squatter resistance presented in chapter five were characterised by an experience of coming to awareness. In contrast, narratives of betrayal, abandonment and dependency on the ANC are characterised by confusion. While disillusionment narratives do articulate a sense that something is wrong, expressions of confusion further indicate that respondents have not quite figured out what it is that has gone wrong.

Demonstrating a sense that Crossroads memory community is left in the dark about the politics of negotiation, Sindi expresses this with the assertion that people have been kept ‘*dom*’ (which in Afrikaans means ‘stupid’). In the quote below, Sindi asserts that things got worse with freedom; in a creative explanation she splits the word freedom in two, and asserts that they were only given the ‘*dom*’. She says that somehow the ‘free’ was taken from them and they were kept stupid. She believes that the youth should still fight for the ‘free’ of ‘freedom’ which was denied to them:

It became worse when I get the freedom, and I never see the freedom for myself, we only see 'dom', we still have to look for the 'free'. If I was young I would still fight for the free, because now we are still keeping *dom*, now my government keep us *dom*, keeps us stupid. If I'm still young I would fight for the free, I would say now, youth, come let's *toyi-toyi* now, fight for free, they must stop giving us this *dom* and Mandela must tell us where's free, because Mandela knows where's free, he was the one with the same room with De Klerk, so what was the agreement that they must give us the 'dom', so now we are holding *dom*, there is no freedom (Sindi, Interview, 9 August 2011).

For Sindi freedom was not attained, but it was compromised at the negotiations table, which she alludes to through her discussion of Mandela being in a room with De Klerk (the leader of the NP and President of South Africa before 1994) and giving up the 'free', while 'my government' is 'keeping us' stupid. Through the imaginative splitting of the word 'free/dom' Sindi provides an evocative sense that something has happened to the 'free' but remains out of the awareness of people who are 'kept stupid' (given the 'dom') by their own government.

The constant reference to a 'complicated confusion' demonstrates the awareness of the lack of awareness of what has gone wrong. As Boy-boy asserts, 'confusion is the order of the day'. Respondents' assertions that they are kept in the dark and left confused allude to a re-mystification that has occurred through negotiations. Not only were the popular masses deprived of the freedom for which they fought, but they were also cast into 'darkness' again. This is further evidenced in the quotes where respondents compare the violence of the past to the violence of the present and at times assert that things are worse in the present. Furthermore, when speaking about the violence of the present as mindless violence, respondents assert that at least the violence they faced in the past had a purpose to it. The quotes below indicate the connections between violence, pain and purpose, where violence with a purpose that can be understood within a framework of oppression and resistance is less painful than violence that seems purposeless. The first quote is from Fundiswa, spoken during one of the group interviews she organised for us at Beauty's crèche. The second is from former squatter leader, Oliver Memani, collected during his life history interview conducted at his home in Khayelitsha:

The young people of the past got involved in violence to make a change of the political views, unlike the youth of today that just want to take a gun and shoot it to

make a name for themselves ... Then you fought because you wanted the country to be liberated, but today people are just crazy and shoot people for no reason (Fundiswa, Group interview, Beauty's crèche, 29 November 2011).

Yes, but the difference is by then people had hope that once we are free there will be a difference, once the country is free from oppression of apartheid it will be different ... yes, freedom is just from the mouth but from the act nothing. That's how I think (Memani, Interview, 26 January 2012).

These reflections on the meaning of violence in the present, in relation to the meaning of violence in the past are profound and tragic. Reading this construction of freedom as violence in relationship to the constructions of violence explored in chapter five, we see how respondents were able to locate the meaning of violence during the squatter struggles within a broader vision of resistance and hope for a better future. By contrast, the violence of today is constructed as meaningless.

This assertion makes sense when understood through these narratives of confusion and re-mystification. While the narratives of squatter movements were characterised by empowerment and 'opened eyes', the narratives of the post-transition present are characterised by dependency and confusion. It is the lack of awareness, understanding and hope for change that makes the violence of today less bearable.

### 6.3. Conclusion

The narratives of both abandonment and betrayal represent respondents' attempts to make sense of the position they find themselves in today, in relation to their memories of struggle and their expectations of transition. Three different stories of transition were presented in order to show the personal lived experience of this time. These narratives of disillusionment represent a challenge to the national memory discourse of reconciliation in the sense that they contest the assumption that oppression and violence are in the past. Instead, they argue that oppression continues in the present. During a group interview at Zulu's place, Ethel Ntsophongawale sums up the issue: 'We have been long in this road, the struggle has taken a lot from us and we are struggling, we are suffering even today and there is nothing that has changed' (Ethel, Group interview, Zulu's place, 28 October 2011). This lived experience that 'nothing has changed' for Crossroads memory community is

critiqued and interpreted through these two dominant narratives of betrayal and abandonment. In other words, respondents feel that not much has changed for them in the present, and this is explained for squatter-comrades in terms of them being betrayed and excluded from recognition, and for victims of past violence in terms of them being neglected.

A particularly striking feature of these two narratives of betrayal and abandonment is the way in which they set up a relationship to the ANC government of an unfulfilled agreement. In general, there first have to be agreed-upon terms, before there can be an abandonment or betrayal of those terms. In the case of abandonment, the squatters' end of the deal is constructed as fulfilled, and included: 1) suffering and struggling for freedom and against oppression; 2) accepting the ANC as the leader of the oppressed to represent the needs of the people at 'the table' of negotiation and government; and 3) waiting patiently for change to come. In the case of betrayal the squatter end of the deal is constructed as fulfilled and included: 1) fighting and sacrificing one's life for liberation; 2) accepting the ANC as the leader of liberation and of the comrades; and 3) settling down and allowing the path of non-violence and reconciliation to lead to freedom. While Crossroads memory community believe that they have held up their side of the bargain, they have been actively betrayed and passively abandoned, because the ANC government has not held up its side of the bargain, which respondents thought was to bring about freedom, which would have both the material expression of socio-economic change and the symbolic expression of recognition and acknowledgement.

From this narrative understanding of what has gone wrong in post-apartheid South Africa, in relation to what squatters hoped for and what they have received, there are various forms of agency that squatters mobilise, in order to respond to the position they find themselves in. These two narratives are themselves forms of agency, as they critique the ANC government, accusing it of not fulfilling its role of caring for the poor and oppressed, and acknowledging those who sacrificed their lives for liberation. The narrative breach of betrayal and abandonment make these narratives of the present compelling and give respondents a reason to tell their stories. These

narratives are also attempts to make sense of a confusing and painful reality where, on the one hand, the national narrative asserts that the struggle against oppression and violence is in the past, but on the other hand, respondents continue to experience oppression and violence in the present. They are, therefore, in a process of sense-making, but this process is still unfolding. In the following chapter a deeper critique and counter-narrative will be presented, which bubbles up from the lived memories of the past and scratches at some of the hegemonic assumptions around the connection to the ANC and the individualism of memory identities of victim and veteran.

## Chapter Seven

### **Victims, Veterans or the Counter-Memory Identity of ‘the People’**

In the previous chapters I demonstrated that respondents’ narratives of the transition imply a relationship of dependency on the African National Congress (ANC), which is constructed around the themes of betrayal, abandonment and re-mystification. Furthermore, this relationship of dependency negates histories of empowerment and ties respondents into the politics of memory claims and identities of veteranhood and victimhood. While comrade-veterans emphasise the active exclusion from the recognition and benefits accorded to struggle veterans, the Crossroads memory community emphasises victim discourses of neglect and lack of care through narratives of abandonment. For the Crossroads memory community, the identities of veteran and victim are both constructed in relation to the ANC as leader, recogniser and care-giver, and the ANC is then critiqued for not fulfilling this function. Respondents attempt to prove their struggle legitimacy in terms of this connection to the ANC, which subtly reinforces the party as the rightful provider of benefits related to memory identity.

This chapter looks more closely at the more counter-hegemonic impulse of respondent’s memory, which calls into question the underlying relationship and the politics of the narrative of betrayed veteran and abandoned victim. It continues to answer the question of how respondents’ memories support or subvert national memory discourse. In particular, it argues that when respondents call on their memories of ‘people’s power’, the dominant memory identities of veteran and victim, and the national liberation struggle discourse in which they are embedded are contested and subverted. The frames and identities of transitional justice and post-conflict development discourse are, therefore, challenged as the identity lens shifts to the collective identity of ‘the people’ and the empowering memories of unity and the creativity of the squatter struggle waged from below.

The ANC also mobilises the identity of ‘the people’ for its own legitimacy. However, from their lived memories of squatter resistance, respondents of this research attempt to reclaim the empowering meaning of this identity. In

this way, the memory identity of ‘the people’ in respondents’ narratives challenges their relationship to the ANC by re-remembering the power of the squatters and contesting the individualism of veteran and victim identity.

The chapter begins by discussing the hegemonic symbolic relationship of the ANC to ‘the people’ in the discourse of the national liberation struggle. This dynamic relationship is located within the grounded story of Gladstone Ntamo’s vision (presented below), and the issues and contradictions contained in this relationship are demonstrated. The chapter then draws out the counter-hegemonic memory identity of ‘the people’ which respondents construct through drawing on their lived memories presented in chapter five. I demonstrate how this counter-memory identity challenges the assumed relationship of dependency to the ANC government and provides Crossroads memory community with a memory identity that is more in line with their interests. The counter-hegemonic memory identity of people’s power has the potential to remind the Crossroads memory community of their lived experiences of empowerment, unity and creativity; of a moment in their history when they enjoyed ‘a little bit of freedom’ and ‘lived by their own means’.

### 7.1 The Relationship between ‘the People’ and ‘the Party’

While the notion of the symbolic relationship between ‘the people’ and the ANC is fairly removed and abstract, this section attempts to locate its politics within the specificities of squatter resistance as a form of people’s power. This relationship was set up through the transition; it is a dynamic relationship and it is unclear and shifting enough to allow for different interests to come to use it. This section begins with a discussion of the concept of ‘the people’ contained in dominant national liberation struggle discourse. It then presents the story of Gladstone Ntamo’s vision for the recognition of squatter histories of struggle and explores the contested nature of the relationship between the ANC and its uses of ‘the people’. This story demonstrates how respondents pour their hopes and their concerns about the political nature of this relationship into the example of Ntamo’s vision and

how the contradictions implied in this relationship are managed through the metaphor of ‘the gate-keeper’.

#### 7.1.1 The Discourse of the National Liberation Struggle

The relationship between the ANC in exile and the mass popular movement inside the country in the 1980s has been analysed by various scholars (for example van Kessel 2000, Suttner 2004, Neocosmos 2009). The politics of the ANC in exile have been described as national liberation struggle politics, which assume that the path towards liberation progresses through military armed struggle and that liberation is achieved through a seizure of the state by the liberation party. In contrast to this politics, the 1980s witnessed the rise of anti-apartheid movements from below, characterised by people’s power. The ANC, in exile, did play a powerful role in the imagination of the popular movement and many involved in people’s power would tune into the ANC’s radio freedom broadcast live from Lusaka and listen carefully to the strategy and ideology of the movement. However, these movements were characterised in terms of people’s power precisely because they were not led from the national liberation party. The masses and their strength in unity comprised a powerful force against the apartheid state, both in the forms of popular resistance as well as in their forms of alternate state structures of people’s power. Therefore, within the liberation movement we see two different forces of power, ‘the people’ of the liberation movement and ‘the party’ of the liberation movement. Furthermore, a relationship full of un-discussed contradictions existed between these two different forms and forces of power. It was, therefore, also a relationship whose contradictions were managed discursively as the party co-opted the discourse of ‘the people’ for its own legitimacy, while legitimising itself as the leader of the liberation struggle.

Michael Neocosmos (2009) argues that the undoing of the mass movement came in its coalescence around the idea that the role of people’s power was to prepare the ground for the coming to power of the ANC in exile. In a later article he writes on the South African case: ‘The sites of embryonic people’s power never fully matured and were rather still born, as the democratic

politics of the mass movement more-or-less rapidly collapsed into authoritarianism' (Neocosmos 2009:314). For Neocosmos and others, the democratic potential contained within the people's power of the 1980s movements is frustrated by taking for granted the role of the party as the leader of the popular struggle. The kinds of politics that creep in through the peace settlements are very different from those that were emerging during the 1980s. Furthermore, the politics of the ANC in exile were not the same as the politics of 'the people' and, as a result, the new regime would inevitably fail to deliver on expectations of what liberation should look like from below. This contradiction was managed through the national liberation movement discourse, which is summarised by Raymond Suttner as a language of unity that 'tends to represent the unified people as embodied in the liberation movement organisation and then equate them with the people as a whole' (2006:23). Suttner draws attention to the slogans such as 'ANC is the nation' and 'ANC is your mother and your father' to show the workings of this discourse, which assumes that the liberation party is the natural leader of all parts of the movement and then of the nation, which follows the success of the movement.

The discourse of the national liberation movement continues its legitimising function for the ANC, despite the glaring contradictions of South African democracy (Marias 2011). The ANC attempts to keep the idea of the national liberation struggle alive as a key nation-building discourse, through which it gains its legitimacy. This remembering is disciplined in terms of what Baines calls 'ANCs Master Narrative of the Liberation Struggle' (Baines 2007:283). This official narrative of past violence was set up through the TRC in the name of reconciliation and nation-building to act as the authoritative voice functioning to delimit what should be remembered and what should be forgotten (Bundy 2001). Hart (2007, 2008) and Marais (2011) argue that recent struggles over power within the ANC government have been waged precisely around the meaning of the master narrative of the liberation struggle and who should be crowned its rightful owner.

Marais, Hart and Baines show us that, in the present, it appears that the meaning of the liberation struggle has become an ANC master narrative; thus

the place of the ANC as leader of the liberation movement is, at this stage, taken for granted. Within this hegemony, however, those within the ANC continue to struggle over who is the rightful leader of the liberation party. However, this hegemony or settling of the relationship between the movement, the people and the party occurred during the transition, and there was a moment when it seemed a different kind of relationship might have been possible. Despite the hegemonic nature of this relationship in South Africa today, respondents demonstrate their own grappling with it; at times treating it as obvious and at other times struggling with the contradiction and calling up their memories of the past in ways that question it.

#### 7.1.2 The Story of Gladstone Ntamo's Vision

Towards the end of my fieldwork in February 2012 there was much excitement from Commander Zet, as he had received a phone call from Charles Kanku, former Amabutho member and the peninsular organiser for South African National Civics Organisation (SANCO) in the Western Cape. Kanku had been contacted by Gladstone Ntamo with 'a vision'. Ntamo, who was introduced in chapter four, is considered by veteran-comrades to have been the leader of the squatter-combatant networks in KTC. In his own life narrative he confirms that he was a leader of squatter resistance, but in terms of his veteran status he asserts that he was recruited in 1987 to be part of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK) units, whose leadership was in Gugulethu. Therefore, he tells a story where his struggle status of 'veteran' comes legitimately out of recruitment into MK units, based in the township of Gugulethu. His vision, however, is to celebrate the role of the squatters and to 'salute' and 'congratulate' the people of Crossroads, Nyanga Bush and KTC. Commander Zet was particularly excited about Ntamo's vision, asserting: 'But I was so happy he said he has a vision' (Commander Zet, Informal discussion, 20 February 2012).

Much discussion surrounded this 'vision' of Ntamo's; what it might mean and the hopes and fears that surrounded its possibility. I present some of this below, as it speaks to the contested nature of the relationship of 'the ANC', as the liberation party, with 'the squatters', as a specific section of 'the

people' whom the liberation party claims to speak on behalf of. Furthermore, this is a relationship that has its imaginary and formative roots during the transition and the politics of the peace negotiations in South Africa. This is also a relationship that continues to structure the political connections and contestations between the squatters as 'the people' and 'the ANC' today. Ntamo is seen as a gate-keeper between these two groups; thus his vision for squatter recognition stirs up past experiences and present constructions and dynamics of this relationship.

On Sunday 19 February I attended a meeting held at KTC, to discuss Ntamo's vision with various squatter movement leaders and participants from the struggles of the 1980s. There were many stories told about the struggles of the past, the roles the squatters played and the importance of their recognition. However, it was unclear what form this recognition would take, by whom, and with what effects. It seemed the aim, in Ntamo's words, was for 'us to congratulate ourselves'. There was a vagueness around what the point of this self-congratulation was, but into this vagueness could be poured the imaginations, hopes and concerns of many player. Below, I quote some of these different interpretations on the envisioned event in April. In my fieldwork journal I wrote:

The next day, we are at the training centre (home of SVACOM Khayelitsha branch) and we speak to Twoboy Jack and Zet about the meeting yesterday. They are very happy about 'the programme', Zet especially is full of excitement, recounting all the times they've tried to question the past and the powers that be and feeling that because Ntamo is now there with them things will change. He draws up memories of the distinction between those from Gugulethu who 'think they are better' than those from Khayelitsha. The memory of the struggle is cut through with a division between Crossroads versus Gugulethu, the 'illiterate foreigners' versus the 'literate Cape-borns'. But Ntamo represents to Zet the power returning to the squatters, the illiterates, and all the memories of discrimination come back to him and he laughs at them because he hopes that now it will be different. A day later Wanda voices his concerns that Ntamo is using Zet and the 'visioned' event to gain popularity for the ANC. He worries that in the end the ANC will sponsor the event and it will turn into mobilisation for the ANC rather than a reclaiming of power for squatter memories of struggle (Fieldwork journal, 20 February 2012).

Zet's excitement was expressed on Monday, Wanda's concern on Tuesday and on Wednesday all three of us went to conduct a follow up interview with Yamile, where the event was discussed and concerns were raised:

Yamile: I am somebody who analyses things, I've got my eye very sharp. These years, when Ntamo was an ANC councillor, he was not coming back to us, when he's lost from his group he's coming back. He had a loaf of bread he didn't want to share with the two of you. This getting together is going to blow up – we're doing push, push, here – a chess game – it is okay but you must look at loop holes. Once people on top, we will be competing for points, but they will never, never say that. Because you will say to me 'open the door, so we get in' and then 'close the door' and then we open the next door, that is the thing that is damaging everything (Yamile, Interview, 23 February 2012).

Zet: Ntamo did not associate with me because he feared he will lose his bread, he was told by Tony (Yengeni) never to associate with Zet or Yamile. Now Ntamo comes with a vision where we are recognised and send a delegation to Luthuli house – why if we operate on the behalf of the liberation movement? We ask them, 'Are you aware of the internal forces and leaders, yes/no?' The programme must be led by us – but these things be hijacked if there is any loophole. Ntamo is doing this because why? They took away his councillorship (Zet in Yamile's interview, 23 February 2012).

Wanda: All of a sudden Ntamo is coming up with a vision after he's been kicked out. He has been bribed to be against you and everyone in the struggle – big salary – new piece of bread out of his mouth and he thinks that he has a vision we must admire ourselves and go to Luthuli house, but once they see Zet is coming to us vigorously they will see Ntamo is coming with his own ways of KTC and Nyanga Bush. What if again they say – here is a piece of bread go and eat. Please make sure you use these people appropriately. (Wanda in Yamile's interview, 23 February 2012)

This discussion between Yamile, Zet and Wanda around the politics of the ANC, Ntamo and the squatters brings up interpretations and fears of the way in which the power of the squatters is 'used' in a political 'chess game'. The symbols of 'the bread' of liberation are used as a way to explain why Ntamo was co-opted by the ANC-MK version of the struggle, to act against the squatter's power version of liberation. Furthermore, there is an argument that he has now been excluded from the bread of liberation, as his councillorship will not be renewed. There is fear that he may either mobilise the power of the squatters, enabling him to threaten the ANC with it, so they give him another piece of bread; or that there will be some way in which the squatters are again used as a symbol of power, but then discarded once they have served their purpose.

Wanda and I have an interview lined up with Ntamo, and it seems that the fears of these comrades are correct in the sense that Ntamo has no intention of challenging the hegemonic narrative of the ANC leadership, asserting 'I salute our leaders' and disagreeing when asked to reflect on the poverty of people, despite liberation: 'nothing is wrong, but our people' (Ntamo, Interview, 27 February 2012). As was demonstrated in previous chapters,

Ntamo stands strongly in support of the hegemonic memory that privileges the ANC, legitimises the neat chains of military command led by MK members and criminalises and excludes comrades from veteranhood. Furthermore, when we ask what he hopes will come out of this event of celebrating the squatters, he responds:

Now I want us to tell our people the history and allow them to ask some questions, but at the same time I want our people to know each other and to make sure that day will be a celebration day for the people to get information from us to say we achieved what we wanted to achieve. It is difficult now to win the election in this area, if you can now look or think if it's difficult to us now (Ntamo, Interview, 27 February 2012).

Ntamo asserts that he wants to use the event as a way to tell the people the history of the ANC and remind them what they have achieved. The aim is to re-affirm the legitimacy and meaning of the ANC for the people, in order to get the support of the people again in a context where it has become difficult for the ANC to win an election in the Western Cape. Ntamo's conception of 'the people', therefore, are as a constituency for the ANC, and the aim is to re-build broken ties between this constituency and their leader, by reminding them of the history of the ANC in the liberation struggle.

### 7.1.3 The Gate-Keeper Metaphor

Before we move to the more counter-hegemonic expressions of 'the people' arising in squatter memories, it is important to first address the way in which the contradictions between the assumed relationship of the ANC to the people and the realities of continued oppression are managed through the metaphor of the gate-keeper. This management represents a way in which respondents subtly support this assumed connection of dependency and therefore requires analysis. The problem and solution to betrayal and abandonment is often located within the gate-keepers who have betrayed or abandoned 'the people'. Ntamo represents one of these gate-keepers and often a metaphor of bread is used to indicate a sense that, if only the gate-keepers could step aside and allow 'the people' access to the bread they are keeping, then things would materially and symbolically improve for them. Furthermore, the relationship between the ANC and the people is maintained, as the blame is located on the gate-keepers. Thus Crossroads memory community remains in

a relationship of dependency, where their fate is determined by these gate-keepers of the ANC.

This blunted critique furthermore has the potential to turn full circle and become a hegemonic force, with the unintended effect of buttressing unequal power and privilege; thus finding itself supporting the ANC once again. We see this dynamic expressed in the story of Ntamo's vision and how respondents engaged with this vision. While there was excitement about the possibilities of gaining access to power through Ntamo as gate-keeper with connections to the ANC, Yamile extends the metaphor of 'liberation for some', to argue that the problem is not with the gate-keepers, per say, but rather with the fact that there are gate-keepers, in the first place. He begins by asserting that Ntamo was given a piece of liberation pie: 'He had a loaf of bread he didn't want to share with the two of you'. But he speaks against engaging Ntamo as a gate-keeper, arguing that the politics of the present is much bigger than just gaining access to the pie: 'This getting together is going to blow up – we're doing push, push, here – a chess game ... Because you will say to me "open the door, so we get in" and then "close the door" and then we open the next door, that is the thing that is damaging everything'. The fact that some have access to privilege at the expense of others is at the heart of the problem for Yamile. It is 'the thing that is damaging everything'. Therefore we see Yamile extending the insider/outsider critique to argue that the problem is much bigger than individual gate-keepers. Therefore, there is no point in engaging these gate-keepers, as you risk being manipulated into servicing the problem you are trying to challenge.

The issue of supporting the power you aim to challenge was further recognised by some respondents as a danger of the Struggle Veterans' Action Committee (SVACOM)'s rhetoric, as they recognise and speak on behalf of 'the people' but see their role as improving the party by removing the gate-keepers. As a result, people felt uncomfortable that SVACOM might be manipulating them towards supporting the ANC once again. In his story of the formation and development of SVACOM, Faizel paints a story of the way in which the organisation was formed to address the exclusion of comrades

from veteran integration, recognition and benefits. While the government initially reacted with hostility, Faizel has more recently become part of government structures in the Western Cape. He understands this as part of a process of the government becoming more connected to the people:

The ANC in the Western Cape has collapsed as a political structure and they are trying to remove gate-keepers, those who have claimed the ANC for themselves. Those people gate-keeping, in my opinion they have been in cahoots with the apartheid government and as long as they keep us out, they are able to stay in power. The ANC needs to be in touch with reality and the people on the ground. I am the Deputy Chairperson of the ANC in the Western Cape region and at the end of the day we are members of the ANC, but we are out of tune with certain people of the ANC (Faizel, Interview, 25 July 2011).

This connection has not resulted in SVACOM's achievement of special pensions for its members or their recognition in terms of the new Military Veteran's Act. This sense of the dual role of SVACOM as being for 'the people'; uniting 'the people' who have been excluded, while at the same time rebuilding the ANC, was a concern expressed by some people who were wary of the politics of SVACOM. Wanda's neighbour felt that SVACOM was going to benefit the ANC by raising a support base for it. These were also the concerns expressed around Ntamo's motives, and these indeed were expressed by him as his motives. Furthermore, Faizel's quote above demonstrates how the metaphor of gate-keepers manages the contradiction between a government that is constructed as 'our government' and the reality in which we feel 'betrayed' and 'abandoned'. The problem is individualised to the problematic 'gate-keepers' and the connection between the people and the party is maintained.

## 7.2 Veterans, Victims or People's Power

The critique of individual gate-keepers supports the underlying assumption of the connection between the ANC and 'the people' underpinning the narratives of the betrayed fighter and the abandoned victim. By blaming gate-keepers for the state of affairs, the solution becomes removing these gate-keepers, so that care can be given to victims and recognition to veterans from their parent party, the ANC. Furthermore, this critique re-affirms the individualism of the claims to veteran recognition and reward and victim reparation. Narratives of betrayal and abandonment and the blaming of gate-

keepers in the present are determined by the structure of hegemonic memory discourse. The connection to the ANC remains legitimised, and the focus is on the individual's inclusion (as part of a legitimate memory group) or on critiquing the individual gate-keepers.

When we look at the politics of the narratives of betrayal and abandonment presented in the previous chapter, we see how respondents are caught up in the double bind of needing to tell their history through dominant memory identities and discourses, in the hope of gaining inclusion into the 'fruits of liberation'. This issue was introduced and discussed in chapter four, where it was demonstrated that respondents who want to lay claim to memory benefits have to comply with the dominant narrative in order to gain inclusion. There is a connection between respondent's attempts to lay claims to the memory identities of victim and veteran and their expressions of narratives of betrayal and abandonment. The dominant discourse of the national liberation struggle sets up this double-bind. The respondents who come out of radical histories of lived resistance and find themselves in conditions of extreme poverty and desperation resort to individual and group claims to victim and veteran status. Furthermore, they make sense of their continued oppression in terms of their active or passive exclusion from these memory identities and the benefits connected to them. Being caught up in contesting this exclusion and attempting to gain inclusion means having tell their memories in ways that conform to the dominant memory, and this reproduces the assumption of dependency on and connection to the ANC government as their leader, acknowledger and carer.

The different politics involved and the contradiction and double movement of these narratives can be found, for example, in the way in which Commander Zet professes a narrative of the betrayal of legitimate veterans, but also constantly asserts 'the struggle was hijacked'. This phrase is politically very different from asserting that veterans were betrayed. In order to betray, there must first be a connection to the betrayer; however no previous connection is necessary in the case of a hijacking. 'Hijacking' implies that something is stolen from you, and the person who does the stealing is not a previous friend and ally, in the sense that the term 'betraying' implies. Therefore, through the

use of the term ‘hijack’ the assumption of previous connection between the ANC and the popular struggle is not assumed. Furthermore, in this case, it is not individuals and groups who have been excluded unjustly, but rather that ‘the struggle’ has been taken from the squatters. This is less an issue of exclusion, and more an issue of something important being taken from the squatters.

### 7.2.1 The Struggle has been Hijacked

The expressions of betrayal and abandonment tie into an assumed connection and social pact between the ANC and Crossroads memory community. However, Commander Zet’s phrase of ‘the struggle hijacked’ alludes to a different kind of politics of contestation, which steps out of the bounds of the dominant discourse of veteran and victim rewards and recognition.

Another way in which respondents challenge the national liberation struggle discourse is through re-asserting the meaning of the struggle for freedom in collective terms. While respondents construct continued oppression in freedom as resulting from exclusion, in the quotes below they do not ask for inclusion of a few, but rather, of all. Freedom is re-asserted as something that should ‘benefit the people’ or ‘benefit everyone’, by Wanda, below:

I feel I shouldn’t have participated because my participation has benefited the people I was working with to accomplish one goal, that was freedom and that freedom is not benefiting everyone, just a certain group of the society (Wanda, Interview, 13 February 2012).

Similarly, Charles says that, although they were not fighting for benefits, they were fighting for the country: ‘That is what I am saying, when you are fighting, it’s not that we are fighting to get something for our own, but we did fight for the country’ (Charles, Interview, 17 March 2012).

These quotes challenge the hegemony of individualism in the national liberation struggle discourse and re-define the goals of the struggle as freedom for the country and the people, not just for the few. The individualist discourse of veteranhood, of the national liberation struggle, and of individual benefits creates a tense tightrope for the poor in the post-apartheid contexts. In making material claims on the basis of their continued poverty, it

is difficult not to fall into step with the individual benefits of inclusion attempts. The relationship between the obstruction of the goals of liberation and the betrayal of individuals presents itself as a tension. On the one hand, respondents argue for inclusion into the individual benefits that they see others have, as these would alleviate the emotional and material suffering they feel. On the other hand, they delegitimise granting benefits on individual terms. Charles emphasises below:

Also I want to emphasise ... there are a lot of our comrades like that, a lot of our comrades, now that's why sometimes when you see someone you've been with on the road, and they call me and say, 'Charles I don't have food', and then the neighbours will say, 'this guy was deep in the struggle, but look at today', what's the use, what we are saying Kim, the vision of why we were fighting, the comrades they have to release that, straight to the masses, down to the people, that's what we want, not only some few people, me and my comrades, my friends, my cousins. You can look at today what's going on outside, comrades are not scared, I've got a tender here, my girlfriend a tender there, my cousin a tender there, these comrades, they will just drink water and then you will ask yourself, is this what we were struggling for? (Charles, Interview, 17 March 2012).

In the quote above, Charles begins by asserting that 'there are a lot of comrades who are like that', meaning poor. He goes on to argue that the solution lies in 'releasing' the 'vision of why we [the comrades] were fighting'; that if this vision of what the struggle of the people was about were released, it would remedy the current reality, where 'only some few' comrades, friends and cousins in the inner circle of inclusion benefit, where 'comrades are not scared' to grant 'tenders' within this inner circle and to metaphorically 'drink' all the 'water' at the expense of others. Metaphors of food and water are commonly used to indicate the benefits gained by some and excluded from many. Charles cites the example of job contracts reserved for a closed circle of the friends and family of government to express this. This, Charles concludes, is not what the struggle was for. Charles sees the solution to the individual suffering of the excluded comrades as being in 'releasing' the vision of why we were fighting to the masses. He believes that this vision of the mass movement challenges the realities of today, where some comrades benefit at the expense of others. He argues that the meaning and reason of the struggle of the past will call into question the politics of the present.

The quotes cited in this section draw attention away from the individualising tendencies of narratives of the ‘veteranhood’, ‘reconciliation’ and ‘the national liberation struggle’ discourse towards a sense that it is the meaning and purpose of the internal struggle that has been hijacked. But what was the meaning of the struggle for the squatters? What is it that should be re-remembered? In chapter five we saw how narratives of resistance emphasised the creative, bottom-up process of their struggle. This was a struggle that came out of their lived experiences of oppression, and involved them challenging this on a daily basis. This challenge that emerged from the bottom up also entailed unity. The squatters decided to stand together, in defiance of the pass laws and the security forces. Especially in Nyanga Bush, they came together as one, and as one they pitted their power in numbers against the state. Different people and groups played different roles within this unity, but the power came in the unity. Creativity was another key element of the squatters’ lived resistance; the sense of ‘making their own means’ to resist the state. The squatters were empowered in a further sense that their strategies of lived resistance came out of their lived experiences and the everyday process of standing together against the pass laws. The significance of this aspect of the memory of popular resistance against apartheid is excluded from the dominant memory of the national liberation struggle, which privileges military resistance in exile and the leadership of the national liberation party. However, lived memory experiences emerge in the narratives to challenge the hegemony of the memory discourse, in which national memory identities are embedded. In the section below, the quotes of respondents emphasise the counter-hegemonic memory identity of ‘the people’ rather than ‘veterans’ and ‘victims’. Calling on this memory identity emphasises the unity, empowerment and creativity of the squatters’ struggle.

### 7.2.2 The Unity of ‘The People’

Alongside and in contestation with narratives of betrayal at the hands of individual ‘bad apples’ of the ANC, respondents express a more collective sense that something called ‘the struggle’, which belonged to the category of ‘the people’ has been hijacked. The identity category of ‘the people’ expresses the power of the unity of the squatters, despite their illiterate and

uneducated nature at the time of the squatter movements. The ‘unity’ and ‘firmness’ of ‘the people’ working ‘towards one direction’ is expressed by Bongisile: ‘the unity and the firmness of the people of Nyanga Bush, as uneducated as we were, we managed to unite ourselves and to work towards one direction at that time’ (Bongisile, Interview, 17 October 2011).

Similarly Felix expresses the collective nature of the struggle, saying that there is ‘no place that never took part in the war’ and that people were killed with ‘unity’.

If I were to discuss the struggle, through general knowledge and the way of looking things in South Africa. There is no place that never took place [part] in the war, people were throwing stones and tyres were burning so transport of white people disturbed. People were *toyi-toying* to stop people going to work where some people killed and shot at when they were *toyi-toying* and especially when raised the flag of the ANC when it was still banned. We were getting killed with unity when that flag was flown. Every weekend you could see NY5, Cement Works, Khayelitsha – on the TV you will see a stream of cases where children were killed, people were killed very badly, fought much for this liberation (Felix, Group interview Beauty’s crèche, 23 November 2011).

The power of unity against the stealing of liberation by few is asserted in another of Zet’s quotes: ‘we need unity to defeat those stealing liberation’ (Commander Zet, Interview, 11 February 2012). The power of unity is, therefore, remembered and comes to challenge the strategies of attempting to gain inclusion. Rather than attempting to gain inclusion for individuals and groups, this quote re-emphasises the importance of the unity of the people in challenging those ‘stealing liberation’. However, the way in which hegemonic and counter-hegemonic memory are intertwined are also demonstrated in this quote. While unity is emphasised, the challenge is to defeat ‘those’ stealing liberation, therefore it calls to mind the individualist bad apple, ‘gate-keeper’ metaphor. It assumes that, if only the right people were in power, this would change things, thus re-affirming the relationship of dependency to the government. What was remarkable about squatter resistance and the resistance of many black communities during the popular struggle is their independence in the sense that they responded from their lived oppression. The sense of process and creativity, rather than leadership from the national liberation movement is emphasised. In the quotes below these memories come to the fore to challenge the assumed leadership of the party and its relationship to the people.

### 7.2.3 Squatter Power and Creativity

There are two different versions of who was ‘at the forefront’ of the struggle and, within, them, two different meanings of ‘the ANC’ as symbol. As has been shown, at times respondents concur with a view that the ANC leaders in exile are – and were – the rightful leaders of the struggle; however, at the same time, the memory of ‘people’s power’ comes up to assert a very different view. In the quotes below, Lati and Manxiwa invert this leadership dynamic, asserting, ‘it was us who liberated them’; it was ‘our’ leadership, not theirs, that made a difference. Lati further speaks about the power of protest, unity, woman and one voice as a ‘scream’.

It was us who liberated them and encouraged them to take part in the struggle as leaders, to all these situations and happenings, it was because of us as leadership, we would have to attend a protest and women also went to Parliament to protest that their men were getting killed, and when asked why they were there, they would just scream, all of them scream, all of them (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

We’ve got a short question currently, the question we ask is that we as internal forces, the people that we are fighting with inside the country, we were throwing stones at the troops of the apartheid system – what were they doing where they were? What fight did they raise against the system, we were throwing stones and getting shot at with teargas and the impacts (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

Lati’s and Manxiwa’s quotes express the power and force of the masses. In the quote below, Zakuthini reflects on the TRC, where he had expected that ‘the people’ as the UDF would be revived to account for the popular struggle. He was very confused when the ‘so-called ANC took over everything’:

In terms of us fighting, we were always fighting as the people that were protecting our community, and if we need to do anything politically we would go through the UDF channel, and it surprises us today that the ANC has to account for some of the things that we do, because the ANC was not really there when we were there. You know even in the TRC when the ANC was called to account, you know we really felt bad, because we thought that there would be some revival of some sort of the UDF – so it is the leaders of the UDF that have to come and get answers, you know. Hence even most of the people that fought for the liberation are still where they are today, they never gained access even to the opportunities, because the ANC, so-called ANC, took over everything (Zakuthini, Interview, 20 February 2012).

These quotes contest the leadership hierarchy that came to dominate during the transition, when the power of the squatters and the masses under the UDF was usurped by the power of a few ‘so-called’ ANC leaders who took everything.

The challenge to individual inclusion into the privileges of recognition, reward and reparation has been presented through a return to a discourse of unity and the people and an argument for collective benefit and transformation. Crossroads memory community further critique the terms on which people feel they were excluded. In particular, they speak about their poverty, geographical location and lack of education, arguing that, when the power of their unity was taken from them, they no longer had the kind of power required to gain inclusion into the layer of privilege. In the quote below, Sindiswa argues that, when the struggle was happening, there were no ‘employments’ and no divisions between the educated and illiterate; it was just ‘everyone in one’. But, after the struggle, the past was re-created in terms of ‘rotating chairs’ of ‘secretaries’ and ‘chairpersons’ in the struggle, and people became categorised according to their educational level:

I’m sure when I’m just sitting alone and thinking about these things that happened that you know we started to be categorised in terms of the struggle in terms of this what is happening now ... if you can go back and check how things become so nasty in the ANC, because the time when the internal forces were to be employed in the struggle, at that time there was no employments in the struggle, it was just call everybody in one. But immediately things changed, there were these rotating chairs and people are being called secretaries, chairpersons in the struggle and they’ve been there, everything changed. We are categorised now according to education, by our own comrades. During the time we were really fighting, no one cares about the education, no qualifications and no otherwise (Sindiswa, Interview, 9 August 2011).

Similarly, in the quote below, Manxiwa asks the question of the connection between the squatters and the ANC leaders in the context of democracy. He then refers to the ways in which there was no requirement to be educated when they were involved in the struggle; however now this seems to be the requirement of inclusion and legitimacy:

What is the connection between us [the squatters and the ANC leaders] now in democracy? I would have been very happy if during the struggle we would have been given the order that the people were required to take part in the struggle, to throw a stone you must be educated, to throw a petrol bomb you must be educated, to put stones you must be educated, to throw a petrol bomb you must be an educated person, to put stones so that the van cannot pass by you must be educated. I would have been happy now, because I know that I would not have participated and taken part in the struggle, but we are disappointed because that was not said to us, we were not told that we need an education to be part of the struggle (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

Commander Zet asserts that it was the ‘illiterate *amagoduka*’ who were at the forefront of the popular struggle; KTC and Nyanga Bush were at the centre of

the fight. However, after liberation the people of Gugulethu (who are now in the leadership of the ANC) who claimed the struggle; hijacked it from the squatters:

Those who want to be active in Gugulethu, they come out there to where we are living, KTC or Nyanga Bush, you see, leading by whom, by the illiterate people. They call us illiterate *amagoduka* – come and go – the contract, hence we call them son of the bitch and thugs ... They behave like all these things were led by them, No, so now we want to remind the people where these things happened and how ... (Commander Zet, Interview, 11 February 2012).

For Crossroads memory community it seems the rules of the game changed with liberation. During their squatter struggle they believed they had the power of unity, but then, with the ushering in of the new dispensation, new forms of class power were required for inclusion, which they did not possess. In their interpretations of why they have been excluded, respondents cite their geographical location, their lack of education and their poverty as factors that kept them in an oppressed position. Furthermore, even though squatters don't seem to have the right kind of power in the context of today, they nevertheless assert that the power they had was key to liberation. Wanda continues this analysis in the quote below, by saying that the squatters, their power of being ungovernable and violent spaces of people's power were used by the ANC leaders from exile. They joined with the squatters struggle and made use of its power, but then distanced themselves from it.

Even then there was this classification, some people associated with people who were supposed to be influencing us politically were also discriminating against us as the people who live in the hostels and the people who live in the squatter camp. So this means that they had to have better ideas of how to use us, because after all these people used us, that is why they are looking at us as, that is why they are looking at us as people from Khayelitsha, not people from the Western Cape ... We thought they were people courageous like us, we didn't know they were coming from exile, we thought they were interested ... they came to join us because they saw that these places were always linked to violence and these people are always in conflict with the police – so they were looking for loopholes to attack the police and a shield that they saw it was us, without telling us, but becoming part and parcel of what we were doing (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

The sense of shifting gear from an experience of empowerment to one of dependency can be seen in respondents' reflections on the difference between the violence of the past and the violence of the present. The argument is presented in a narrative of disillusionment that violence and oppression in post-apartheid South Africa are taken a step further, when respondents assert that it is, in fact, more painful to face the oppression of the present, because it

is an unexpected oppression. By contrast, the violence of today is constructed as meaningless in a context where people don't see freedom and there is no hope for change.

Furthermore, when respondents compare the past to the present, they demonstrate the shift in gear from participating and contributing (empowerment), to being neglected and not taken care of today (dependency unfulfilled). Zola\*, a woman from one of the group interviews, expresses:

I am saying to you as the residents of this community, my heart is so painful because we participated and contributed with everything into the struggle but today we are left and neglected behind, nobody takes care of our interests (Zola\*, Group interview Dlamini's home, 24 January 2012).

In this context of continued oppression, disempowerment and dependency the only recourse available to respondents is to attempt to gain inclusion into the memory identities and benefits set up, in order to deal with the legacy of the past. The process of making their history fit both victim and veteran identities ties Crossroads memory community into a victim relationship to the ANC, which is imagined as responsible for their recognition, care and lack thereof. Alternatively, there is a version of history that is told in their counter-narratives, that emphasises the power of the squatters and the creative ways in which they fought their struggle independently from the ANC. This is emphasised time and time again, when respondents remember creatively 'making their/our own means' and ask the question: Where were they, when we were maintaining the struggle inside the country?

This contradiction between making memory fit to lay claim to victim and veteran identity in ways that re-confirm dominant memory, and the challenge to this memory that arises from the lived memory of the independence and bottom-up experience of empowerment that these squatters went through can be traced within narratives of betrayal and abandonment. On the one hand, respondents tie into this relationship to the ANC as recogniser and carer, but, on the other, they challenge it though shifting from an expression of individual and groups betrayed and abandoned to an expression of the struggle betrayed and abandoned.

Furthermore, in the quote below, Wanda highlights the immediacy of the struggle on the ground.

All people fighting here were with the spirit on their own. We would be inspired by the meeting, but would only put some things into practice and change others to do in our own way ... I did not need a political education to understand what was required because I had my personal view besides the general view about apartheid, I had my personal experiences beside the idea that everyone was going through a process of being discriminated against. People were, of course doing things like workshops will be conducted to workshop the comrades about the policies of UDF and about the Freedom Charter ... and sometimes it did not make sense compared to what was happening ... so the Freedom Charter did not take away how people felt. And talking about throwing stones at the police, nobody will say to us, 'throw stones at the police', it was our view that we are sick and tired of these police coming into our places and getting our places demolished, and then therefore we will plan on our own without being influenced or being commanded by the political organisation and political leaders, we would do that on our own ... we were fighting a system that was confronting us, we were confronting a situation that was right there in front of us (Wanda, Interview, 19 August 2011).

The political workshops and education provided by ANC leaders from Gugulethu were sometimes seen as disconnected from the realities of squatter struggle. The squatters considered these leaders to be their allies in struggle, rather than their leaders. Furthermore, according to Wanda's quote above, the power of the squatters lay in their ability to respond to the situation facing them on the ground, not in the intellectual discussions about the freedom charter.

### 7.3 Conclusion: Praxis and Counter-Hegemony

Gramsci's (1971) term 'praxis' refers to the relationship between practice/action and ideology/theory required for counter-hegemonic action to unfold against hegemony in a way that challenges both the lived reality of oppression and the hegemonic meaning system that supports the status quo. The struggle against oppression should, therefore, ideally take place at the dynamic inter-face of lived resistance from below and the ideological understanding of the nature of society. The practical experience and process of acting against oppression should inform and be informed by the ideological process of coming to understand the nature of oppression. Fanonian language can be used to describe the same revolutionary idea of a dialectical struggle. In the process of resisting the violence of oppression by sacrificing physical life for social life, so, too, do the oppressed challenge the internalised violence against the self, which has maintained and mystified the

violent nature of oppression (Fanon 1963, 1986). The oppressed begin to demystify the nature of oppression as violence in the process of being willing to sacrifice their life against the violence of the oppressor.

The quotes in this chapter demonstrate how squatter power lay in the immediate ability to respond; in their courage and unity to defy the forces of apartheid at their doorstep. This was a power that was based in organic resistant consciousness. This was a power a little closer to freedom, even as it was intertwined with all sorts of warped horizontal violence, in the context of extreme oppression. However, while this power represented a taste of freedom in its very immediacy, at the same time this immediacy meant that squatter-comrades were not adequately prepared for the fight that lay before them. As Bongisile shows below, it was this immediate power, the sense of ‘liberation now, education later’ that was the reason why the squatter’s power could be hijacked:

Yes, in fact we were a bunch of South Africans in Nyanga Bush who were people who told themselves we’ve come to work for greener pastures here. The fight we were waging was not the fight we were prepared for. Which is why it was very easy for us to be arrested and killed, and some other people were carrying on with university, coming and mixing (Bongisile, Interview, 31 October 2011).

In the quote below, Commander Zet emphasises the feeling of sitting and waiting for change and recognition but, instead, being sidelined by those in power. He argues that the squatters, in particular, have been betrayed as they observed the call for ‘liberation now, education later’ and fought with everything they had. However, once liberation came, it was easy to sideline those who slipped back into positions of oppression, especially in connection to their lack of education as a form of privilege: ‘So now the mission is achieved, it is time for eating the juice of liberation, people observing the idea of “liberation now, education later”. So they took advantage because we were waiting and not demanding’ (Commander Zet, Interview, 11 February 2012). Because of the lack of ideology and awareness, the squatters’ power was used and then hijacked from above as the ANC came to take its place as the leader, and the effects were expressed geographically, so that the illiterate squatters were left symbolically, politically and materially marginalised from the memory and the fruits of liberation.

The quotes from Bongisile and Wanda above represent the lack of praxis within the popular movement. While the resistant consciousness of people's power was a unique moment of resistance from below, perhaps the reason that it could so easily be overtaken by the ANC and led back into dependency and mystification, was because it represented only one half of the praxis puzzle. Yes, the resistance emerged from below, and required immediate response, but, in this context, it was difficult to nurture an organic ideology that could have acted as a means through which to conceptualise and challenge the national liberation struggle at the time of ANC takeover.

The resistance consciousness and awareness of the squatters was not adequately developed into ideology that could maintain this power through the transition and into democracy. Instead, the power of the squatters and the popular movement was demobilised in democracy, and they accepted the hegemonic idea that the struggle was over, now that the ANC was in power. However, from their continued lived experience of poverty and oppression, respondents assert that the struggle is not over and attempt to develop counter-hegemonic narratives of betrayal and abandonment. However, these remain caught in the trap of dominant memory discourse. Those acting from below could not see what was to come and what the result would be from handing over power; but today they are living this result. They are dependent and oppressed, and, in many ways, this violence has remained mystified by the force of memory discourse. This chapter, however, demonstrates that resistant consciousness continues to appear in respondent's narratives of the past and is fed by a memory of time when a different kind of power took the stage for the squatters, when it was not class privilege but organic resistance that was the power of the day. Instead of arguing for the return of this organic power, they assert that they wish they had never engaged it in the first place, as in the end it was class privilege that mattered. Those who were educated, connected and wealthy were those who, in the eyes of the squatters, gained access into the fruits of liberation. In other words, they gained and controlled access into class privilege in a 'new South Africa', which remains unequal and oppressive. While lived memory provides a basis for the development of counter-hegemonic memory discourse, this easily lapses into national

memory discourse. For example, the infection of hegemony runs particularly deep in the tendency to assume the power of the ANC and critique ‘bad apples’, who are stealing liberation, and the tendency to over-emphasise the power of veterans and fighters over the power of the unity of the squatters.

South Africa is currently in a process of questioning the post-transition regime, which some are calling a water-shed moment. The recent massacre of protesting miners in Marikana in 2012 has generated a renewed alarm bell, urging South Africans to wake up to the realities of oppression and violent repression, which continue in post-apartheid South Africa. Furthermore, marginalised internal histories of past struggle are bubbling up to challenge the hegemonic memory of the national liberation struggle. For example, the participatory action research of Janet Cherry, along with the Amabutho of Mandela Bay, tracks the process through which they challenge dominant struggle memory and their exclusion from it (Cherry, 2013). Therefore, the contestations analysed in this research form part of a broader contestation and questioning developing in South Africa at this moment.

This contestation is one that calls for a rethinking of memory and history towards understanding why we are in this current situation, and also learning from the successes and mistakes of history. The successes of empowerment, creativity and unity are important for the process of this developing contestation. But, also important, are the lessons of the lack of ideology and understanding that allowed for the re-mystification of the nature of oppression in the present. In challenging this ‘confusion’ of the present, the link between action and understanding will need to be developed and nurtured. Through developing this relationship between understanding and action, a powerfully rooted counter-hegemonic memory narrative may open up different potentials for the present memory struggle of Crossroads memory community. Furthermore, the action and understanding of this memory struggle would benefit from being in dialectical conversation with a burgeoning re-conceptualisation of the nature of oppression and liberation possible in the post-transition South African context. This is a process that develops through struggle in the context of the everyday, and that is deeply connected to issues of memory. In the final chapter I attempt to distil a

roadmap for 'remembering well' from respondents' memory narrative, in terms of the issues of power, oppression and liberation.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Remembering Violence Well: Hegemony and Agency in Memory Narratives**

This chapter summarises the key findings of this research and demonstrates how they speak to the broad question posed by this thesis about how members of the Crossroads memory community engage (speak through, support and subvert) national memory discourse. In doing so, this discussion contributes to a story about the politics of memory in post-apartheid South Africa. It is a story that has already developed among those who are working to challenge the hegemony of memory discourse.

The literature contributing to this task falls into three camps. There are studies that expose and critique the political function of memory discourses of reconciliation and the national liberation struggle (Bundy 2001; Posel & Simpson 2002; Suttner 2004b; Moon 2006; Suttner 2006; Baines 2007). A second set of studies demonstrate how the subjects of this memory discourse engage and challenge it from below (Colvin 2000; Wilson 2001; Hamber & Wilson 2002; Norval 2009; Bucaille 2011). A third set tells a different kind of story, which aims to include excluded voices and narratives of past violence (Foster et al 2005; Reynolds 2013). This work falls into the second and third categories. On the one hand, it contributes to this literature by telling an excluded story; on the other hand, it demonstrates the nuances and politics of this exclusion, through analysing the relationship between local and national memories of the anti-apartheid struggle.

There are two levels of local memory, both which contain challenges to the politics of national memory. The one level of local memory comes from presenting the excluded story of squatter struggle as part of popular struggle and analysing how squatter power and squatter consciousness emerged at the time of mass resistance. The other level of local memory comes from the specific ways in which respondents who come out of this history speak to and against national memory discourse. Bringing these two sets of memory

challenges together allows for analysis, not only of respondents' contestations, but also of what their memories of squatter power mean in the face of hegemonic discourse. This final chapter brings together the findings of the previous four chapters to discuss how they speak to one another, and to unfold the broader story they tell. It also aims to draw out common themes occurring across the previous chapters.

### 8.1 Adverse Inclusion

This section demonstrates how the hegemony of national memory works, not only to exclude, but to adversely include the members of this case study into its frameworks of meaning. The concept of adverse inclusion, or adverse incorporation, has been developed to critique development discourse, which imagines that poverty comes from the exclusion of the poor from modernity (Du Toit 2004; Hickey & Du Toit 2007). The issue with exclusion discourse is that it assumes that to address poverty means to build bridges so that the poor may enter dominant economic and social networks. This view denies the way in which poverty flows not only from exclusion, but from integration into these networks in ways that continue to privilege the dominant at the expense of the poor. Therefore, the lens shifts from finding ways to include the poor, to assessing how adverse inclusion into an unjust system contributes to their conditions of marginalisation. The authors cited above have developed this concept in relation to the political economy and in challenge to a two economies discourse in South Africa<sup>12</sup>. This section argues that the concept also helps us to understand the politics of systems of meaning.

The power of hegemonic memory works, alongside the political economy, to adversely incorporate actors into memory discourse in ways that contribute to the continued symbolic, material and political marginalisation of these actors. Furthermore, the strength of hegemony in the way in which it gains consent

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<sup>12</sup> The two economies discourse was put forward by Thabo Mbeki to argue that South Africa consists of two economies; one is white and wealthy and the other is black and poor (Mbeki 2003). On the basis of this discourse it was argued that, in order to address poverty, those in the second economy should be included into the first economy. This discourse and its assumptions were critiqued in a special edition of *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies* (Bond 2007).

from the poor can be found in this mechanism of adverse incorporation as it contains outright challenge. Chapter four demonstrates that respondents are caught in a memory paradox in relation to memory discourse. The catch-22 of adverse inclusion makes it difficult to completely resist speaking through the hegemonic narrative, even if it is not in their best interests to do so. I argue that adverse inclusion has destructive effects for respondents, and supportive effects for the hegemony of national memory. Through this discussion I draw out two metaphors to describe how local memory is mobilised by respondents, both as resource for inclusion and as weapon against the adverse terms of incorporation.

In order to demonstrate this argument it is useful to refer back to the theoretical contributions of Laclau and Mouffe (2011) about the nature of discourse, antagonism, subjectivity and hegemony. Discourses are units of meaning that contain different elements within a signifying chain, or a web of interconnected meaning. Hegemony is achieved through a fixing of a particular meaning, as if it were the truth of the situation. Therefore, in fixing meaning it achieves taken-for-granted status and becomes the terms against which other claims are judged. Through fixing meaning, it becomes the truth. Similarly in the language of Foucault (1980), power works through imposing a certain knowledge or meaning as the truth, therefore defining the rules of the game in which certain interpretations will be ordained as valid in terms of this truth and others will be disqualified. Hegemony works ideologically because it functions to determine what can and cannot be legitimately said, while at the same time supporting relations of domination. Furthermore, due to this broad legitimisation of hegemonic meaning, actors internalise it as if it were their truth, even if it does not express their interests. However, this results in contradictory consciousness as actors hold both the hegemonic meaning and a contradictory lived meaning, which comes out of lived experience (Gramsci 1971).

For Laclau and Mouffe (2011), contestation is possible when the identity and interests of subjects are not included in the system of meaning. Therefore, speaking from an excluded subject position gives actors more perspective as they do not see their experience reflected in the 'truth' of the discourse. This

outsider status allows for the possibility of political subjectivity outside of the hegemonic discourse, rather than subject positionality inside of the hegemonic discourse. This articulation is useful, as it develops two different agencies that are possible in relation to the structure of hegemonic discourse. On the one hand, the agency of the subject position speaks within the bounds of the discourse; on the other, the political subjectivity speaks through an alternative system of meaning outside of the discourse.

While Laclau and Mouffe (2011) provide a useful framework for understanding the relationship between hegemony and agency in systems of meaning, the findings of this research demonstrate a third position between the compliance of the subject position and the radical difference of the political subjectivity. The third subjectivity is key, as it demonstrates how hegemony works. In order to adversely include (rather than exclude) marginalised groups, they are placed in a contradictory position. This positioning means that their recourse to challenging hegemonic discourse often work towards supporting this discourse at the expense of the marginalised. The metaphor of a meaning web and of memory as resource and weapon in relation to this web helps to paint a picture of the three different agencies possible in relation to hegemony. The first kind of memory agency comes from occupying a privileged subject position within the discourse or sitting comfortably in the middle of the web; your interests are supported and included in the terms of 'truth'. This is not an agency available to my respondents who are both symbolically and materially marginalised. Generally, this is a position reserved for those at the top of the privilege and power hierarchy.

A second position in relation to the hegemonic meaning web is demonstrated through the idea of memory as resource. When the excluded mobilise memory as a resource, they attempt to add their excluded memory onto the web. They do not challenge the underlying assumptions, but try to mould their histories in ways that they too may be legitimately acknowledged and included. In a sense, this strategy is like trying to glue your story onto the memory web. A third position in relation to the memory web is counter-hegemonic, in the sense that it attempts to construct an entirely new memory

web, which, like a weapon, cuts through the underlying connections and assumptions of hegemonic memory.

### 8.1.1 Memory as Resource

It is clear that respondents feel marginalised from ‘liberation’, and this has both socio-economic and symbolic resonance. Countless quotes have been offered that demonstrate the levels at which respondents express their marginalisation. In chapter six the presentation of the narrative of abandonment and betrayal show how respondents feel that their expectations for liberation have been dashed and unfulfilled leaving them confused. However, chapter six also argues that, by definition, both betrayal and abandonment imply a connection to the ANC government. This connection is experienced as a relationship of dependency, which is often expressed in paternal and maternal terms. This dependent connection to the ANC is encouraged through the hegemonic discourse of the national liberation struggle, which asserts ‘the ANC is your mother and your father’ (Suttner 2006:23). It is expressed in Commander Zet’s narrative when he argues, ‘the ANC must apologise for throwing its son in the dustbin’. However, it is this adverse connection that has been created between the ANC and the squatters that is at the heart of the issues and workings of hegemony. It is not just an exclusion that respondents feel has happened; it is an imagined dependent connection that has been broken.

There are three ways in which respondents mobilise their memory as a resource; hoping these will connect them back into the web and mend what they perceive to be broken connections of betrayal and abandonment. The first example is seen in the way in which respondents engage the memory discourse of trauma and reconciliation. For reconciliation discourse, the identity position of ‘victim’ and its relation to trauma and reparation bear particular relevance for respondents. Through this memory identity, they attempt to express their present lived realities in terms of their past memory narratives. The web of meaning of reconciliation discourse that is engaged by respondents takes the following truth form:

- Apartheid was a crime against humanity and in post-apartheid South Africa we have to deal with the impact of the political violence of apartheid so that we can build the nation and move forward in reconciliation.
- The way in which we do this is through acknowledging the individual victims, through listening to their stories of pain and trauma and through providing them with economic reparation for these past pains.

This memory discourse connects victims to reparation through the concept of the past pain of the trauma experienced through violence. However, this discourse refers to those who were directly involved and told their stories to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Those who did not tell their stories do not have access to reparation, despite their past trauma. Because they did not appear before the TRC, they are excluded from this discourse. However, they are not completely excluded. The discourse not only provides a way for them to make sense of their history, but in making sense of their history in these terms it creates a false sense of potential connection to an economy of trauma. In the discussions of the meaning of the past for the present, respondents assert a hope that if they get the ‘right’ people to record their wound of the past, they may get access to reparation money. Their wounds have, therefore, become their commodity within this imagined trauma economy, where people get money in exchange for trauma-telling. This adverse inclusion into an imagined economy of trauma was created through the TRC’s connection of individual wounds to individual reparations for victims of gross violations of human rights. However, it is continued through the workings of post-TRC non-governmental organisations that work in the field of memory activism. Despite their best intentions to argue for reparation for victims and to contest the exclusion of those who did not testify at the TRC, this has the unforeseen effect of trapping the mobilisation of memory to work towards gaining inclusion into the discourse.

A second form of adverse inclusion into memory discourse occurs for squatter-comrades who attempt to gain access into the demobilisation discourse of veteranhood, set up in relation to the discourse of national

liberation. This discourse asserts that the natural and legitimate leader of liberation and the liberation struggle was and is the ANC liberation party. Connected to this assertion, the hegemonic discourse asserts that the anti-apartheid struggle was a military struggle, and the key combatants of this past and veterans in the present are those who formed part of neat chains of military command connected to parties on either side of the struggle. Furthermore, the heroes of this war and violence, to be celebrated as the true liberators of South Africa, are the veterans of Umkhonto weSizwe (MK), the military wing of the natural leader, the ANC.

Squatter-comrades did not belong to the ANC military wing, but formed structures of violence that defended their struggle against the apartheid regime and actively attacked members of the South African police force. However, this history of comrade violence is not simply excluded from the national memory narrative of veteranhood. It is adversely included in the sense that the role played by these comrades is claimed for the legitimacy of the MK and ANC inside South Africa. This is demonstrated through the example of the Gugulethu Seven, who were ambushed and murdered by police in 1985 in Gugulethu in the Western Cape. While respondents assert that these comrades were, in fact, from Nyanga Bush structures of violence, this memory and the legitimacy it gives is claimed by former MK members of Gugulethu.

At the same time that the role played by comrades and activists on the ground is claimed by the leadership of the ANC, the discourse also criminalises and demonises the action of comrades within this local struggle. Instead of seeing this as an exclusion, it is an adverse inclusion, in the sense that it allows the ANC and MK to construct their own struggle as 'clean' in relation to a construction of the comrade struggle as 'dirty'. As such, comrades become a symbolic holding and blaming space for anything that might dent the reputation of the liberation struggle. Within this context of adverse exclusion, respondents attempt to engage their memories as a resource through which to argue that they are also legitimate and heroic veterans who should be included in the veteran structures, in order to gain access to veteran benefits, such as special pensions.

A third form of adverse exclusion gets to the heart of the matter, when it comes to understanding the underlying force of connection. It speaks to the relationship between ‘the people’ and ‘the ANC’ in the discourse of the national liberation struggle. As discussed in the paragraph above, this version of history positions the ANC as the rightful ordained leader of the mass movement that took place in the 1980s. The ANC is imagined as the obvious and always leader of the people and people’s power. This is a third form of adverse inclusion, as it functions to contain the contradictions of transition without transformation, by creating a link between the people and the ANC, while at the same time usurping the power of the people that was displayed in the mass movement. On the one hand, what Suttner (2004) calls ‘the modes of practising people’s power’ is taken from the mass movement, who hand over their trust and expectation to the ANC government. On the other hand, people feel abandoned and betrayed by this relationship of dependency and expectation that did not deliver what it promised to.

Due to this adverse connection to the ANC government, it is hard for respondents to sever these ties, as they continue to imagine salvation within the ANC. Therefore, mobilising their memories as resource, they argue that the problem lies with the individuals within the ANC, rather than the ANC itself. They continue to mobilise a memory of connection to the ANC, even if this is mythically based. They challenge their adverse connection through a narrative of ‘gate-keepers’ who prevent them from entering the promised land of liberation. It is imagined that two worlds exist, one that has been left behind and another that has entered liberation, and that all that needs to happen is that the individuals blocking the gates to the second world are removed. This version of the nature of South Africa bears strong resemblance to the two economies discourse (see footnote 10). It holds out hope that, if the illegitimate gate-keepers are removed from the ANC, then the marginalised might gain inclusion into the memory of the struggle and the economic benefits connected to this inclusion.

Findings show that adverse inclusion is not in the interests of respondents. Those attempting to gain access into the discourse of reconciliation and trauma experience this process as a violent and perverse one. Not only do

they not gain access to reparation, but they go through the ordeal of seeking out memory activist organisations and then the performance of retelling and re-living their pain. This experience is described as re-traumatising for respondents, but they hope that they may gain access to money in a context of extreme economic hardship. The connection between trauma and financial gain, in a context where people are economically excluded, leads them into a performance that brings pain without reward. For squatter-comrades, adverse inclusion into veteran discourse has material and symbolic implications. On the one hand, they are excluded from the benefits of legitimate veteran status; and on the other, they are forced to deny their own history, and especially the more complex dimensions of violence.

It is through the adverse inclusion of respondents into national memory discourse, rather than their complete exclusion, that hegemony of the national memory is maintained. It functions to keep hope alive that inclusion is possible. If one can just find the right memory glue to get one's history included, or just tell the right people, or just remove the wrong people, then inclusion will be possible. The above examples rest on an assumption that inclusion is possible, because exclusion is not complete. However, people are rather kept close enough to memory discourse to keep their hope alive. Hope keeps hegemony alive, as it prevents respondents from cutting ties with the hegemonic discourse. Not only does adverse inclusion have implications for hegemony and speak to the dynamic through which hegemony is maintained, it also has implications for respondents.

In sum, one way in which respondents mobilise their memories is as a resource for inclusion in a context of adverse inclusion into memory discourse. While this supports the structure of hegemonic memory discourse and the power relations implied in that discourse, it is not in the interests of respondents who suffer the violence of hope, the re-traumatisation of pain performance, and the denial and shaming of one's own history for fear of demonisation.

### 8.1.2 Memory as Weapon

Alongside and intermingled with the attempts for inclusion discussed above, respondents' memories also act as sharpened weapons that cut through the underlying structure of this discourse. This section demonstrates the counter-hegemonic ways in which respondents bring their memories into conversation with national memory.

In terms of reconciliation and trauma discourse, respondents' memory weapon challenges the assumptions of this discourse on three fronts. While the hegemonic discourse asserts that the pain and the trauma is in the past, respondents strongly and continuously assert that violence and trauma continue in the present. Furthermore, they argue, the violence of the present is made doubly painful, as it is unexpected. In the context of assumed liberation from apartheid, they no longer have a clear counter-hegemonic discourse through which to understand and challenge the violence of today. While the violence of the anti-apartheid struggle was connected to resistance and hope for change, the violence of today is experienced as being without purpose. Despite speaking through this trauma discourse and the victim identity in ways that do damage to respondents, there are also subtle ways in which they cut through and subvert this discourse. Another key way in which respondents challenge the discourse of trauma and reconciliation is through subverting the individual subject of this discourse in favour of a collective subject. They continually assert that their trauma is collective, and they challenge the way in which individual pay-outs are given for collective trauma.

In terms of the discourse of veteranhood, there are three key ways in which respondents challenge its underlying assumptions. Instead of trying to gain legitimacy into the terms of the hegemonic discourse, respondents assert their power as separate from the power of MK. They continually assert that the comrades were acting creatively and 'making our/their own means'. They argue that, when the heat of the war was confronting them at their doorstep,

they formed powerful structures of violence against the apartheid state, without help from MK. At the same time they de-legitimise the role played by MK in the anti-apartheid struggle, by asking: Where were they when we were fighting the struggle inside the country, and what were they doing in exile to contribute to our struggle? Through these contestations, respondents demand evidence for the taken-for-granted discursive assumption that the ANC is the leader of the liberation struggle in South Africa, and the MK veterans are its heroes. Furthermore, they provide arguments for their own claims that what they were doing was making an impact.

There is a second type of contestation to this discourse, which is crucial to engaging and contesting the national narrative of liberation struggle. Instead of falling into line with the ‘criminal versus political’, and ‘clean versus dirty’ distinctions, respondents argue for a complex view of the struggle. Within a complex view, motives and actions within a context of violent oppression and resistance cannot fall neatly into this dichotomy. Furthermore, they argue that this dichotomy is inappropriate for coming to terms with the histories of violence, not only in the case of excluded comrades, but also in the case of included and celebrated veteran-heroes.

Finally, respondents’ discussions of memory challenge the construction of the hegemonic relationship between ‘the ANC’ and ‘the people’ in the discourse of the national liberation struggle. Alongside the ‘gate-keeper’ metaphor of individuals who prevent access to the fruits of liberation, respondents also draw on memories of people’s power. Respondents re-emphasise the power of unity and the collective identity of the people. In doing so, they challenge their own attempts to gain individual inclusion into benefits set aside for legitimate veterans and victims of struggle. Furthermore, they emphasise class factors, such as education and geography, to argue that the power that is required today is very different from the power required during the struggle. This is demonstrated by Manxiwa (Interview, 12 August 2011), who asserts, ‘I didn’t need an education to be involved in the struggle’; however, today he believes he needs one in order to be included in liberation. Therefore, respondents challenge the way in which people are valued, not for their collective unity and people’s power, but by their status in

a system that rewards those elites who were already privileged in terms of education and geographical status. Respondents further assert that this was not the end result they were fighting for and argue for a remembering of the collective identity of the unity of the people.

In sum, these findings are drawn from an analysis of the relationship between local and national memory from the narrative perspective of the excluded subject position of squatter struggle in the mass movement. Through this discussion findings demonstrate, firstly, a key mechanism through which hegemony and consent is maintained, despite the fact that the interests and history of squatter-comrades are not represented in national memory discourse. The concept of adverse inclusion allows an understanding of the workings of hegemony and demonstrates why respondents continue to speak through a discourse that is not in their interests. Hegemony works because it adversely includes the subject positions whose interests are not represented in national memory. From this understanding of hegemony co-opting the oppressed through adverse inclusion, there is a second understanding that develops about agency and resistance and is evidenced in these findings. There are two different agencies of contestation that can come from the experience of being in an adversely included subject position. While the one attempts to gain inclusion, using memory as a narrative resource, on the whole these attempts are shown to be not in the interests of respondents. Rather, the effects work against the well-being and desires of respondents for recognition and material transformation. However, a second memory agency emerges that uses memory as a weapon to cut through the underlying assumptions of national memory. Instead of speaking through the terms of the hegemonic 'truth' these assertions radically challenge their taken-for-granted nature.

## 8.2. The Place of Ontological Memory and Violence: A Different Story of Transition

In this section I propose a different reading of the politics of transition from the experiences presented by respondents. While this is not the interpretation provided by respondents, it is one that emerges from my interpretation on the

ontological memory story presented from below. Drawing on Hegel (1977) and Fanon's (1986) theorisation of the master-slave dialectic and the place of violence within this dialectic, I use this to tell a story about what happened to respondents through the lived process of resistance and transition in relation to this dialectic. This interpretation provides further insights into the nature of memory. On the one hand, it argues that memory is not only about the construction of meaning, but also about the ontological experience of the past. On the other hand, it demonstrates how memory plays a central role in the re-mystification of violence and the creation of a new master-slave relationship in the post-apartheid context. In Milan Kundera's novel, *The book of laughter and forgetting*, on memory, he connects the removal of a people's memory to their death. He does this through the words of a displaced historian in the novel who asserts:

You begin to liquidate a people by taking away its memory ... then the people slowly forget what it is and what it was ... the people are unable to survive crossing the desert of organised forgetting (Kundera 1996:218).

In the quote above, Kundera brings together the notion of violence and memory, demonstrating how social survival and memory are tied to one another. He continues this evocative understanding of the connection between a people's survival and memory, through stating that a people without their history are a 'humanity that has lost its continuity with humanity'. There is a strong sense in these quotes that memory gives people their humanity, and stripping them of their humanity is social death. This links up with a Hegelian/Fanonian understanding of the master-slave relationship being one where the slave relinquishes social life for physical life (Fanon 1986). Similarly, Achille Mbembé (2003) asserts that slavery is death in life and freedom and death are closely related. Linking social life to memory, Patterson (1982) argues that a slave is made a slave through natal alienation, or the removal of social memory from the person who is denied their lineage. Drawing on this understanding, the following section (8.2.2) will show how freedom, death and memory are connected in the quotes of respondents. Through this connection I propose an alternate understanding of the experience of the transition to national liberation not as freedom, but as a new form of slavery.

There is a sense in the quotes of respondents that, without the memory of their struggle, their life and their history becomes meaningless. The denial of the memory of the role they played is highlighted as confusing and traumatic, a key form of the symbolic violence of the present. This understanding is qualitatively different from the understanding of the political uses of memory discussed above, as it points to the ontological experience of memory and the social loss of memory. Ontology refers to the study of being, and is concerned with the way in which life is experienced (Heidegger 1962). Lived experience, with an organic quality, is what we turn to in understanding the nature of being and the relationship between memory and being. Using this kind of ontological lens, this section tells a different kind of story to any of the stories commonly told about the transition to democracy. Through an ontological lens on memory, this thesis tells the story of the experience of the consciousness of respondents across the three time frames of this research: apartheid, transition and the present. Through doing so, it presents an alternative understanding of the nature of transition to democracy from the ontological perspective of those who fought in the squatter movement from below.

#### 8.2.1 A Moment of Ontological Freedom

This study demonstrates the journey taken by squatters of Crossroads through the popular anti-apartheid struggle, the transition to democracy and the post-apartheid memory politics. These narratives tell a general story of the experience of resistant consciousness. Following Hegel and Fanon's insights into the nature of oppression as violence and resistance as the willingness to sacrifice individual-physical life for collective-social life, we see the power of squatters emerge, through this consciousness, against the apartheid state. This is demonstrated in chapter four as respondents remember what it was like to come to resistant consciousness and how they construct this as a decision to 'sacrifice with their lives'. Going back to the theoretical section of this thesis we saw how Fanon (1986) drew on Hegel's master-slave dialectic to understand the nature of oppression, violence and resistance in the liberation struggle against colonialism. Following Hegel, Fanon emphasised the centrality of the risk of life in the struggle for reciprocal recognition and

human relatedness (1986:218). Furthermore, applying this understanding to colonial oppression and resistance, Fanon argues that, because the colonised accepts servitude for fear of death and is unwilling to die for freedom, the coloniser is tyrannical and violent without limit. The oppression of the colonised intensifies until he discovers that his oppressor can be killed, and this discovery shakes his social and psychological world.

This process of being enslaved through the threat of violence is linked to the mystification of the power of the oppressor. Respondents describe how, when growing up under apartheid, they were initially mystified about the nature of oppression and saw the superiority of whiteness as being natural. One respondent describes how he was taught to believe that white people were gods, and others describe the belief in the superiority of white people. The relations of violence that held together black and white in relationships of oppression through apartheid structures were mystified under an ideology of white superiority, internalised by the oppressed. Furthermore, the experience of 'discovering that his oppressor can be killed' is, indeed, one that shakes the social and psychological world of respondents. This is evidenced in the description of the process of the shock of coming to awareness as one's 'eyes' become 'opened' to the realities of oppression. It is also shown in the excited assertion that 'the elephant has been killed by the ant' when Commander Zet responds to the abuse of his white boss with retaliated violence.

Fanon (1963) argues that, when the mystification of the power of oppression is demystified, the self-confidence of the oppressed is restored and this discovery ushers in a long-awaited revolutionary struggle. In his interpretation of Fanon, Bulhan argues that 'the oppressed suffer multiple forms of death and that submission to oppression, for fear of physical death is tragically self-defeating thereby ensuring, among other things, higher rates of physical, psychological and social death' (1985:12). If freedom from oppression requires the risk of life, oppression, too, requires the fear of physical death. Individuals who place a premium on biological life become uprooted from their communities, ideals, histories and destinies. The more the oppressed seek physical survival, the more their oppression deepens and

betrayal is frequent. But those who survive biologically die socially (Bulhan 1985). Another interpretation of the ontological meaning of death and resistance is provided by Mbembé (2003) in his paper of necro-politics (death-politics). He argues that, in situations of extreme oppression, the strongest form of power available to the oppressed in a fight for freedom is their ability to sacrifice their lives. This understanding of two different forms of death, social and biological, and the power of sacrificing physical life in a situation of over-determined oppression comes strongly to bear on the squatter-comrades' experience of coming to resistant consciousness.

The analysis of chapter five demonstrates the process that squatters went through in coming to stand defiantly in the face of the physical violence of oppression. It further demonstrates the power of unity. Through the process of squatter defiance and unity, respondents argue they found a 'little bit of freedom'. This freedom is often expressed in terms of social relations of the family, and somewhat liberated from the control of the oppressive state. There is an empowering quality of the decision to 'sacrifice with their lives'; as Manxiwa asserts, 'the only thing that helped us there, we had to fight' (Manxiwa, Interview, 10 August 2011). This is coupled with the power of unity; as NomaIndia argues, 'we had to fight and there was one word, unity we were together doing it all of us' (NomaIndia, Interview, 10 November 2011). Even for those who did not engage in active violence against the oppressor, the choice to live in squatter communities was a choice to stand strong in the face of the threat of violence. The empowered quality of the experience of squatter movements went far beyond an individual experience of coming to consciousness. This experience was empowering because it was collective, and gave the squatters a collective power in the face of the violence of oppression.

A key part of demystifying the nature of oppression was in discovering the empowered consciousness of the unity of the squatters against the state. In listening to the stories of the experience of resistant consciousness painted by respondents, a picture emerges of a group who became empowered to see their oppression for what it was, and found the bravery and unity to stand against it, 'to sacrifice with their life and their blood' and to choose social life

over physical life. Within this pure process described above, there was complexity and various forms of horizontal violence. However, as argued in chapter five, this memory of resistant consciousness is what is key for the squatters of Crossroads. Ontological memory is important, as it is memory with an organic quality that bubbles up from below, to remind respondents what it felt like to unify in defiance against an oppressive system. This memory is an important well-source through which hegemonic memory is challenged. This memory also emphasises the tragedy of the transition to democracy and the violence done to this memory through the transition and national memory discourse. In the section below, I stay with this lens on the relation between oppression, violence and empowerment, and use it to analyse respondents' experiences of the transition.

### 8.2.2 Return to the Master-Slave Dialectic?

The nature of people's power that emerged in the context of the mass movement in the 1980s has been theorised as an important moment of radical democratic practice that emerged from below and spread throughout the country in the 1980s (Morobe 1987; Suttner 2004b; Neocosmos 2009). However, this moment did not last and its potential was not fulfilled. Instead, through a process of settling, the mass movement accepted the ANC as their representative and, in the process, relinquished their self-created empowerment. At this moment, a relationship of dependency was set up, which was required for the settling and the politics of negotiations. The power of the mass movement and the politics of the people were quickly demobilised and institutionalised (Cherry et al 2000). This thesis contributes to understanding this process of demobilisation through the lens of the memory of squatter resistance in Crossroads. It does so by comparing respondents' ontological memories of struggle to their experiences of the transition and the present.

Chapter five presents stories characterised by experiences of empowerment, defiance, awareness and unity; chapter six presents stories characterised by disappointment, confusion, betrayal and abandonment. The quotes from chapter six demonstrate how people shifted gear, from setting up their own

organs of people's power to waiting expectantly for changes to be given. This gear shift thus reversed the empowered process they had begun and stifled the popular movement developing from below. Their consciousness moved back into being dependent and determined, waiting for the ANC to deliver. Settling back into a relationship of dependence did not lead to their hopes and expectations being fulfilled. Instead, they were left feeling abandoned and betrayed by the party they handed their loyalty and power over to.

As the sections above argue, memory is power, and the loss of memory is social death (Patterson 1982). Not only did respondents hand over their new-found power and their hopes for a better material existence; with these they sacrificed the social life and the 'little bit of freedom' and autonomy they had gained through their physical sacrifices. In this sense, the ontological experience of the present is one that brings them back into slavehood and also causes them to question the role they played in the past. If, in the end, their shift in consciousness and empowerment amounted to nothing, then what is the meaning of that past in the present? Manxiwa gives an example of how they expected that their sacrifice would be recognised when liberation came, but, because it was not recognised, this changes the meaning of the role they played. For Manxiwa, in the light of the present, they become slaves in the past:

Let me make an example. When there is a team and the football players, those people know that they are going out there to kick the ball, but the spectators that are looking up on them, one day they know that one day they will give them something, even if they did not pay them enough, one day they would award them. Even though we were hoping that our leaders would award us for our contribution towards the struggle, but the leadership did not even consider us or even say a word to us, thank you gentlemen for your contribution towards the struggle, and here is your little piece for each and every one to say thank you for your contribution. But we see they are only sharing the wealth of the country amongst themselves and then anger starts to get into us and we get frustrated because we become '*iquboka*' slaves (Manxiwa, Interview, 12 August 2011).

The quote above demonstrates two things. Firstly, it demonstrates the relationship of dependency and expectation created between respondents and the ANC in the context of the present. Secondly, it demonstrates the way in which the forgetting of their history, turns squatter-comrades into 'slaves'. In Manxiwa's and Lati's interviews they remembered the organs of people's power that they created in the context of a hostile state to deal with the needs

of the squatter community. Remembering these, Lati asserts with pride, ‘we live there by force, not by their permission, we live there by our own means’ (Lati, Interview, 12 August 2011). However, in the final statement of Manxiwa’s reflection of the meaning of this past in the context of the present, he rethinks the nature of this contribution. Instead of seeing their role and their struggle as by and for the squatters, he rethinks this as a struggle that was for the ANC and therefore should be recognised by the ANC. However, because this recognition does not happen, he argues there is a frustration and they become slaves. Their contribution, which was meaningful at the time, is now interpreted through the lens of ‘the national liberation struggle’ discourse as meaningless. His choice of the word ‘slave’ is important. It indicates that, despite their empowered history, in the context of the present they now become ‘slaves’ again. This slavehood is closely linked to their place in history and memory.

Like many who were involved in the squatter movements and internal struggles, today respondents feel as if what they did is not counted. They expected that they would share in the country’s liberation, but instead they are excluded. Furthermore, as a result of this exclusion and betrayal, comrades express feelings of humiliation in front of their social networks and families. Considering present realities, comrades express that people see them as ‘useless’ because they sacrificed their ‘personal lives’ for ‘nothing’. I remember asking Wanda’s oldest daughter how she felt about her father having been a comrade in the anti-apartheid struggle, to which she replied, ‘the struggle means nothing’. Similarly, Lati expresses this humiliation from the social environment and connects this to the lack of acknowledgment given to comrade-veterans when they die:

From the point of view of the people that did not take part in the struggle, they see us as very useless people. They see us as people who did not care about their personal lives, and were only involved in the struggle for nothing ... We think about when somebody passes away, and we want to explain about our heroes, the people that have taken part in the struggle. We want to tell their family what role they played in the struggle, because sometimes when somebody dies, then nobody tells what role this person played in the struggle. We think about this and we wish that our people could get recognition when they are buried like the people who have taken real part in the struggle ... It is very clear to us that there is no history that will be written about what we did in the struggle (Lati, Interview, 17 August 2011).

The ontological experience of the present is expressed as a painful denial of the memory of popular struggle. Oppression is multi-dimensional and acts on structural, material as well as symbolic levels. Respondents discuss their continued material oppression, and construct this as continued violence, thus challenging the premise that a transition has happened and violence is in and of the past. Materially and geographically, respondents' lived experiences of poverty, unemployment and underemployment point powerfully to their continued structural oppression. Quotes about exclusion from liberation and continued oppression give voice to this experience. However, respondents are also struggling with a confusing re-mystification of these new forms of oppression and violence.

These narratives indicate what happens when consciousness is released from the mystification of the violence of oppression, but then re-mystified again. The process of settling was, in many ways, a settling of the consciousness of freedom, the consciousness that saw the violence of oppression for what it was and was willing to sacrifice physical life for social life. Through the transition politics, resistant consciousness was brought under another mystifying spell that, if they put their trust in the ANC, the ANC will bring the social life, and the freedom they yearn for. However, this did not happen and respondents feel that they are, once again, in a situation of oppression and darkness, with no hope for a different future, as Sindi asserted in the chapter seven, 'the future looks dark, dark, dark'.

### 8.3 Re-Mystification versus Remembering Well

In the work of Richard Sennett (1998b), he develops the concept of 'remembering well' to refer to the kinds of memory narratives that are in the interests of those who remember. He draws on the example of employees who have been laid-off, to show how their memory of this experience is structured by capitalist discourse in ways that encourage them to individualise their failures. This, he argues, is an example of not remembering well, as it is not in the interests of the laid-off workers to remember this experience as an individual failure. Instead, he argues that collective memory of shared injury would be far more beneficial for his

respondents. Similarly, this final section asks what remembering well would look like for the respondents of this study in the context of re-mystification and hegemonic national memory.

### 8.3.1 The Spell of Mystification

Fanon (1963) argues that freedom cannot be given; it has to be fought for. In the context of popular struggle and squatter resistance narrated by respondents, they were fighting for freedom and being changed by this process. The beginnings of freedom were already felt by the squatters who engaged in this shift in their relationship to the oppressive state. However, this shifting gear, from an empowered position, back to a position of dependence, was accompanied by a re-mystification of violence. While squatters had come to have their eyes opened about the nature of apartheid and to break the spell of the taken-for-granted superiority of whiteness, there was a new spell cast to bind a new master-slave relationship. It was a spell of meaning and hegemony and it infiltrated and impacted on people at the level of memory. This spell had two key elements and two key effects. The first element was to convince people that their freedom lay in the hands of the ANC liberation party. This element is called the 'ANC master narrative of the liberation struggle' and it positions the ANC as the natural leader of liberation (Baines 2007). Furthermore, it claims the 'unified people' as an extension of the liberation movement (Suttner 2004a). This sense was expressed by Bongisile, when he describes the role of squatter-comrades as the dirty hands of the liberation struggle; an appendage to the head and minds of those who are now in power. This element of the spell gives birth to the construction of legitimate 'veterans' as those who belong to organised military wings of liberation movements and the denial of the organisation of violent resistance from below.

The second element of the spell was cast by the discourse of reconciliation, which structured memory through the keyhole of individual victims and perpetrators. By constructing this keyhole, it shifted the focus onto the healing of individual victims, rather than the structural transformation of society. Through these spells, people were encouraged to forget their past

power, put their trust in the ANC and focus on the individualised work of healing and reconciliation. Not only was their power stifled, but the memory of this power was also taken from them.

This spell had two effects. Firstly, it created a politics of smoke and mirrors, where people who were poor felt their only recourse to liberation was to squeeze their histories through the keyholes provided, thus focusing their energies on the warped process of claiming veteran and victim status. Setting up these ‘possibilities’ for recognition not only forced people to tell their histories in ways that are not in their best interests; but the second effect of the spell is that it also worked ideologically to turn attention away from the key question: What happened to people’s power and the transformation people were living and fighting for?

These keyholes are metaphors for the adverse inclusion discussed above. People plough their emotions, finances and time into trying to get their history into the shape that will allow them to open the doors of victimhood and veteranhood, in order to gain the few benefits waiting on the other side. While this doesn’t amount to anything for them, it does shift attention away from a version of memory that would challenge the spells that keep the relationship of dependency alive.

In his discussion of the violence of oppression, Bulhan argues that prolonged oppression reduces the oppressed into mere individuals without history and community, fostering a tendency to privatise a shared victimisation (1985:123). In the struggle to ‘remember well’ squatters’ memories tussle against a new oppression, which strips respondents of their memories of unity and collective power, and entices them to engage their pasts in individual terms of ‘veteran’ and ‘victim’. This struggle between staying true to the power of their organic memory of past struggle, versus laying claim to individual benefits, is compounded by their dire economic marginalisation. This aspect of this challenge is outlined in the powerful quote below from Sazola, who pulls together all the strands of the critique of the reparation industry. She listens to her companions assert their desperation for the interview to provide a channel to reparation money, and my own concern

expressed around my inability to do that. She explains eloquently the nature of the victim drama. She argues that, even though the assumptions underlying reparations completely misrepresent what the squatter struggle meant to people, squatters nevertheless comply with these assumptions, because they are desperate:

We are really desperate for money ... When people are suffering they become aggressive, they are aggressive because they are hungry, they are angry because they are not in a satisfactory living environment. Although we were doing these fights, we were not looking for benefits, we were looking for places to settle and be. We were confused now later when the government is giving certain people money, people that say we are struggling and now looking for that money because some people do get money and some people do not get money so the reason we are looking for money is that we are in the same situation as those who do get funds. Now the government is creating conflict amongst us. But during that time we gave our blood and our kids to fight for the liberation of this country, without expecting any benefits, but then some people get and some don't. That is why you hear that there is a lot of conflict of interest (Sazola, Group interview, Zulu's place, 28 October 2011).

This quote demonstrates how people sacrificed with their blood and their children for liberation, not for reparation. There was purpose to that sacrifice, but in the context of the present that purpose has been unfulfilled and people are angry, hungry and desperate. Individual benefits come to cover over the contradiction created by the lived experience of the absence of liberation and the kind of transformation people struggled and suffered for. Not only does reparation then act to depoliticise and channel the anger and hopelessness caused by the lack of liberation into the search for individual benefits, but it further disrupts and perverts the unity and the purpose with which people struggled, as they are brought into competition with each other for reparation money offered in the context of desperation.

### 8.3.2 Remembering Well

As this chapter has demonstrated, remembering in terms of mystification is not in the interests of respondents. When respondents attempt to claim victim and veteran identities, in order to receive financial and symbolic benefit, they also re-affirm connections and support for the ANC. This is in the interests of hegemony and the status quo and, in general, it does not help respondents with their continued conditions of violence. It increases symbolic violence through adverse inclusion. The lack of transformation and continued

structural violence is managed through national memory discourse, therefore it is at this symbolic level that respondents engage and have conversations with and against national memory. These conversations occur at the level of their consciousness and can be conceptualised as a dynamic interweaving of two levels of memory consciousness in conversation with one another. These two levels were seen and analysed through respondents' discussions of the meaning of memory, in the context of their lives today. On the one hand, the national story of history travels down to popular memory and into the consciousness of respondents as hegemonic memory. On the other hand, lived memory and personal lived experience exists alongside, in conversation with hegemonic memory. It is this conversation within the narratives of Crossroads memory community that this thesis has attempted to capture, unfold and understand, in order to distil both the effects of and the challenges to hegemonic memory in South Africa.

Alongside their attempt to squeeze their history through the keyholes of hegemonic memory, respondents also demonstrate powerful forms of remembering well. These memory weapons have the power to cut through the spell of mystification. In this final section, I distil three key counter-hegemonic elements found within respondents' memory narratives.

The first key element is the de-legitimisation of the ANC and their military wing as the leader of popular struggles and the liberators of South Africa. Respondents draw on their memories to demonstrate the power they had and, in rare moments, they speak back to the national liberation struggle discourse in defiance, saying: Where were you when we were on our own here in the thick of struggle? When memory asserts that the ANC is the right party, but it is the gate-keepers that are doing wrong, this hooks respondents back into their relationships of expectation and dependency. Remembering well occurs when there is a challenge to the assumption that the ANC and liberation are naturally tied to one another. This is also perhaps the strongest glue of mystification. Respondents continually find ways to re-connect their loyalty to the ANC as the liberation party, even as they criticise those in power. For these strands of remembering well to come together into counter-hegemonic memory it would require the complete demystification of the natural

connection of the ANC with liberation. Only then will people remember that the role they played was theirs. It did not belong to the ANC: they did it on their own.

A second key element of counter-hegemonic discourse is in the memory of unity, which is tied to the assertion of collective identity. It works against the individualising tendencies of victim and veteran discourses. At various moments, respondents pull back and emphasise their collective experience against the attempts to gain individual reparations and individual veteran recognition. In these moments, they assert, 'we were all in this together'. This challenge to individualism has a further effect of bringing into focus the lack of structural change. Rather than a focus on healing individual trauma, the focus turns to the need for socio-economic solutions that change the realities of oppression for the collective, and these are necessarily structural. When respondents remember well, they argue that this privileging of the elite was at the expense of the masses who fought from below. Furthermore, this kind of remembering well encourages a need in Sindi's words to continue to fight for the 'free' that was denied when they were made '*dom*' (stupid) after the negotiation process.

A final and third element of remembering well, which has implications for addressing questions of trauma and the scars of horizontal violence, is to remember that Crossroads violence was, in the first instance, a struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor. Once this is at the forefront, it becomes possible to then address the forms and effects of horizontal violence that lie within this broader framework. Similarly, remembering well means challenging the dichotomy between 'clean' and 'dirty' and 'political' and 'criminal'. This is a dichotomy that forces respondents to deny certain aspects of their history in order to claim legitimacy, while at the same time allowing those in power to delegitimise respondents, through labelling them as 'dirty'. This dichotomy serves power and results in psychological denial. Challenging this dichotomy would allow for memory that can hold the recognition of the role squatters played in the anti-apartheid struggle and engagement with the more difficult parts of this history.

## 8.4 Conclusion

In the conclusion of this chapter, I bring this discussion to bear on the overarching question about the politics of the relationship between national memory and local memory. This question was posed in order to understand the conundrum of a ‘transition’ without ‘transformation’, from the perspective of Crossroads memory community, and in relation to the hegemony of national memory discourse. To answer this question, three sets of sub-questions were proposed for analysis:

- 1) How do respondents experience and engage (with) national memory discourse? How does national memory discourse affect local memory actors? What forms of discursive agency emerge in their engagement with national memory discourse?
- 2) How do members of Crossroads memory community construct their counter-narratives of violence in terms of their experience of apartheid, violence resistance and the transition to the present?
- 3) How do respondents’ lived counter-memories engage (with) the hegemony of national memory discourse? In what ways do respondents’ memory narratives work to support or subvert the hegemonic assumptions of national memory discourse?

In terms of the first set of sub-questions, respondents bring their memory narratives into conversation with national memory through engaging the discourse of reconciliation and presenting themselves as victims of past trauma, in order to gain access to reparations they believe are set aside for victims. Respondents also engage national memory discourse of the national liberation struggle, through making claims to legitimate veteranhood, in order to gain symbolic inclusion into the memory of the struggle and access to the benefits and recognition set aside for veterans. However, these discourses impact negatively on respondents. Squatter-comrades experience de-legitimisation and criminalisation from the discourse of national memory, and members of the Crossroads memory community experience the ontologies of hope and despair as they compete with one another for limited reparations. Furthermore, respondents experience a catch-22 situation, as they attempt to align their histories to memory identities, which, at the same time,

deny much of their lived experiences. Within the confusing paradox of adverse inclusion, two forms of agency are possible: attempting to gain inclusion into memory identities, or subverting the terms on which inclusion is granted.

In terms of the second sub-question, respondents narrate their memories of squatter struggles as a story of coming to awareness about the nature of apartheid, and choosing to form and join the squatter community of Nyanga Bush. For many, this was experienced as an empowering move of defiance to repression, cut through with painful experiences of hardship and horizontal violence. The stories of squatter struggle emphasise the people's power of liberated spaces and the resistant consciousness that came with the decision to match oppressive violence with resistant violence, defiance and unity. The transition, on the other hand, is narrated through a narrative of betrayal for comrade-veterans and abandonment for the Crossroads memory community. The narrative of betrayal implies an active wrong-doing, while the narrative of abandonment implies passive neglect, but both imply a relationship of dependency and expectation between the squatters and the ANC. While respondents hoped that this relationship of dependency would bring change, it has, instead, brought disappointment that their lives are still ones of oppression and structural violence.

In terms of the third sub-question about the politics involved in this memory conversation, respondents use their memories both as a resource for inclusion and as a weapon that challenges the terms of hegemonic memory. Squatter histories are adversely incorporated into national memory. Attempts to gain inclusion through engaging this adverse inclusion are often at the expense of respondents' interests and in support of hegemonic memory. This is, therefore, an agency that attempts to gain inclusion into the hegemonic meaning system. At the same time, there are ways in which respondents mobilise their memories as weapons, which cut through the hegemonic memory web. This represents a memory agency that is in line with respondents' interests, reminds them of a time when they were ontologically empowered and helps to demystify for them the nature of the violence of the present.

When respondents attempt to claim access to victim and veteran identities, they often attempt to align their memories to the hegemonic story of the national liberation struggle and transition to freedom. When they assert narratives of the betrayed veteran and the abandoned victim, they partly support and partly subvert the underlying assumptions of national memory discourse. When respondents draw on narratives of betrayal and abandonment, these subvert the underlying assumption of reconciliation discourse that the problem of violence is in the past and the aim of the present is healing. Instead, respondents re-locate violence in the present experiences of oppression, asserting 'nothing much has changed'. However, at the same time, these narratives support the assumption of national memory discourse that the ANC was the legitimate leader of liberation, through the assumptions of a relationship of dependency that has been thwarted. However, as chapter seven demonstrates, this relationship is challenged through the bubbling up of the memories of people's power, and the empowerment, creativity and unity of squatter resistance from below.

Memory agency that challenges hegemony cuts through the underlying assumptions that: 1) violence is in the past; 2) the problems of the present are the result of individual bad apples in the ANC; 3) change should benefit individuals; 4) the liberation struggle was led by the ANC; and 5) there are clear distinctions between liberation action as political and 'clean' and anti-liberation action as criminal and 'dirty'.

Instead, the counter-hegemonic elements of squatter memories highlight: 1) the continuation of violence and oppression; 2) the memory of the power of the unity of the squatters in defiance; 3) the independence of the memory of people's power from the ANC government; 4) transformation should benefit the collective; and 5) continued oppression is located in the sacrifice of people's power rather than betrayal and abandonment of bad-apple gate-keepers. While this analysis teases out the elements that are hegemonic and counter-hegemonic in memory narratives, in reality these elements are wrapped together to form contradictory memory consciousness.

## Conclusion

This thesis explores two different kinds of memory that exist in squatter narratives. On the one hand, it looks at the ontological memory of squatter struggles and the transition. Ontological memory is an organic memory that emerges from memory held in the being of respondents. It holds the element of memory that is beyond meaning. One brings meaning to the feeling captured in memory, in order to express it in words, but the feeling still belongs to a realm prior to meaning and comes into relationship with meaning. Then there is the memory of memory, and this refers to the meanings of memories and the way they layer and intermesh with one another. The ontologically embodied memory of a moment is made meaningful through one's story about the meaning of that moment. That meaning will already be infused with the stories passed down about that kind of moment and will also be in relationship with other people's interpretations of the moment. We hold both the embodied experiential memory and the stories that we give to it at the time. Imagine that a lived moment becomes part of a much broader memory story that is shared by the nation, and that it also becomes part of a powerful discourse, which determines how the entire nation's past should be interpreted. This national memory determines how the entire nation should interpret the broad moment in which your moment took place. Now imagine that the broad story is taken as the truth of history. However, this so-called truth does not quite fit the moment you experienced and your stories of that moment.

The ontological memory of respondents is a memory of a moment of powerful unity, freedom, creativity and hope. This hope came from the experience of breaking free of the chains of a system of meaning that denied them their humanity, their freedom of movement and their ability to live the life they chose to live. The ontological memory is one of defying a system of violence and dehumanisation. This was not just an individually empowering experience of matching violence with violence by saying no to oppression, but also an experience of unity. The ontological memory squatters hold expresses an experience of unity in support and collective power, with eyes wide open to the reality of oppression. Imagine that experience of collective

empowerment. Now imagine, in that context, that some other power comes and tells you that they are your true leader and, believing them, you hand over your new-found power to this false prophet. This false prophet hails the memory in which your moment took place and sets up requirements for you to be part of this memory. But these requirements demand that you forget the essence of unity, creativity and empowerment of your moment and, instead, bow down to your new false prophet. In conditions of poverty and destitution, the false prophet dangles the possibility of prizes, if you tell your memory through their story. By focusing on jumping through the memory hoops set up, you abide by the lie and you forget your moment because you need to survive. Really, you will never forget it as it continues to bubble up from time to time. However, instead of offering solace and power, it just gives painful confusion and pain, as you wonder: how could things have gone so wrong?

In essence, this is the memory story that this thesis tells. It is told from the perspective of the Crossroads memory community, but in telling it holds various insights and critiques. In this final conclusion, I bring this story to bear on memory theory, transitional justice, post-conflict development and the narratives of respondents. In doing so, I demonstrate the implications of this story for different levels of understanding, theory and practice in South Africa and internationally.

### 1 For Memory Theory

The empirical work of this thesis holds insights for memory theory in terms of the way in which we understand the relationship between the past and the present and the politics of popular memory. Emerging in these narratives are three layers of memory, which have universal resonance. On the one hand, our memories are structured by discourses of memory, which speak to the first layer of memory as shared discourse. How we remember our individual lives is structured by broader themes that are given to us through a shared realm of memory frames, and these are often linked to systems of power. On the other hand, there are counter-memory discourses and these work against hegemony, but also have a shared content. This speaks to the second layer of

memory as counter-memory, which challenges dominant meaning systems. Counter-memories are systems of meaning that appeal to us because they represent something of our interests and lived experiences. Therefore, lived experiences give us a clue as to how we cobble together the memory stories available to us through which to tell our histories. Already, the relationship between the past and the present is evident, as these memory stories travel from history so that we can make sense of our own histories. Depending on the positions we find ourselves in, the meaning-making systems that appeal to us will speak to that position. Therefore, there is a sense of meaning being made for the purposes of the present.

A key finding of this research for memory studies is related to the question of memory and ontology, and the third layer of memory explored in this thesis. We do not just make our memories from systems of meaning; there is an organic quality to memory, as it is meaning that has been lived. This lived experience of the past also comes to bear on the constructions of memory that people have available to them. Therefore, when considering the counter-hegemonic possibilities in memory, this consideration must move beyond the question of meaning systems, to include ontological analysis of the lived experience of memories held. Further research in memory studies would benefit from investigating the nature of ontological memory and how lived experiences may come to challenge hegemonic memory, even if they are not yet articulated as a counter-meaning system. Through this kind of analysis, it was possible in this thesis to move beyond an evaluation of the way in which memory contestation happens in the present. Through the excavation of the lived memories held, these too had a powerful story which challenged the frames of the present.

## 2 For Memory of South Africa and Liberation Struggles

While respondents belong to a particular history of squatter resistance, this is also a story shared by many South Africans who were part of the popular uprising from below. Furthermore, the history of transition forms part of a broader history of national liberation struggle and against oppression and colonial domination. While the transition to national liberation has been

analysed from a variety of perspectives in South Africa and across the continent, this research contributed to these by focusing on the hegemonic role of memory in this process, and the ontological narratives of those who experienced it. In terms of the hegemonic role of memory, this thesis contributes to a broader critique of the role of memory as a hegemonic force in containing resistance to elite transitions that are not in the interests of the poor. In terms of lived experience, this research attempts to extend the ontological work of Fanon (1963, 1986) on the experience of consciousness in the national liberation struggle, to continue this story of what happens to liberated consciousness after national liberation. This analysis demonstrates how liberated consciousness is brought back under a new mystifying spell and into a relationship of dependency with the new elite regime. This process is akin to social death and traps consciousness back into the master-slave dialectic.

### 3 For Squatter-Comrades and the Revolutionary Masses

In the context of this re-mystification of consciousness and the nature of the spell of hegemonic memory, this thesis distils a possibility for a new memory that would challenge this mystification. This new resistant memory would be based in a challenge to the assumption of the ANC's natural leadership, a re-affirmation of the collective power of the people in unity, and a sincere engagement with the scars of the violence of the past, free from the myth of political cleanness. However, this energy was co-opted before, and it is easily co-opted again. In order to develop alternate memory of liberation that is in line with the interests of the poor, there also needs to be an engagement with why this energy was so easily co-opted in the first place, leading to the 'still-birth' of 'sites of people's power' (Suttner 2004b; Neocosmos 2009). The slogan 'liberation first, education later', represents one place in which the answer to this question may be found. While the slogan emphasised the power of immediate resistance, this was also the reason why squatters were easily co-opted. Throughout the quotes about how their power was taken from them, squatters mention the lack of education and how they feel 'stupid' and 'used'. Bonsigile provides an important answer to this question when he says, 'The fight we were waging was not the fight we were prepared for'.

These quotes speak strongly to the lack of ideological development within a context of immediate response. While this response created the organic development of modes of practising people's power, it did not become fully fledged as an ideology of what a liberated future should look like and how it could develop out of these local experiences of empowerment. The exploitation of the lack of ideological development in these spaces is summarised by Nigel Gibson, who argues:

The problem is that these expressions of direct democracy, however flawed and limited in their practice were celebrated but not translated into a radical rethinking of liberation theory for a post-apartheid society. This ideological pitfall was exploited by the ANC which was able to capture these narratives and celebrate the idea of 'peoples power' while remaining the self-appointed future negotiator. While it was hoped that such a participatory democracy could become a basis for a post-apartheid society, it never became a challenge to political theory. (2001:283–284)

The phrase, 'expressions of direct democracy' refers to the process through which ordinary black South Africans realised that they could influence their lives and take active control of their futures. It was with this sense of direct democracy that various United Democratic Front (UDF) civic groups and street committees were formed to resist everyday forms of oppression. Gibson argues that, if these local expressions of democracy had been in continuous and challenging dialogue with political theory, it might have been possible to resist the ways in which the negotiation process functioned to co-opt and silence a democratic civil society.

If this was the reason that the power of local resistance was co-opted and still-born, then it remains a key issue for the potential development of counter-memory. The mythical belief in the power of the liberation movement is connected to the lack of confidence of people in their own power. This confidence could come from a more fully articulated ideology of counter-memory that draws on the strands and elements of counter-hegemonic memory that remain in the organic memory of those who formed part of these organs of people's power.

#### 4 For Post-Conflict and Transitional Justice Theory

If this thesis provides a critique of post-conflict and transitional justice discourse, what are the implications for post-conflict development? Firstly,

these findings emphasise the importance of work that is critical of the discourse of post-conflict development and its functioning. If development practice does not want to be in the interests of power, it must remain attentive to the discourses it works within and the role of these discourses within power. Secondly, for transitional justice, the socio-economic realities of post-conflict societies are central. This is argued in a recent book that asserts that transitional justice needs to take seriously the goals of the development of economic and political inequality (De Greiff & Duthie 2009). Transitional justice, they argue, without socio-economic and political equality, is doomed to fail. This assertion is borne out by my research in the sense that, without structural economic change, programmes of transitional justice miss the key socio-economic needs of the poor. However, this assertion also misses a key point demonstrated by this research: that transitional justice and development as global discourses, networks and institutions play a role in the ideological construction and maintenance of inequality.

Post-conflict and transitional justice practices and institutions play a role in defining and creating what it is possible to think and do in terms of concepts such as reconciliation, justice, freedom and development. They also play an ideological role, in the sense that the meanings of these concepts become taken for granted. They become part of what Ferguson (1990) calls the 'anti-politics machine'. The role which the discourse of post-conflict development plays in the process of hegemony is de-politicised through narrowly focusing their sights to normative questions of better practice. At the same time, those who work in the field may be unaware of the ways in which the underlying assumptions of the frameworks in which they work contribute to maintaining injustice and inequality. In South Africa, the assumption that justice can be pursued through individual processes, whether these are apology, recognition, amnesty or reparation, ignores the role of the unequal distribution of power in society and the question of how to see, challenge and rectify inequality. Therefore, the impacts of post-conflict development and transitional justice in South Africa provide a key case in point. It has been hailed as a 'miracle' and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) is seen as a success story. However, this research tells a different story about the ideological role of

transitional memory discourses and the effects of this role on the poor. We see the way in which ‘freedom’, ‘reconciliation’, ‘justice’, ‘transformation’ and ‘development’ are meaningless in the lives of respondents, except in the role they play in encouraging and facilitating the settling into a new relationship of dependency and adverse inclusion. These discourses accompanied a realignment of power and the legitimisation of the new elite. This legitimisation was necessary in a context where the new government did not embark on the equitable distribution of the system of power in ways that would have truly made a difference to respondents’ lived experiences.

In South Africa there was a moment in the 1980s when the distribution of power in South Africa was challenged from below, but during the transition this challenge was contained and post-conflict development and transitional discourse played a key role in this. The implications of this thesis for post-conflict development is that, rather than only asking technical questions about better practice, the focus should also be on questions about the underlying assumptions of this practice. Research in this field should turn its focus to the way in which their practice functions within transitions from violent struggles to democratic settlements. The field needs to interrogate the ideological role it plays in transitional attempts to realign power in ways that support inequality and privilege and adversely include the most marginalised groups within society.

#### 5 For Transitional Justice Practitioners

This research also has implications for practitioner-based research. If practitioners do not take for granted the terms of transitional justice, there is a role they can play in supporting the development of organic memory. Rather than acting as channels of adverse inclusion connecting government benefits to people’s history, they may turn their energies towards developing the strands of counter-hegemonic memory contained within people’s histories into a more robust counter-hegemonic memory discourse. This represents a challenge for practitioners who want to help those who are adversely included within the terms provided, which are terms of individual benefits. However, if they do not question these underlying assumptions, the

hegemonic discourse and the system of unequal power it maintains will continue.

For practitioners who pour their energy and time into helping those who ‘suffered for freedom, and suffered with freedom’, would their work not be more effective if it was also geared towards a challenge of the system of power and meaning that they themselves are working within? This system of power places memory practitioners at the keyhole of adverse inclusion, giving them the role of carrying the pain of the marginalised, while at the same time feeding into the smoke-and-mirror politics of reparations and veteran benefits, which turns attention away from the issue of power and inequality.

## 6 A Final Note

In sum, this thesis tells the story of the memory of squatter resistance in the context of the present. This is a case study that finds itself in the darkness of post-conflict memory in the present. It remembers what it was, but it tried to understand why it is no longer. This consciousness was born in the soil of action, practice and embroiled experience. This soil lacked the fertiliser of theory and ideology; of imagining what a new balance of power could look like and how it might take force. This consciousness was the key to the empowerment of the oppressed, but it was also an undirected force, easily co-opted. In its breaths of memory today, it feels its containment; it feels that it is lost, fragmented, unfinished. However, in its attempts to articulate a desired end point of victim reparation, veteran integration and a better ANC government, it exposes again its lack of ideology.

This is the story of the memory of a budding empowered consciousness, which is lost and forgotten. Although it knows it is lost, it does not know its direction theoretically. Intuitively, there are hints and arrows showing it towards the light of a counter-hegemonic memory, and this comes out throughout the narratives that yearn for a different kind of freedom and justice than the one they have been given. Opening its eyes, it sees only darkness and sinks back into the known strategies of trying to gain inclusion. It conforms to the given tropes of hegemony, the myth of the ANC and the

desire for integration and reparation, hoping to find freedom in these empty prizes of smoke-and-mirror politics. However, the internal compass remains; it grew inside the consciousness when first it experienced the power of demystification and defiance in unity against violence. This memory is held in the cells of respondents and, in moments of counter-hegemonic memory, it shouts up, 'Hey, that's not it!' and remembers the power of unity and the collective. The hook of the mysticism of national memory discourse is powerful and this thesis contributes to loosening the power of that hook by drawing out the strands of an alternative memory with a different kind of politics.

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## **Cited Interviews:**

### **Interviews**

- Angelina (Jama Nomarushia Angilina), 10 November 2011. Life history interview at NomaIndia Jali's home in Philippi (with Nomatoza and NomaIndia present).
- Athel (Athel Khali), 2 December 2011. Interview at Zulu's place in Philippi.
- Beatrice (Beatrice Tshinika), 16 Jan 2012. Life history interview at her home in Khayelitsha, Site B.
- Bongisile (Bongisile Mgese), 17 October 2011. Life history interview at his home in Philippi.
- Bongisile, 31 October 2011. Life history interview at his home in Philippi.
- Boy-boy (Boy-boy Tuma), July 2007. Life history interview conducted at the Khayelitsha training centre.
- Charles (Charles Kanku), 17 March 2012. Life History interview in a room at the Khayelitsha site C sport stadium, during ANC meeting (Commander Zet present in meeting).
- Commander Zet (Zwelitsha Mghlutwa), July 2007. Life history interview conducted at the Khayelitsha training centre.
- Commander Zet, 25 July 2011. Interview about SVACOM conducted at Faizel Moosa's home in Athlone, Cape Town.
- Commander Zet, 11 February 2012. Follow up to original life history interview (collected in 2007) at his home in Khayelitsha site B.
- Commander Zet, 13 February 2012. Follow up to original life history interview (collected in 2007) at his home in Khayelitsha site B.
- Commander Zet, 20 February 2012. Informal interview/discussion with Two Boy Jack, Wanda and I about Gladstone Ntamo's plan to recognise the squatters.
- Motumi (Director General Tshepe Motumi), 31 August 2011. Interview with the Director General of the Department of Military Veterans at the Booyesen Hotel, Johannesburg.
- Faizel (Faizel Moosa) 25 July, 2011. Interview about SVACOM conducted at his home in Athlone, Cape Town.
- Lati (Lati Mbongisa) 12 August 2011. Life history interview at Robert Rehenene (Manxiwa's) home in Philippi (with Robert present).

Lati, 17 August 2011. Life history interview at Robert Rehenene (Manxiwa's) home in Philippi (with Robert present).

Manxiwa (Robert Rehenene), 10 August 2011. Life History Interview at his home in Philippi (with Lati present).

Manxiwa, 12 August 2011. Life History Interview at his home in Philippi (with Lati present).

Max (Max Ndanyana), 11 October 2011. Interview at the Khayelitsha museum, Mandela Park, Khayelitsha

Memani (Oliver Sebenzile Memani), 26 January 2012. Life history interview at his home in Khayelitsha, Site B.

Moscow (did not record full name). Informal interview with Moscow, member of Umkhonto Wesizwe Military Veterans Association (MKMVA), Booyesen Hotel, Johannesburg.

Ntamo (Gladstone Ntamo), 27 February 2012. Life history interview at his home in KTC.

Nomatoza (Jali Nomatoza Trena), 10 November 2011. Life history interview at NomaIndia's home in Philippi (with Angelina and NomaIndia present).

Nomaindia (Noma India Jali), 10 November 2011. Life history interview at her home (with Angelina and Nomatoza present).

Pamela (Pamela Buyana) July 2007. Life history interview conducted at the Khayelitsha training centre.

Sindi (Nosindiso, surname not recorded) 26 July 2011. Life history interview conducted at the house where she rents a room in Nyanga Township.

Sindiswa (Sindiswa Nunu) 9 August 2011. Life history interview conducted at her home in Philippi

Two Boy Jack (Vakele Jack), 16 February 2012. Follow up to original life history interview (collected in 2007) conducted at the training centre in Khayelitsha.

Wanda (Mzolisi Malungisa) 19 August 2011. Life history Interview conducted at his home in Khayelitsha.

Wanda, 30 January 2012. Interview about comrade violence with Wanda while driving to key sites of past violence in Crossroads.

Wanda, 30 November 2011. Interview on victimhood at his home in Khayelitsha.

Wanda, 13 February 2012. Follow up life history interview and discussion of research experience.

Yamile (Mthuzimele Melford Yamile), 8 August 2011. Life History Interview, at his friend's home in Philippi.

Yamile, 11 August 2011. Life History Interview, at his friend's home in Philippi.

Yamile, 23 February 2012. Interview on the structure and function of the comrades, and the meeting proposed by Gladstone Ntamo to recognise the squatters (in conversation with Wanda and Commander Zet).

Zakuthini (Cingani K. Ndletyana) 20 February 2012. Follow up to original life history interview (collected in 2007) at his home in Khayelitsha.

### **Group Interviews**

Group Interview, Zulu's place, 21 October 2011. Group interview at Standard Kuwan (Zulu's place), a large room which used to be his shop in Philippi organised by Godfrey Gwija

Group Interview, Zulu's place, 28 October 2011. Group interview at Zulu's place in Philippi

Group Interview, Zulu's place, 4 November 2011. Group interview at Zulu's place in Philippi.

Group Interview, Beauty's crèche, 15 November 2011. Group interview at Beauty Godongwana's crèche (child's day care) organised by Fundiswa Gobingca, Philippi East.

Group Interview, Beauty's crèche, 23 November 2011. Group interview at Beauty Godongwana's crèche organised by Fundiswa Gobingca, Philippi East.

Group Interview, Beauty's crèche, 29 November 2011. Group interview at Beauty Godongwana's crèche organised by Fundiswa Gobinca, Philippi East.

Group Interview, Dlamini's home, 24 January 2012. Group interview at Dlamini's (did not record surname) home in Site C Khayelitsha.